



# ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY



## CONTENTS

### EDITOR'S MESSAGE

#### PHINEHAS—THE WARRING PRIEST

by E. R. Bower

#### NOTES ON REVELATION

by J. Flanigan

#### ADDRESSING GOD IN PRAYER

by T. E. Wilson

#### THE OFFERING OF ISAAC

by William Mullan

#### A MEDITATION ON PSALM 1

by Cliff Jones

#### INDUSTRIOUS SERVANT OF JEHOVAH

by J. B. Hewitt

#### THE BOOK OF RUTH

by E. R. Bower

#### JAMES KERR DUFF

A Tribute by James G. Hutchinson

#### HOW GOD SAVED AN IRISH BOY

by J. K. Duff

#### COMMITTEE'S REPORT

#### HYMNS AND THEIR WRITERS

by J. Strahan

## "MY LORD AND MY GOD"

Higher He could not go,  
Greater He could not be,  
All else must bow below,  
His Regal Majesty.

There, Angels sped in flight,  
His Word swift to obey,  
He clave primeval night  
To launch Creation's Day.

Yet down from realms so high,  
Our great Redeemer came,  
To suffer and to die,  
Upon a cross of shame.

From wealth beyond degree,  
And Glory so sublime,  
In abject poverty,  
He graced the sands of time.

His was the manger's straw,  
The outside place so bare,  
The peasant shepherds saw,  
The Lord of Glory there.

Had every king and queen,  
Before Him bowed the knee,  
His coming yet had been,  
Boundless humility.

To Him no throne was given,  
Only a crown of thorn,  
His side by spear was riven,  
He died amid the scorn.

What mind can e'er conceive,  
Of such a love as this,  
That caused the Son to leave,  
The Father's side of bliss?

Ah Lord, I come to Thee,  
No gold or myrrh I bring,  
But gladly bow the knee,  
To own Thee as my King.

—C. F. GEDDES, Portessie.

\*\*\*\*\*

## EDITOR'S MESSAGE

MARANATHA — The Lord Cometh! We expected Him before. The world grows darker, wickedness abounds, days are dangerous, strife and unrest are found in every place, many depart from the faith, the love of many waxes cold, our own hearts are often chilled—but let us not say “My Lord delayeth His coming” for “He that shall come, will come and will not tarry.” He said, “I will come again,” and we may be sure that He will. Let us lift up our heads and look! and in the meantime “Occupy till He comes.”

As I write to you from Northern Ireland it is against a background of the sad news of dear saints of God shot down as they were singing Gospel Hymns in their Mission Hall in a border county of this troubled land. The Lord comfort and strengthen as He alone can.

Along with this comes good news of God blessing the preaching of the Gospel and of souls being saved in various parts as our preaching brethren still labour diligently in the work so dear to the heart of every Irish believer. There is always much to discourage, but with it all much to thank God for—Constant preaching of the Gospel with well attended meetings. A good interest in the ministry of the word and a growth in the number of well-attended Bible Readings. Among these the large Annual Bible Readings in Larne and Lurgan which continue to grow year by year, and the saints are being helped and encouraged.

The remainder of the British Isles is not so Gospel minded as Ulster and one would love to see the need of the perishing gripping the hearts of the saints afresh. There is a need of deep heart-searching about this.

Scotland still serves well the needs of the ministry of the word. Many dear brethren in secular employment travel long distances, many overnight to minister God's word to His dear people. The number of those so doing has decreased, many loved brethren have been called home and cannot be replaced. God has graciously raised up a generation of younger men who are showing real gift coupled with faithfulness in the expounding of God's word.

England and Wales are comparatively weak in testimony compared with the rest of the United Kingdom, but even there, there are good assemblies and excellent saints, well-fired beacons in the darkness—keeping His word, not denying His name while others are departing from the Truth. In some parts there is an exercise to return and obey His word . . . with a measure of recovery. Brethren, pray on and stand! The Lord is coming.

It is not all dark—take courage—He abides faithful and is still able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.

Habakkuk's words in disappointing days well fit our lips "Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my Salvation." The days demand prayer, praise and watchfulness.

Watchfulness against the waywardness of our hearts—"Take heed unto **yourselves** and to all the flock" and watchfulness against evil wolves from without, who enter in, not sparing the flock, but a greater danger still—"from among yourselves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them."—the Leaven of Swanwick still remains, the corrupting process goes on—Seminars in various centres, literature, statistics and deductions therefrom. Good words and fair speeches to deceive the hearts of the simple. Many are in danger of being beguiled from the simple path of obedience to the word of God. Shepherds need to be alert, awake, constantly watching the flock.—"Let us watch and be sober." "The coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the readers for their continued interest in the magazine. (Circulation has increased by 50 per cent. in the last ten years). Please try to introduce other readers. Also I would thank those who by their gifts make the free circulation of the magazine possible. Special thanks also to those who have contributed articles, most of them busy men, but giving time to feed the people of God.—Brethren be assured the saints are being helped.—Write on!

During the year we have lost our great friend, Mr. John Hogg. He is greatly missed by us all and this loss cannot be replaced, but we trust in our unfailing God. We are thankful for the interest shown by the members of the committee who are men with the confidence of the assemblies in Northern Ireland. We are also greatly indebted to our brother Mr. Wm. Neill who is doing valuable work in the secretarial and business side of the magazine, to him and to Mrs. Neill (Mr. Hogg's daughter) for the great amount of work they do in the packing and despatch of the magazine.

I have for a while felt the need for help in the Editorial Work (not merely because I have white hair) I am often away from home, sometimes abroad for long periods and it becomes impossible to keep things up-to-date. So over a year ago the Committee (including our late brother Mr. J. Hogg) decided to ask Mr. Brian Currie to become assistant editor. He has now agreed to take up this work and I welcome him heartily. I shall continue to be responsible for doctrinal content of the magazine, but I shall value the help of our brother in editorial work, proof reading, etc.

We shall value the continued prayers of the saints that the "Assembly Testimony" may continue to edify the saints and we wish all our readers the Lord's richest blessing throughout the year.



## “PHINEHAS — THE WARRING PRIEST”

by E. R. BOWER

The last psalm in the ‘Numbers’ book of the psalms is Ps. 106, and it records of Phinehas, “and it was counted unto him for righteousness, unto all generations for evermore.” Abraham it will be remembered had a similar testimony. Cf. Rom. 4.22; Gal. 3.6.

“The Lord was with him.” Ben Sirach places Phinehas as “third in renown to Moses and Aaron. (Ecclesiasticus 45. 23-26).

Following the “Wars of the Lord,” the tribes of Reuben and Gad, with the half-tribe of Manasseh took possession of their inheritance as given to them by Moses, and built an altar near the Jordan. The tribes west of Jordan heard of this altar and — perhaps in the fervour of a new found zeal—assumed that the two and a half tribes were rebelling against the Lord and setting up a new centre of worship. War was in the air, but Phinehas was sent as an arbitrator and he recites to them the lesson of Baal-Peor, “What trespass is this ye have committed against the God of Israel to turn away this day from following the Lord . . . ?” (Josh. 22. 16-17).

Although commentators are not very happy at the result of the ‘discussions’ Phinehas himself was satisfied that this altar was an altar of witness and not of worship—a witness to the unity of the nation—and who are we to cross swords with the warring priest?

Twenty years passed and Israel, because they were again in subjection to the king of Mesopotamia—having forgotten their God, and given themselves again to idolatry and the doctrine of Balaam, were in a sorry state. Mesopotamia was one of the nations not driven out by God, but left to prove them. Then God Himself raised up a Saviour—Othniel, Lion of God, and the first of the judges, whom the rabbis place as highest among the judges for he was the only judge represented as irreproachable. Upon him came the Spirit of the Lord and he gave the land rest for forty years. (Jud. 3.10), but if the Land had rest, Israel’s spiritual life continued its decline. During Othniel’s rule there were two men in spiritual opposition—Phinehas grandson of Aaron,

and Jonathan, grandson of Moses; Phinehas the High Priest of Israel; Jonathan the false priest of the breakaway tribe of Dan.

Not now Midian to be judged, but the sin of Israel with Midian. In Jud. 20 we see judgment about to fall upon Benjamin, and for the first time in the history of the judges there is mention of the High Priest—Phinehas—and we hear him asking the Lord, “Shall I yet again go out to battle against the children of Benjamin **MY BROTHER**, or shall I cease?” A warring priest no doubt, but what love there is in his heart for his brother! Benjamin was to be judged for their sin, but at what a cost for the other tribes—65,000 slain! The putting down of sin in the life; in the congregation; is a costly business.

The story of Phinehas begins and ends with a weeping people.

It is about this time that the priesthood disappears from the scene until the days of Eli (1 Sam. 1) who was not of the line of Aaron but of Aaron’s fourth son, Ithamar. The true priesthood was not restored until the time of Solomon.

We might compare the zeal of Phinehas with that of a later name-sake, a son of Eli.

There is a Jewish tradition that not only was Phinehas a priest, but also a prophet, (vide, Josephus) and at a time when Israel was again a victim of Midianite aggression (Jud. 6) we read that “the Lord sent a prophet” with a brief but pointed message, “Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, ‘I brought you up out of Egypt, and brought you forth out of the house of bondage; and I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hands of **ALL THAT OPPRESSED YOU**, and drave them out before you, and gave you their land, and I said unto you, ‘I am the Lord your God; fear not the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell:’ but ye have not obeyed My voice.’ ”

It is extremely doubtful whether Phinehas was in fact this prophet, but if he was, how appropriate the words are, for was he not the sworn enemy of Midian and of Balaam?

Is it mere coincidence that we read in the letter of our Lord to Pergamos (Rev. 2. 12-17) that the One who wrote introduces Himself as “He which hath the sharp sword with two edges” and commands, “Repent, or else I will come to

thee quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.”?

Of our Lord it is recorded “This Man, because He continueth ever hath an unchangeable priesthood . . .” (Heb. 7. 25), and today we have “such an High Priest” (Heb. 7.26).

Hebrews 3 and 4 speak of the wilderness journey of Israel, and the entry into the Land; it also tells of the failure of Joshua to enter into rest, ends, “Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin, let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

## Notes on Revelation

by



**JIM FLANIGAN**  
**NORTHERN IRELAND**

### “FINAL JUDGMENTS”

In Chapter 20 we are largely concerned with judgment. Although there are no less than six allusions to the thousand years which we call the Millennium, these are indeed but allusions, and not an exposition of the glories of that Age. Such exposition has already been given to us by the Prophets and Psalmists, and is not the subject of the Revelation.

There are three scenes of judgment; (perhaps four). Firstly, there is a preliminary, interim, judgment of the Devil. Secondly, there is a judging by fire of the final revolt against the King, at the end of the thousand years. Thirdly, we have the eternal judgment and doom of Satan. Fourthly, the judgment of the wicked Dead, at the Great White Throne.

We have seen that the Beast and the False Prophet have already been cast into the Lake of Fire, but not for another

thousand years will the Devil join them there. God has yet purposes to be fulfilled. Satan will be bound with a chain, and consigned to the bottomless pit, the Abyss. Here we see the futility and fallacy of a literal interpretation of this Book of Symbolism. A Spirit-Being bound with a literal chain? It cannot be. How foolish too, to search for the geographical location of the bottomless pit! There can surely be no doubt that the symbolism simply teaches that the Devil will be confined in a state of utter helplessness, until the purposes of God require his release.

Likewise is seen here too, the absurdity of an A-millennialism which teaches that Satan is bound in this present age of grace. This binding of the Devil takes place when the King comes. Until then this arch-deceiver continues to delude and devour, and we are reminded of his power in the four designations which are here given to him. These are repeated in exactly the same order as we had them in Ch. 12, as if to suggest that the judgment here meted out to him is consequent upon the victory over him in that earlier chapter. There is an undoubted link.

He is the Dragon, cruel and monstrous. He is the Ancient Serpent, ever cunning and subtle, as in Eden. He is Diabolus, the Devil, slanderer and accuser of God and His people. He is Satan, the avowed and inveterate enemy and Adversary. How sad to remember that he was once the anointed Cherub, full of wisdom and beauty, but lifted up in pride and now destined for destruction (Ezekiel 28.12-19). Lucifer, the "Brilliant Star," is to be brought down to Sheol (Isaiah 14.12-16). But meantime, he will be held in the Abyss, and the world of which He has been the Prince for so long, will pass under the rule and reign of Messiah.

Verse 4 is not consecutive with verse 3. John is now given a vision of three classes of saints who will live and reign with Christ. There are those whom he sees already enthroned. To this we look forward, who share His rejection now. Next, John sees the souls of those who have been beheaded for faithfulness to Christ during the terrible events of the preceding chapters. He sees them raised to reign. Thirdly, he sees those who had defied the Beast, who lived true to the Word of God, and had refused the Beast's mark and image. These all live and reign, and thus concludes the

several stages of the first resurrection. Of this resurrection Christ has been the Firstfruits. Then follows the resurrection of those believers who form the Church, His Body. Then the Old Testament saints who are raised at the coming of the King. Finally, the saints and martyrs of the seventieth week and the days of the Great Tribulation. The unbelieving dead will not be raised until after the thousand years. This waits until verse 12.

It is hardly honest or consistent, to introduce here, two kinds of "life," or two kinds of resurrection, one spiritual and one physical. This A-millennialists do, to support the idea of a general resurrection of all the dead at one time. How clearly is it stated that there are two resurrections, of the just, and of the unjust, with a thousand years between. The first is a resurrection "out from among" the dead. The other is a resurrection of the unbelieving dead, to stand in judgment. It is a blessed thing to have a part in the first, for them the second death has no terrors. But for those who miss the first resurrection there is indeed a second death, the Lake of Fire.

Our thoughts are now projected to the end of the thousand years of Messianic rule. Satan will be loosed. (An A-millennial problem! If Satan is bound *now*, as they teach, what is his loosing? Many A-millennialists confess to an embarrassment here). But why should Satan be loosed at this stage? One reason must be to demonstrate the unalterable corruption of the human heart, apart from grace. We have seen that the unprecedented judgments of earlier chapters did not change human nature or produce repentance. Neither will the bliss and glory and prosperity of the reign of Messiah. When the Devil is loosed, there are immediately found multitudes who will rally to his call from the four corners of the earth. These are the posterity of the righteous who initially entered the Kingdom (Matthew 25.34). Experience of glory has not changed them. Only a work of grace can help us.

They will gather to the call of Satan in hosts, numberless as the sand of the sea. It is a final insurrection against the Lord and His Anointed. God and Magog of an earlier tribulation day (Ezekiel Chapters 38 and 39) were but the prototype of this last revolt. They surround the beloved City, the Capital. But in a moment of time it is all over.

Fire from heaven devours them. The Devil is taken, and cast into the Lake of Fire, joining the Beast and the False Prophet, in torment that knows no abatement. "Unto the Ages of the Ages" the judgment continues. It is the strongest way in Greek to express Eternity. Ages of Ages, ever advancing, never ending; as eternal as the God whom they have opposed.

Now is the final assize; the Judgment of the Wicked Dead. The Throne is "Great," and for how many reasons! The Greatness of the Judge; the vastness of the assembled multitude; the enormity of the issues to be assessed. It is a "White" Throne. All is righteousness and purity and holiness. The Dead are assembled impartially, small and great. There is no respect of persons. The judgment is inescapable too. Earth and Sea and Hades give up their imprisoned dead. All must appear to have their judgment reckoned. The Books are opened. All is accurate, and infallible, and beyond dispute. The records are divine. Another Book is opened. It is the Book of Life. It is undoubtedly the Lamb's Book of Life, though not explicitly here so called. Only those who live by the death of the Lamb can escape sentence at this Judgment. The Book of Life is opened here, not that it might be searched for names, but as a demonstration that the reason for a man's appearance here is, that there has been no saving link with the slain Lamb, the Man of Calvary. It is the register of those who rest for salvation on the value of His Blood alone.

The varying degrees of judgment having been divinely assessed (Matthew 11.22 and 24) with heavenly accuracy, and according to what a man has been and done, all are cast into the Lake of Fire. There is no escape. There is no outlet. There is no end. No alleviation. No second chance. No hope. How eternally grateful should we be for the substitute Lamb Who bore the judgment for us. How thankful for that sovereign grace that drew us to Him for refuge. How reverently and sincerely we sing—

"Oh awful day, who would not be,  
Sheltered O Lamb of God in Thee;  
Safe at Thy side when wild and loud,  
The shrieks of that unnumbered crowd  
Shall rend the heavens and fill the skies,  
Till judgment's doom shall close their cries."

## ADDRESSING GOD IN PRAYER AND WORSHIP

by T. ERNEST WILSON

One of the features of our modern permissive society, is the tendency to familiarity in addressing the aged or those in positions of authority. It is becoming quite common for children and young people to call old people by their first name. It is one of the results of modern revolt and the breakdown of law and order and authority, to drop the old terms of honour and respect in addressing their elders.

Conditions in the world usually have a way of manifesting themselves in the church. It is becoming increasingly common to hear God addressed with the familiar "yu" instead of the reverential "thu." The argument is that the reverential form is archaic, it was used in Shakespeare's day, and was the common form of speech when the King James version of the Bible was translated in 1611. We no longer use it today in addressing each other, therefore let us drop it in addressing God! It is regarded as a mark of superior education and sophistication to avoid the old forms and use modern language in praying to the Deity. Those who do it, insist that it is not a lack of reverence, but using language that everyone understands. This is very plausible, but is it true?

### THE QUESTION OF ENGLISH GRAMMAR

We are told that the old form of the second person "thu," and its use in everyday speech has been dropped. Admittedly, when the King James Version was translated, "thu, thee" etc. were simply singular forms of the pronouns, while "you" was the plural form. The translators followed this rule whether God or man was being addressed. But today the plural form "you" is commonly used as a singular. While this is true, yet the old form of the second person and its reverential use, is a part of our language. We learn it in school in our verb conjugations: I am, thu art, he is, etc. In most languages, reverential forms of speech are used in addressing the Deity. For example, in the Latin languages, such as Spanish and Portuguese, the second person "tu" (thu) is used in a three-fold way:

- (1) Endearment and intimacy, between husband and wife, to a child or intimate friend.
- (2) It is used in disparagement to one regarded as an inferior.
- (3) Always in a reverential way in addressing the Deity.

In Bantu languages used in Africa, and among so-called primitive people generally, God is addressed in majestic terms and titles. No African child would think of addressing his parent or an elder by the familiar form, and to speak to Almighty God in this way would be unthinkable!

### THE NEED FOR REVERENCE

In addressing a king or the president, or a cabinet minister or a judge on the bench when a law court is in session, it is customary to use respectful terms which we do not ordinarily use; your majesty, your honour, etc. The New Testament sanctions and gives examples of such usages. We read there of an honourable counsellor and of honourable women. Luke addresses his Gospel to the "Most Excellent Theophilus," and Paul, addressing Festus the Governor, uses the term "Most Noble." It is a part of the present day decline in respect, to despise dignities and authority. But if one were to use the language of the street or the market place in addressing a judge while he is presiding in a law court, he would be held in contempt of court, how much more the need for reverence and respect in addressing the Creator and Redeemer of the universe!

Another important point is consideration for the feelings of others. From time immemorial it has been the custom to follow the examples in Scripture in addressing Almighty God. But this is not just mere custom or tradition. God said to the wicked in Ps. 50:21, "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself." It is both the direct teaching and example of Holy Scripture. To hear anyone publicly address God in familiar language, calling Him "you," shocks the feelings of older and sensitive, spiritual people, who are characterized by the fear of God in their lives and speech. It is altogether wrong to hurt and shock the feelings of the saints in this way.

One would make a distinction between a young person recently saved, who is not familiar with the teaching and language of Holy Scripture, and the mature person who uses this kind of language deliberately. There is a difference



between ignorance and arrogance. The first needs teaching, the second, rebuke. A much used and abused word today is "communication." Some have the idea that in speaking to the young and immature, we have to use the language and vocabulary of the street corner or the high school. The only way to raise the level of respect and the dignity of personality, is to use simple but dignified language in speaking to them.

### MODERN BIBLE TRANSLATIONS

One very serious contributing factor, that has helped along this tendency of disrespect in addressing God, has been some of the modern revisions and paraphrases of Scripture. Two of the chief offenders in this respect are the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, authorized in 1951 by the National Council of Churches and the New English Bible, the New Testament of which was published in 1961. Some of the men on the committees for translation of both of these versions are notorious liberals who do not believe in the deity of Christ, His virgin birth and other fundamentals of the faith. This decided bias comes out in their translation of vital passages. Sometimes in the RSV, the formal address of "thee," "thou" and "thine" is used, while at other times the familiar "you" and "yours" is used. Dean Weigle, the chairman of the revision committee, on page 56 of "An Introduction to the RSV" explains their use in this way: "After two years of debate and experiment, it was decided to abandon these forms, and to follow the modern usage, except in language addressed to God." Note carefully the distinction; the formal address is used in addressing God, and the informal is used in speaking to man. Let us look at one or two examples which illustrate this rule of translation:

The AV of Matt. 16.16 reads: Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God.

The RSV reads: "You are the Christ, the son of the living God.

Does this mean that Christ is only a man and not God? According to Dean Weigle's explanation, this is the only conclusion we can reach.

The AV of Acts 9.5 reads: Who art thou, Lord?

The RSV reads: Who are you, Lord?

Did Saul of Tarsus believe that the One who spoke to him from heaven was only a man?

The New English translation follows the same rule. In this version the reverential "thee" or "thou" is never used in the Gospels in addressing our Lord Jesus Christ. This distinction of pronouns has a subtle doctrinal implication, and gives the impression that the translators are trying to separate our Lord and Saviour from God and so undermine the doctrine of His deity.

### THE INFLUENCE OF THEOLOGICAL COLLEGES

Unfortunately many of the teachers in academic theological circles have adopted the use of the familiar "you" in addressing both God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. This has helped to popularize the trend. Young people take their cue from their teachers. They can do no wrong and it sounds educated to imitate them. Leaders and teachers today have a tremendous responsibility to show an example of reverence and becoming humility in speaking to a Holy God.

We would lovingly appeal to all who know and love, worship and serve our Lord Jesus Christ, and who confess Him, not only as the unique Son of God, but as God the Son manifest in flesh, to avoid any semblance of disrespectful or slang language, either in speaking to Him in prayer and praise, or speaking about Him in the preaching of the Gospel, or in the ministry of the Word.

"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." Amen. Rev. 5.12.

In the Psalms "you" and "your" occur 30 times, and never in addressing God; but "Thy" and "Thou" occur 2860 times. Solomon's great prayer, recorded in Second Chronicles, uses "Thy" 61 times, but "you" is not to be found.

The prayer of our Lord Jesus in John 17 lacks a single "You," but contains "Thou" and "Thine" 41 times.

*Series of articles returning next issue (D.V.)*

**FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTALS** by J. B. Hewitt

**MARK'S GOSPEL** — by the late James Pender

---

**LOOK FOR ARTICLES** by New Contributors for 1984

# THE OFFERING OF ISAAC

by WILLIAM MULLAN (Dublin)

## GENESIS 22

I have read with interest the article in your issue of Sept./Oct. '83 in which the offering of Isaac is made dependent on the ram as a "combined" or "second" offering, and even made to be a substitute "instead of" Isaac. If however, we are not prepared to believe that the absolute surrender of Abraham and Isaac to the command of God was accepted by Him to the same extent as if Isaac had been slain, his blood shed, his body offered as a burnt offering, and received back in typical resurrection with the full approval of God with no substitute or combined offering needed, then the expression "not withheld" from Him, twice stated in Genesis 22 and the expression "offered up" twice stated in Hebrews 11, do not mean what they say. (See also my previous comments, A.T. Jan./Feb. '83).

Your correspondents' article views Isaac as a sinner needing a substitute, but the Divine record shows him as an offering, a burnt offering fully offered before the ram was even seen, and the idea of a second burnt offering to complete what allegedly the first was not able to do, must be rejected, as it would "take away" from the meaning of the whole event.

The whole event was a test of faith and obedience resulting in the renewal of the covenant with Abraham:—"because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: that in blessing I will bless thee . . . and in thy seed (Christ) shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice" (verses 16-18). The importance of the blood is not overlooked. If Isaac had been actually slain it is obvious his blood would have been shed, and the fire would have consumed the body which God would have restored in resurrection, but so great was the faith of Abraham that the intention was taken for the deed, hence the call "Lay not thine hand upon the lad, for NOW I know" etc. (verse 12). As the burnt offering type of Christ, *at the moment* of the raised knife all that God required from the typical death to the typical resurrection was fully met.

The article states "Isaac could not be offered because he was not without blemish and without spot" and that is just the point if he is to be viewed as a sinner needing a substitute, but God did not command him to be offered as a sinner. The key to the whole event is the burnt offering which could only be used as pertaining to what *God Himself* required, and that is what the story is all about, the burnt offering that God required in Isaac as a type of Christ. Why would God require something "in the stead of" what He had already accepted? Seeing that we must never "combine," "add" or "substitute" anything to spoil the accepted offering of Christ the Antitype, why spoil the accepted offering of the type by doing so?

The reference to the "horns of the altar" is interesting, but I suggest, not relevant. The altar at that time and up to Exodus 20 could be of earth or stone (Exodus 20.24,25). Later it was defined, measured and with horns.

The Name Jehovah-Jireh was prophetic of Christ and Calvary, although Abraham associated it with the ram, of which it is recorded that he offered it up "in the stead of" his son, but his son was already offered and accepted as above shown. Abraham's faith was related to the offering of his son, not the offering of the ram.

Among the Lord's people was there ever faith like it? "Take now *thy son* and offer him for a burnt offering." Isaac to be slain in whom were all the promises? How could it ever be? The promise of the land of Palestine; the one seed (line of descent to Christ) (Galatians 3) and the blessing of nations which were yet to be! Could faith have gone further? Yes, the knife was already raised, but at that terrible moment Isaac was *already offered* both in the heart of Abraham and in the mind of God, and God stayed His hand—no more was needed—"NOW I know, seeing that thou hast *not withheld* thy son, thine only son from Me."

But let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter from the Divine record of nearly 1800 years later, causing the faith of Abraham to be eternally honoured as part of the Word of God:—"BY FAITH Abraham when he was tried (or tested) offered up—a ram? Surely not. How could faith be tested by offering a ram? Let us read it again, "BY FAITH Abraham, when he was tested, *offered up Isaac*: and he that had received the promises *offered up* his only

begotten son of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead: *from which also* he received him in a figure; (Hebrews 11:17-19).

With appreciation for the space kindly given for different views.

## A MEDITATION ON PSALM 1

by CLIFF JONES (Cardiff)

### THE WAY OF BLESSING

Psalm 1 can be regarded as a preface or introduction to the entire Psalter. It is closely connected with Psalm 2. In Psalm 1 we read of the blessing of a godly man. The word translated "Blessed" in verse 1 is, in fact, plural and here the Holy Spirit is telling us of the "blessednesses" or "happinesses" of the man who does God's will. There was, of course, only one man, the Lord Jesus Christ, who was perfect in all His ways, sinless, spotless, undefiled and perfectly obedient to His Father's will. Only He could fulfil the descriptions given in the Psalms of the righteous man and only He could fulfil the descriptions given to us in Psalm 2 of God's anointed, the righteous Son of God.

In verse 1 we read of what the blessed man does *not* do. He does *not walk in the counsel of the ungodly*. Let us remember that, no matter what outward appearances may be, the ungodly ultimately ". . . take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed," (Ps. 2.2). The blessed man obtains his counsel from a prayerful study of the Word of God.

The blessed man does *not stand in the way of sinners*. He leads a separated life (2 Cor. 6.17). The separated life is a life which pleases God. It is the separated believer who is enabled of the Holy Spirit to love God with all his heart, soul, mind and strength, and to love his neighbour as himself. (Matt. 22. 37,39; Mark 12. 30,31). The Lord Jesus Christ is truly Lord of every aspect of such a life (2 Cor. 10.5). The separated believer experiences true blessing and is full of grace, love, power and peace. He has a spiritual discernment which comes from waiting on God, and being led of the Holy Spirit, in prayer and meditation on His Holy Word. Separated believers enjoy true fellowship with

separated fellow believers and with God, for it is to such that He has said “. . . I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters . . .” (2 Cor. 6. 17,18). True blessing comes only if we separate ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit that hinders the work of the Holy Spirit. (2 Cor. 7.1).

The blessed man does *not sit in the seat of the scornful*. He does not mock the things of God nor make a joke of sin, of righteousness or of the judgement to come. He does not speak lightly of heaven and hell.

In verse 1 we see the downward progression of the sinner as he sinks deeper and deeper into sin—walking, standing and then sitting.

Verse 2 brings before us the positive side of things. The blessed man delights in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. The blessed man delights to prayerfully read the Word of God, guided by the Holy Spirit. The Word of God gives him guidance, warning and encouragement, and its promises give him a peace that passes all understanding. The Word of God “. . . is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword . . . and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart,” (Heb. 4.12): it is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path (Ps. 119.105).

In verse 3 we read that “. . . he shall be like a tree planted . . .” There is nothing haphazard here. He is a transplanted tree, cultivated and cared for by God. He is as a tree “. . . planted by the rivers of water . . .” God supplies him continually with all his needs. The blessed man shall *bring forth seasonable fruit, his leaf shall not wither and whatsoever he does shall prosper*. He has put his trust in God and in no one and nothing else. He grows spiritually as he feeds on the Word of God and he brings forth fruit in daily living as he serves, empowered and enabled by the indwelling Holy Spirit.

## THE WAY OF THE UNGODLY

Our attention is now directed to the ungodly. “The ungodly are not so . . .” — striking words which indicate to us the strong contrast with the state of the blessed man. The ungodly are “like the chaff.” They are not like a planted tree, but are worthless, swept away to a lost eternity in hell.

Verse 5. "Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgement, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous." The ungodly will be found guilty. They will not be found among those who are clothed in the righteousness of God.

The Lord knows the way of the righteous (verse 6). He is concerned with their way and with all that happens to them. "But the way of the ungodly shall perish." The ungodly shall perish and their way shall perish.

Psalm 1 brings before us the way of blessing and the decline and fall of the ungodly. Those of us who have been saved by grace, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ know the way of blessing. God's power is infinite and with Him all things are possible. (Luke 1.37; Rev. 19.6; Matt. 19.26; Job 42.2). His love and mercy are infinite and everlasting (1 John 4.8; Jer. 31.3), and He wants to shower blessings upon us (Ps. 81.10). He is "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think," (Eph. 3.20). It behoves us, therefore, to be alive to our privileges and responsibilities, and to wait upon God, meditating in His Word, day and night, that our spirits may prosper, and we may bring forth fruit to the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Many spiritual benefits can result from committing to memory portions of the Word of God. Portions memorized by children often stay in their minds throughout their entire life times. Psalm 1 was one of the first portions of the Word of God committed to memory, as a young boy, by the present writer. The Psalm contains truth, elements of which can be appreciated by the very young. Its promises and warnings are clear and unequivocal. The Psalm contains truth which it will take eternity to appreciate but, by the grace of God, we can understand something of what it teaches here and now.

The believer who is living in the constant anticipation of the return of the Lord Jesus Christ will study the Word of God at every opportunity. Such a believer's thoughts will be occupied with the Person, Work, Beauties and Perfections of the Lord Jesus Christ. He will be blessed, and by the enabling power of the Holy Spirit his life will exalt the Lord Jesus Christ to the glory of God the Father.

May God help us to know the "blessednesses" and "happinesses" of the man whose "delight is in the law of the Lord," in which he meditates day and night.

# THE INDUSTRIOUS SERVANT OF JEHOVAH

by J. B. HEWITT

*Portrayed by Mark*

Key words : Ch. 10.45; 12.6.

INTRODUCTION 1.1-13 HIS COMING

Personality v. 1; Promised v. 2,3; Prepared for v. 4,5.  
Accepted v. 9; Approved v. 10,11; Attacked v. 12,13.

1. HIS GLAD SERVICE. 1.14—6.6. THE CHARACTER  
OF HIS WORK.

(a) *The Expression of His Interest.* 1.14—3.12.

(1) *Seen in His Activity* 1.14-35 *His Credentials*  
Coming into Galilee 14,15; Calling His disciples  
16-20; Curing Demoniac 21-28; Caring for the  
diseased 29-32; Communion with God 35.

(2) *Seen in His Attraction* 1.36-2.12 *His Character*  
Popularity 36-39; Pity and Power 41,42;  
Preaching 2.1,2; Perception 3-11.

(3) *Seen in His Authority* 2.13-3.12 *His Claims*  
Calling 13-15; Condemning 16-25; Curing 3.1-12.

(b) *The Evidence of His Intelligence* 3.13-6.6

The Choice of the Twelve 3.13-15; The Communica-  
tion of Truth 4.1-34.

(1) *By Messages*

Its Declaration 1-9; Explanation 10-25; Applica-  
tion 26-34.

(2) *By Miracles* 4.35-5.43 *Demonstration by Power*  
Stilling the storm 35-41; Subduing demons 5.1-20;  
Saving the dying 25-34; Raising the dead 35-43;  
Rejected 6.1-6.

2. HIS GRACIOUS SYMPATHY 6; 7; 8; 9.26

THE CONSISTENCY OF HIS WORK

(a) *The Extension of His Influence* 6.7-7.37

The Mission of the Apostles 6.7-13; The Murder of  
the Baptist 14-29; By Miracles 30-44; By Ministry  
45-56; Meeting Opposition 7.1-23; By Manifestation  
of Power 24-37.



- (b) *His Enriching Ministry* 8. 1-26  
Exhaustless Resources 1-10; Exposure of Pharisees 11,12; Explanatory Precepts 13-21; Exhibition of Power 22-26.

**3. HIS GREAT SACRIFICE 8.27-15.47  
THE COMPLETION OF HIS WORK.**

- (a) *The Revelation of the Cross* 8.27 - 9.50.  
Communication of Truth 8.27-33; Challenging Claims 34-38; The Coming Glory 9.1-13; Conquering the Demon 14-29; Commending Humility 30-39.
- (b) *Regulations for Conduct* 10.  
Facing the Moral, Social, Personal, Spiritual and Physical Problems of Life.
- (c) *Reaching the City* 11.  
Preparation 1-6; Procession 7-10; Prohibition 15-18; Power 19-33.
- (d) *Rebuking the Critics* 12.  
The Relationship of the Heir 1-6; The Rejection of the Husbandmen 7-12; Rebuking the Scribes and Pharisees 13-40; Remarks on Giving 41-44.
- (e) *Revealing the Future* 13.  
Prediction 1-4; Tribulation 5-23; Explanation 24-32; Exhortation 33-37.
- (f) *Road to Death* 14.1 - 15.15.  
The Plotting of the Priests 1,2; The Pouring forth of the Ointment 3-9; The Plan to Betray 10,11; The Passover and the Supper 12-25; The Predicted Denial 26-31; The Pain of Gethsemane 32-42; In the Priests Judgment Hall 33-72; Before Pilate 15.1-15.
- (g) *Redeeming the World* 15.16-47.  
His Suffering 16-25; His Sacrifice 26-38;  
His Sympathisers 39-41; His Saints 40-47.

**4. HIS GLORIOUS SURVIVAL. 16.  
THE CONFIRMATION OF HIS WORK.**

The Resurrection Morn 1-4; The Refreshing Message 5-8; Revealed to Mary 9-11; Recognised by Two Disciples 12,13; Renewing the Commission 14-18; Received up into Heaven 19,20.

# SOME THOUGHTS ON THE BOOK OF RUTH

by E. R. BOWER

*Chapter 3.18. "Then said she, 'Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall; for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day.'"* ...

The chapter begins with the question, "My daughter, shall I not seek rest for thee . . . ?" and it ends with the statement in v. 18.

Another beautiful picture of the restless kinsman redeemer, seeking rest for a Gentile—not yet his bride, for this would depend upon a 'nearer kinsman.'

Amid the lawlessness of the age, as we have said before, there shines out this picture of a righteous man, restless in his endeavours to find rest for a kinswoman who was yet a stranger.

We turn again to the N.T. picture painted for us by the Apostle Paul when he wrote, "Wherefore remember, that ye being in the time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world; but now in Christ Jesus ye who sometime were afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace, Who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition . . . and came and preached peace to you which were afar off . . . now therefore ye are no more strangers . . . but fellow-citizens with the saints, . . ." (Ephes. 2.11-22).

Said our Lord, when as a lad He was sought by His parents, (Luke 2.40), ". . . wist ye not I must be about My Father's business?" and before the witness of His mother and the world He cried from the Cross, "It is finished" (John 19.30). How He was straitened until the work was complete! "Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him . ." (Ps. 37.7).

Ruth had asked (2.10). "Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?" So we ask, "Why was I made to hear His voice and enter while there's room?"

The Apostle answers, “. . . in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. By grace are ye saved through faith . . .” (Ephes. 2.)

Amazing grace, indeed. And we head the chapter, **REST THROUGH GRACE.**

*Chapter 4.14. “And the women said unto Naomi, ‘Blessed be the Lord, which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman (Redeemer), that his name may be famous in Israel.’”*

The book of Ruth is a book of the women; but not a ‘woman’s book’; a book which has regard to the rightful place of women.

Rachel, Leah, Tamar, Rahab (by implication), Naomi and Ruth—all have a place of honour within the Scripture, and the gospel message itself opens with a genealogy which emphasizes the names of Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Bath-sheba (by implication) and Mary.

The Jewish Targums on Ruth 3.15 speak of Ruth as having a prophetic knowledge that through her would be perpetuated the line of the coming Messiah.

There is little doubt that it was the women of Israel who kept alive the Messianic hope through all the generations, and particularly in the days of darkest gloom and darkness through which Israel, from time to time, passed.

It was Eve, it will be remembered who first anticipated the fulfilment of the promise of God (Gen. 3.15) in those days when man had forfeited his place in Eden’s garden, when she exclaimed (Gen. 4.1), “I have gotten a man, even Jehovah,” and it was an ever present hope of the women of Israel that through one of them would come the promised Seed And this hope apart, how often did (and do) the weaker vessels put to shame their ‘lords and masters’? Ah yes, the coming of THE Lord is a very blessed hope.

It is fitting and not mere coincidence that the faithlessness of the times should be tempered by the faith of the women, and that Ruth the Moabitess is followed by Hannah (1 Sam. 1 and 2). Says Hannah, ‘I rejoice in Thy salvation.’ True the words of the women of Bethlehem, “Blessed be the Lord, which hath not left thee . . . without a redeemer . . .”

And so down the years to Elizabeth, Mary and Anna

(Luke 1 and 2). Elizabeth witnesses, "Whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? Mary witnesses, "My Spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour" and Anna, she spoke of Him to all them that looked FOR REDEMPTION IN JERUSALEM.

Blessed hope indeed—then and now.

We label this chapter, simply, THE WOMEN.

## **JAMES KERR DUFF, 1899—1983**

**A TRIBUTE BY JAMES G. HUTCHINSON**

Our brother passed away very suddenly on 11th December from his home while he was preparing to go to Monaghan for the Lord's day meetings.

He was saved in Portadown at the age of 11 years and when he was 16 years was baptised and received into the assembly in Apsley Hall, Belfast. He was commended to the work of the Lord from Apsley and continued to serve the Lord with diligence and dignity.

He spent some time in the North of England working in association with the Cumberland tent and caravan work. God blessed that work and souls were saved.

For quite a number of years he laboured in the border areas and into the Irish Republic with Mr. E. Allen and later with Mr. John Finegan and Mr. W. Johnston, as well as many other efforts with esteemed servants of Christ. In more recent years he paid visits to Africa and the West Indies where his ministry was a blessing to the people of God.

During the years 1959—1963 he was involved with the administrative work of Assembly Testimony magazine as well as contributing articles for publication.

His writings were like his ministry, sane, balanced and uplifting. He stood foursquare on "the things most surely believed." His booklet on 'T.V. and the Christian home' is worth reading.

He was a kind, sincere, gracious man, at all times a Christian gentleman, whose presence and activities exerted a unifying and edifying influence.

He had the joy of seeing all his family saved and in assembly fellowship, as well as some of his grandchildren.

Prayer will be valued for his widow who is not too well.

The particularly large funeral was from Kingsbridge Gospel Hall, Belfast, where he was in fellowship and proved so very helpful. His requests were carried out, when J. G. Hutchinson and J. Hawthorne gave suitable messages at the hall and graveside, assisted by N. Tinsley, S. Jordan and E. Wishart.

## **HOW GOD SAVED AN IRISH BOY**

**By J. K. DUFF, Belfast**

The year 1910 will always be remembered by annalists as the year King Edward VII died, but it will ever be memorable to me because that towards its close I passed from death unto life, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. My two brothers were also awakened and saved about the same time.

I had the great privilege of a home where God was feared and the Bible revered. My parents and two oldest sisters were saved some years previously and were much concerned about the salvation of the four other members of the family. It was therefore the usual thing for me to attend Gospel meetings and go to Sunday School. Moreover, my S.S. teacher was a Mr. Silas Best, who took a great interest in his scholars and faithfully taught me my need of a Saviour, and God's way of salvation. Sometime later he emigrated to Canada, where he still resides.

Many times I had serious thoughts about my soul and its destiny for eternity. But I usually contented myself with the thought that I was young and would have plenty of time later to attend to these matters. On one occasion when thinking of John 3, 16, I asked my sister what it meant to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and she replied: "Believe that He died for you, if there was not another sinner in the world but yourself." This simple explanation helped me later to see that it was not merely believing about the Lord Jesus but trusting in Him personally that brought salvation.

In the month of November, 1910, Mr. King, an evangelist, came from Aberdeen to Portadown to hold some meetings in the Gospel Hall. Night after night he simply

and earnestly proclaimed the message of the Gospel. I attended the meetings regularly but cannot say I was much impressed until the night I was saved. It was on 14th November, when I had retired to my bedroom, that the thought struck my mind, "If I die to-night I shall go to Hell." I was immediately plunged into great distress of soul and, try as I would to lift my thoughts to some more pleasant subject, my efforts were all in vain. I felt that I was a great sinner before God, unfit for Heaven and deserving only His just wrath. Like the Psalmist, "the sorrows of death compassed me and the pains of Hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow." How long this state of anxiety lasted I cannot say, but at length feeling the urgency of salvation, I said within myself, "If I ever get saved, it must be to-night." I then cried out from the depths of my heart, "God be merciful to me a sinner," and trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ that He as my Substitute had died for me. Peace then filled my soul, I was saved for the great Eternity. His own Word declared, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3, 16).

"I take Him at His word indeed,  
Christ died for sinners, this I read,  
For in my heart I find a need  
Of Christ to be my Saviour."

Dear reader, if unsaved, remember God loves YOU, and "Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. 5, 6). You can obtain salvation NOW, for GOD'S WORD says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and THOU shalt be saved" (Acts 16, 31).

—(Reprinted from *Assembly Testimony*, May/June, 1960)

## COMMITTEE'S REPORT

I am the Lord, I change not. Mal 3.6.  
Hitherto the Lord hath helped thee,  
Forward, then in His great Name!  
Yesterday, today, forever,  
Thou shalt find thy God the same.

"Time brings changes." How often we hear these words in our day to day lives and we acknowledge them to be a true description of temporal things. In connection with the publishing

of "Assembly Testimony," 1983 brought many changes—in Committee, postage rates, mailing list, and other details, but all praise to our faithful God, we can say truly "Hitherto the Lord has helped us."

This practical experience encourages us to enter upon another year "in His great Name." We are glad we know not what changes 1984 may bring, but we do know our Lord has said "I change not." So, in complete dependance upon such an assurance, we seek to continue publication feeling very weak in ourselves, but receiving strength and guidance from our UNCHANGEABLE God.

Frequently throughout 1983 our hearts overflowed in praise to the Lord for exercising His dear people in many lands to communicate with us. We wish to thank heartily all those who took time to write words of comfort, cheer and encouragement. In seasons of grief and uncertainty our spirits were animated as we realised experimentally the value of the prayers of the saints. Please continue to pray for us. With grateful hearts we are pleased to report that we were enabled to pay all our expenses as the year progressed thanks to the generosity of our readers. Without your consistent faithful practical support the publication could not continue.

It is difficult to avoid repetition in this annual report, but once more we must emphasise the need for recipients to inform us immediately of any change of address. It is grievous to us and must grieve our Lord when postage is wasted. PLEASE HELP US TO AVOID WASTE IN ANY FORM. Addresses have been revised and computerised, and we would appreciate notification of any errors as many addresses, especially overseas, had to be abbreviated. Continuous updating of our mailing list will be much simpler, so please do not hesitate to advise us promptly of any necessary alterations.

Most readers know that gifts received are used exclusively for defraying expenses. No monetary rewards are made to any individuals who share in this service for the Best of Masters.

All help is appreciated more highly than these comments indicate—whether in distribution or introduction of the magazine to new readers or in any other way.

We are deeply indebted to our Editor who has been helped of God throughout another year to discharge his heavy responsibility in a gracious courageous manner.

Our dear brother Glenville has been enabled to continue his inestimable service and we record our warmest thanks to him.

It gives us much pleasure to express our deep appreciation of the splendid help given by our Honorary Auditor, brother Robert Martin, who audits our accounts carefully and gives us professional advice freely.

Finally thank you all for your support.

## REVIEW

“WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES” is the title of a new series of commentaries to be published by John Ritchie Limited. There is a great need for something of this character at the present time. I have a copy of the first volume lying before me. It covers Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon. I hope (D.V.) to review the work in the next issue of Assembly Testimony. However when I glance at the names of the writers I am certain that the book will prove to be of great profit to the Lord’s people. —These are valued teachers, well known amongst the Lord’s people, men who love and teach the right ways of the Lord.

**HYMNS AND THEIR WRITERS (19) by Jack Strahan, Enniskillen.**

### “THE SANDS OF TIME ARE SINKING”

**ANNE ROSS COUSIN (1824—1906)**

The writer of this lovely hymn, Mrs. Anne Ross Cousin, was the only daughter of David Ross Cundell of Leith, Scotland. Her father died when she was three years old and afterwards she with her mother moved to Edinburgh. At the age of 21, Anne married Rev. William Cousin and, thereafter, whole-heartedly identified herself with her husband in his ministry throughout southern Scotland. Mrs. Cousin lived to the ripe age of 82 years and throughout life composed many hymns and poems. A composite volume of 107 of these meditations was published in 1876 and entitled, “Immanuel’s Land and other pieces by A. R. C.” Two pieces from this collection are still in common usage as hymns today—one entitled, “The Substitute” (“Oh Christ, what burdens bowed Thy head!”) and the other entitled, “Immanuel’s Land” (“The sands of time are sinking”). The latter is the most popular of her compositions and was written about the year 1856 in Irvine when her husband was minister there. In its original, the poem consisted of 19 verses and was first published in the “Christian Treasury” in 1857. Its inspiration and writing stemmed from a long and devoted study by Mrs. Cousin of The life and letters of Samuel Rutherford, the noted Covenanter preacher of the 17th century.



This lovely hymn which we have today could be attributed to Rutherford as much as to Mrs. Cousin as the phrases and imagery used therein stem from Rutherford's writings of 200 years earlier.

Samuel Rutherford was born in the year 1600 in the Scottish border village of Nisbet and there he spent his early years. Seemingly then he paid but scant attention to the needs of his soul and not until he was 27 years of age did he turn to the Saviour. "Like a fool as I was," he said afterwards, "I suffered my sun to be high in the heaven and near afternoon." As a consequence, he ever afterward fervently entreated the young to turn to Christ and give of their best years to Him. In writing to the young man Earlston, he warned, "there is not such a glossy, icy, slippery piece of way betwixt you and heaven as youth; the devil findeth in youth dry sticks, dry coals and a hot hearth-stone; and how soon he can with his flint cast fire and with his bellows blow it up!" He never wished that any other should imitate him in "loitering on the road too long, and trifling at the gate."

The close of the year 1627 found Rutherford, though only a few months converted to God, as pastor of the rural parish of Anwoth in Galloway. There he ministered for nine years and probably never more diligently did any shepherd labour among his flock than did Samuel Rutherford in Anwoth. Rising at 3 o'clock in the morning to hold communion with God, he filled each day full for God in diligent study, writing, preaching and visitation. In the pulpit, his delivery was anything but attractive for he had, "a strange utterance, a kind of a skreigh" but, nonetheless, his messages were alive and warm with the fire of devotion to his Lord. "Many a time I thought he would have flown out of the pulpit when he came to speak of Christ," testified one of his parishioners. The years at Anwoth were full of trials and often there was little to encourage spiritually. Nonetheless, he never allowed the fire of devotion to Christ to die down in his heart and could not but speak appreciatively of Him to others. Over the unsaved, he yearned most tenderly. "I would lay my dearest joys in the gap between you and eternal destruction . . . I would be glad of one soul . . . My witness is in heaven, your heaven would be two heavens to me and your salvation two salvations . . ." Right to the close of his days, Rutherford held Anwoth fast in his heart.

"Fair Anwoth by the Solway,  
To me thou still art dear!  
E'en from the verge of heaven  
I drop for thee a tear.  
Oh! if one soul from Anwoth  
Meet me at God's right hand,  
My heaven will be two heavens,  
In Immanuel's land."

The year 1636 brought changes. Sydserrf, the new Bishop of Galloway and no lover of Samuel Rutherford, hailed him before the High Commission Court in Wigtown. Rutherford was deposed from office and banished to the distant northern town of Aberdeen. Forbidden to preach, his pen got busy and from that "sea-boat prison" where he and his Lord "held tryst," were despatched letters of the highest spiritual calibre. Some 220 of these "prison epistles" have been preserved—"The Letters of Samuel Rutherford."

Rutherford's exile in Aberdeen ended in 1638 with the signing of the Solemn league and Covenant in which the government recognised the spiritual freedom of the non-conforming church. After his liberation Rutherford continued in Scotland as a great spiritual leader and teacher. Settling in St. Andrew's as Professor of Divinity and later as Principal of the new college there, he exercised from that position great influence over students training for the ministry. McWard spoke of St. Andrew's in those days as, "a Lebanon out of which were taken cedars for building the house of the Lord through the whole land." Higher calls to Edinburgh the Scottish capital, and to Utrecht and Harderwyck in Holland were declined, for Rutherford felt convinced that God's will for him was at St. Andrew's and there he remained.

The year 1660 was marked by the death of Cromwell and the ascendancy of King Charles II. Dark storm clouds gathered. In the following year, Rutherford was deposed from all his offices at St. Andrew's and summoned by the Duke of Middleton to answer to Parliament on a charge of high treason. When the summons reached Rutherford at St. Andrew's he was on his death-bed, but to the messengers he gave a prompt and clear reply, "Tell them," he said, "that I have a summons already from a superior Judge and judicatory, and I behove to answer my first summons and, ere your day arrive, I will be where few kings and great folks come." When Rutherford's reply was received by the Council, their wrath waxed hot and with feeble malice they resolved that he must not be allowed to die within the college walls. But, nevertheless, in the Council that day one voice was heard in Rutherford's defence. Lord Burleigh stood alone and declared, "ye have voted that honest man out of his college but ye can not vote him out of heaven."

"They've summoned me before them,  
But there I may not come—  
My Lord says, "Come up hither,"  
My Lord says, "Welcome Home!"  
My kingly King, at His white throne,  
My presence doth command,  
Where glory — glory dwelleth  
In Immanuel's Land."

Within a few days Rutherford had answered his first summons into the presence of his Lord, the righteous Judge, and away from all the "wranglings and cruelty of wicked men."

Rutherford, like Paul the apostle, was a man of singular affection and purpose. His heart's contemplation was Christ. "That is Rutherford's glory, his absorption in Christ" is the testimony of Alexander Smellie, "he has but one goal and no other is worth the mentioning." Dr. Taylor Innes describes him as a man, "impatient on earth, intolerant of sin, rapt into the continual contemplation of one unseen Face." In that contemplation through the scriptures, Rutherford discovered lovely figures of Christ's person and in each one he perceived a unique glory—the fragrance of the Rose—the beauty of the King—the glory of the Lamb—the supply of the Fountain—the reliability of the Guide—the virtue of the Bridegroom and the grace of the Beloved One. Even in these, he acknowledged there were limitations for he confessed that, "no pen, no words, no image can express to you the loveliness of my only, only Lord Jesus."

Rutherford, as did John the beloved disciple, reclined upon the bosom of the Eternal. In his letters he would exhort others to do the same, "There are many heads lying in Christ's bosom, and there is room for yours among the rest." "Go where ye will, your soul shall not sleep sound but in Christ's bosom"—and from that place of sacred intimacy, he went forth to declare Him to others. A fitting testimony to the man and his message has been borne by the 17th century London merchant who, on returning home, announced that he brought great news—he had been converted. "I came," he said, "I came to Irvine and heard a well-favoured proper old man with a long beard, David Dickson by name, and that man showed me all my heart. Then I went to St. Andrew's where I heard a sweet majestic-looking man, Robert Blair by name, and he showed me the majesty of God. After him I heard a little fair man and he showed me the loveliness of Christ"—and that "little fair man" was Samuel Rutherford.

The direction of Rutherford's heart was "into the love of God and into the patient waiting for Christ" (II Thess. 3.5). He mourned his own soul's limited capacity while down here on earth. "I am only pained that He hath such beauty and fairness . . . and and I bleared eyes." Sharing the passion of Adoniram Judson who exclaimed, "Oh, the love of Christ . . . we cannot comprehend it now, but what a study in eternity!" Rutherford too longed for that moment when the last sands of time would have run through life's glass and then would dawn that day of unclouded vision and unlimited appreciation.

Mrs. Anne Ross Cousin, beautifully and skilfully, has woven many of these aspirations of Samuel Rutherford into her lovely poem,

"The sands of time are sinking,  
The dawn of heaven breaks.  
The summer morn I've sighed for,  
The fair sweet morn awakes :  
Dark, dark hath been the midnight,  
But dayspring is at hand,  
And glory—glory dwelleth  
In Immanuel's land.

Oh! Christ He is the Fountain,  
The deep sweet well of love!  
The streams on earth I've tasted,  
More deep I'll drink above :  
There to an ocean fulness,  
His mercy doth expand,  
And glory—glory dwelleth  
In Immanuel's land."

## ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY

Editor : A. M. S. Gooding.

Correspondence relative to Editorial matters should be addressed to the Editor : 7 Sparrow Gardens, off London Road, Kilmarnock, Scotland. (Telephone 24245).

Assistant Editor : B. Currie  
49 Glenburn Road, Dunmurry, BT17 9AN, N. Ireland.  
(Telephone Belfast 621343).

### Committee :

Tom Armstrong, Thomas Beggs, Ronnie Johnston,  
James McKeown, James Moore.

Secretary : William Neill.

This magazine is supported solely by the freewill offerings of the Lord's people.

Friends residing in England, Scotland and Wales may kindly forward their donations to :

John Glenville, Nestor, Hillhead, Colyton, Devon, EX13 6HH.

Friends residing elsewhere should please forward gifts to :  
William Neill, "Beth-Asher," 109 Lurgan Road, Banbridge, Northern Ireland, BT32 4NG.

Please address correspondence, including all new orders, orders for back numbers and extra copies, cancellations and changes of address to William Neill at above address.

You can HELP US by stating the NUMBER of copies required, and submitting NAME and ADDRESS, including POSTAL CODE, IN BLOCK LETTERS, please.



# **ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY**



## **CONTENTS**

### **NOTES ON REVELATION**

by J. Flanigan

### **JUSTIFICATION** by A. Leckie

#### **STRENGTH TO STAND**

by David Eccles

### **THE PROPHECY OF ZECHARIAH**

by E. R. Bower

### **HIDDEN THINGS** by Edward Robinson

#### **THE PRECIOUS BLOOD**

by John Peters

### **FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTALS**

by J. B. Hewitt

### **THE CHURCH** by J. Campbell

#### **MARK, CHAPTER TWO**

by James Pender

### **REVIEW—WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES**

by A. M. S. Gooding

### **HYMNS AND THEIR WRITERS**

by Jack Strahan

## HIS GARMENTS

### **Psalm 19:1-3, Psalm 104:1-3—**

The heavens declare Thy Glory Lord aloud,  
Creative power belongs alone to Thee,  
The wind is Thy path, Thy chariot the cloud,  
Thy garments—Honour, Light and Majesty.

### **Luke 2:12—**

Blest Emmanuel—'God with us' we see,  
Wrapped in swaddling clothes, Heaven's  
glorious One,  
The wise of earth draw near and bow the knee,  
Before the King of Kings, God's blessed Son.

### **Mark 5:25-34—**

A burdened woman comes in deep distress,  
Having looked to man and spent her all, in vain,  
With wasted form she reaches through the press,  
His hem to touch and healing virtue gain.

### **John 13:1-17—**

Observe Him take a towel, and basin fill,  
The disciples' feet to wash, in lowly grace,  
Himself subservient to His Father's will,  
He teaches them to take the lowest place.

### **John 19:5—**

See Him in purple robe, earth's scorn to bear,  
And then with thorns adorned upon the tree  
With shameless eyes they watch the Saviour  
there,  
Expiring all alone in agony.

### **John 19:40—**

Survey once more that dark and lonely scene,  
Where wrapped in fragrant linen clothes He lies,  
In a borrowed tomb, where decay had never  
been,  
He awaits the appointed hour for Him to rise.

### **Philippians 2:9—**

Behold the risen Lord with Glory crowned,  
No longer thorns shall pierce that noble brow,  
The highest place in Heaven for Him is found,  
Who waits the time when every knee shall bow.

### **Rev. 1:12-15, Isaiah 63:1—**

Now look beyond, like John of Patmos Isle,  
Gaze well upon the risen Lamb of God,  
Clothed in vesture, which, in a little while,  
Must know the crimson stain of avenging blood.

—C. F. GEDDES, Portessie.

## NOTES ON REVELATION

by JIM FLANIGAN, Northern Ireland

### “THE HOLY CITY”

It would be dishonest not to admit that there are many difficulties mingled with the beauties of the concluding chapters of the Revelation. It would be a mistake, however, to miss the beauties because of an undue occupation with the problems. We shall try to find a balance, facing the difficulties as we contemplate the glory.

That the first eight verses of Ch. 21 bring us to the eternal state, is very clear. Of that there can be no doubt. The final judgment is over. The old heavens and earth have passed away, and with them the great troubled sea of restless nations. Everything is new, and God is content to dwell with men. It is not now, a “people of God” among men, but *all* men are now His People, and God dwells with them, and is their God. The Holy City is here, forever in the freshness of Eridal beauty. There is an ever-flowing fountain of the water of life, and tears and death and grief and distress are no more. The Throne-Sitter is “Alpha and Omega.” The purposes of the beginning are now brought to fruition and fulfilment in a glory which shall never be disturbed again.

As for the cowardly unbelieving, the abominable and murdering, the impure and idolaters, the lying and the sorcerers, they have been purged forever from God’s creation to die the death that never dies, in the Lake of Fire.

In Ch. 17, an angel from the seven which had the vials of wrath, had shown John the Woman and the City which was Babylon. Now, an angel from the same seven will show him the Bride and the City, which is New Jerusalem. It is here we meet with perhaps the first problem in these lovely chapters. Is there now, in verse 9, a retrospection? a going back, in thought, to the Millenium? Or are these subsequent verses consecutive with, and continuous from, verses 1-8? Or does it really matter? Perhaps there is now, indeed, a reversion in thought, and we are to see the City in relation to the Millenium, but if the glory of the City is eternal anyway (and it is) then is interpretation much affected by the questions that are raised? Let us contemplate the glory.

Notice that the Bride is here the wife of “The Lamb.” She has been associated with Him Who suffered and was rejected. But the days of rejection are past now, and in

company with the Lamb in His glory the Bride is as radiant as a crystal-like jasper stone.

However, the question must now be asked, "Who, or what, is this City/Bride? Is this a literal city? Is it an actual place? Or is it the Church? The Church only? Or is there indeed, a measure of all these things in this magnificent closing vision? We shall take the view here that there is indeed a place where the saints dwell, and that the glory of the place and the people are so intimately associated, that to see the one is to see the other. Here is a city and a citizenship; a dwelling-place and a people; a Bride at home.

But while we see the Bride, there are other saints too, in the heavenly society. Abraham looked for such a City, and with him there were others who sojourned as pilgrims here. So many of these died, not having received the promises. Now, in Rev. 21, resurrected, and in bodies of glory, they can hardly have a dwelling place on earth. Their names are here, at the gates of the City, in close association with the Bride.

The City is foursquare. There is length, breadth, and height. Whether it is cubical or pyramidal, it is not possible to say for sure. The symmetry of a cube is perfect; it cannot be improved upon. However it is viewed it is the same. If this be a cube, the vastness is amazing. Twelve thousand furlongs are fifteen hundred miles approximately. If the length, breadth, and height, are multiplied, the capacity is about three and a half thousand million cubic miles (3,500,000,000). Well do we sing—

"Millions have reached that blissful shore,  
Their labours and their trials o'er,  
And yet there's room for millions more,  
Will you go?"

It has been estimated that apart from cubic capacity, even the flat area, i.e. fifteen hundred miles by fifteen hundred miles, is as large as Britain, France, Spain, Italy, Germany, and the half of Russia. It is "A good land and a large" (Exodus 3.8).

Notice how the Gates are impartially positioned. There are three gates on every side, East, North, South, and West. The gates are of pearl; each gate is a single pearl. This alone proves that the description of the City is symbolical or figurative. The City may be literal and actual, but the



description is symbolical. Every pearl is the product of a wounded side, born in suffering. There are gates to this glorious City only because of Calvary.

The wall of the City is of Jasper. Its foundations are "pebble-dashed" with precious stones. The general impression of the street and the City is of gold and crystal. There is beauty beyond compare, and wealth incalculable.

There is no temple. God only needs a temple where there is sin. In a sinful world God presenced Himself in a Sanctuary in the midst of His people. Here, in the City, there is no defilement, therefore there is no need for a sanctuary. God dwells with His people.

Neither is there need for Sun, or Moon, or Candle. Neither created light nor artificial light is any longer necessary. There is glory there; the glory of God and of the Lamb. These are the Light of that celestial place. In the radiance of that Light the saved of the nations shall walk, not only millennially, but eternally, and the earthly glory of kings shall pale in its brightness.

"God and the Lamb shall there  
The Light and Temple be;  
And radiant hosts forever share  
The unveiled mystery.

The twelve gates are ever open, for they are always open by day, and there is no night there. But defilement shall never enter. Abominable things, that have before disturbed God's rest are excluded here, and this has all been assured by the Cross. The Register of the City is the Lamb's Book of Life.

There is, then, no curse, no sea, no pain, no sorrow, no crying, no tears, no night, no sun, no moon, no candle, no temple. It will be glory and beauty, and light and love. It is, indeed, a *New Jerusalem*, a *Holy City*, and a *great City*, and for us, it is, Home.

"O bright and blessed scenes,  
Where sin can never come ;  
Whose sight our longing spirit weans  
From earth, where yet we roam.  
Glory supreme is there,  
Glory that shines through all ;  
More precious still that love to share  
As those that love did call." (J.N.D.)

## **“JUSTIFICATION”**

by A. LECKIE (Airdrie)

Job and Bildad ask the same question, “How then can man be justified by God?” (Job 9.2; 25.4). There appeared to be no answer to this problem since God had declared Himself to be “One that will by no means clear the guilty” (Ex. 34.7). Condemnation, too, was pronounced on anyone who might attempt to do this very thing, “He that justifieth the wicked and he that condemneth the just, even they both are an abomination to the Lord.” (Prov. 17.15).

In the Epistle to the Galatians and also the Epistle to the Romans, the apostle Paul provides the answer to this great problem.

There is, of course, an important difference in the teaching of these two Epistles on the matter of Justification. In the Epistle to the Romans it is established that there is no substitute for faith, in the Epistle to the Galatians it is equally asserted that nothing can be added to faith. In the Epistle to the Romans the apostle shows that works are opposed to faith in the matter of being Justified, whereas in the Epistle to the Galatians the apostle shows the error of works being added to faith in order to be justified.

There were certain at Galatia teaching that to be justified before God, circumcision must be added to faith; not circumcision as a mere rite but circumcision as an undertaking to keep the law. The apostle made it plain that to add anything to faith so as to be justified makes the Gospel cease to be the Gospel of the Grace of God. How beautiful is the language of Romans 3.26! “God is just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.”

Justification is an integral part of the divine and eternal plan for man; it is part of divine council in relation to God’s desire for our blessing. In Romans 8. 29,30, we read “for whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate . . . moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified.”

The God-head is involved in bringing to us the blessing of justification. God Himself is the justifier (Romans 3.26). In Galatians 2.17 and Romans 4.25, we learn that justifi-

cation is through Christ and in Christ; it was procured by Him and is secured for us in Him. In 1 Corinthians 6.11, we are told that The Holy Spirit is the Divine Agent in this matter.

Before considering further what the Bible has to say about justification, let us be clear in our minds as to the meaning of justification. How can it be defined? If, "to purify" means "to make pure," "to sanctify" means "to make holy," "to justify" simply means "to make just." Justification is a legal term and there appears to be a negative as well as a positive side to it. In its negative aspect it means to be acquitted of guilt; in its positive aspect it means to be declared right or just. Let us not lose the wonder of our justification; negatively, we have been cleared entirely and eternally of all the guilt of all our sins and from the positive standpoint we have been declared eternally just and right in the sight of God who is Himself essentially Just and Righteous.

There is a difference between forgiveness and justification. In Matthew 18: 21, when the apostle Peter asked our Lord, "How oft shall my brother sin against me and I forgive Him? till seven times?" Jesus replied, "I say not unto thee, until seven times, but, until seventy times seven." There must therefore be no end to our preparedness to forgive our brethren. Neither the Apostle Peter nor ourselves could do more than this; we may forgive but none of us can justify. **JUSTIFICATION IS DIVINE PREROGATIVE.** It may be illustrated as follows: Here is a man who is brought before a Court of Law and is found guilty of a certain offence and is sent to prison. Ten years afterwards he appears "in Court" again and is found guilty of another offence. Before sentence is passed on this occasion, he is reminded of his former conviction, and dismayed he asks the question, "My Lord, I served my term of imprisonment for that particular offence; is that still held against me?" To this the Judge replies, "I'm afraid your name remains in the book." No matter what authority might be invested in any man he could not remove "the name from the book," nor the blot from the man's character. What no man can do, God has done for us. God has not only forgiven us our sins, He has cleared our character of all stain, removed our "name from the book," and declared us just in His sight eternally.

Justification is dealt with extensively in the New Testament. It is instructive to notice we are :

Justified by *God*  
Justified by *Christ*  
Justified by *His blood*  
Justified by *Grace*  
Justified by *Faith*

We shall now look at the significance of these matters :—

First of all we are *justified by God*; God is the Justifier. In the Epistle to the Romans (chapter 3.30) we read “seeing it is one God which shall justify the circumcision by faith and uncircumcision through faith” and again in the same chapter verses 25, 26, “whom God hath set forth a propitiation through faith, in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time His righteousness, that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” These are tremendously important verses. In his use of the word “now” in verse 21, and the expression “at this time” in verse 26, the apostle is giving instructions as to the unique character of this day of Grace as compared with God’s dealings with man prior to Calvary. When the apostle mentions “sins that are past,” he is not referring to the past sins of a believer’s life, but to sins committed in a past day, a past economy; sins committed prior to Calvary. When men in Old Testament times brought their offering and exercised faith in God, God in forbearance remitted their sins. It must however be observed that this word “remission” in Romans 3.25 is unique to this verse, it is quite different to that found in Matthew 26.28 and Hebrews 9.22, where the word means “putting away.” In Romans 3.20, the word means “passing over.” Two things characterised God’s dealings with sins committed anterior to Calvary; in response to faith He moved in “forbearance” and passed them over. Christ Jesus having been set forth as a propitiation has declared God righteous in thus acting. Now that Calvary is an accomplished fact, God “at this time,” is not only declared righteous, but as a Just God He justifies the guilty sinner who believes in Jesus. Two things characterise God’s dealings with man “now,” “at this time.” As a Just God, not a God of forbearance, He justifies the person who believes in Jesus; not now “passing over” sins,

not even in Romans chapter 3, "putting them away" but acquitting the person who believes in Jesus of all his guilt and declaring him right and just in His sight forever. The apostle moreover tells us it is a Just God who does this; not merely that He is Just in so doing, but He is a God who in perfect Justice has dealt with man's sin. When God today justifies the guilty sinner who believes in Jesus, He is, in fact, honouring Justice.

In Galatians 2.17, the Apostle speaks of being *justified by Christ*. This raises the question of how we can be justified by God (Romans 3.26), and justified by Christ (Galatians 2.17). When we notice that Galatians 2.17 should read "but if while we seek to be justified in Christ" we can then understand what, in fact, the apostle is teaching. He is thinking in terms of the *sphere of justification*; where only justification can be found. The apostle Peter when preaching in Acts 4.12 had before him a somewhat similar thought when he said "neither is there salvation in any other." There is salvation only in Christ, there is justification only in Christ. If men are to be justified today, there is only one place where that can be found and that is in Christ. I was approached after a Gospel meeting some years ago by a Roman Catholic gentleman who had spent a number of years in a monastery. He was concerned about his need of being right with God. When I visited him in his home I discovered that in the room in which he lived there was a large number of statues of "the Saints" and one of "the Virgin." In course of our conversation I asked him to read Acts 4.12, and when he had done this I asked him what he thought the verse meant, His reply was "No salvation in Mary, no salvation in the Saints, only salvation in Jesus Christ." I then asked what he was prepared to do about this matter and he replied "I'll receive Jesus as my Saviour for three months, I'll pray to God through Jesus for three months, but I must make this proviso, that if after three months I discover it doesn't work, I'll have to go back to Mary and to the Saints again." I then said to this dear man, "Sir, that will never save you, don't you see you are simply testing Jesus to see if He can save you and testing never saved anyone. it must be trusting." "Ah," he said "I must trust Him without any qualifications;" and that he did.

If God is the source of justification, Christ is the sphere of justification. (to be concluded)

## STRENGTH TO STAND

by DAVID ECCLES

V. 10. "BE STRONG IN THE LORD AND IN THE POWER OF HIS MIGHT" (Ephesians 6, 10-13). This verse will be our text to remember and the one which our thoughts will centre around. But before our consideration, I would like to bring to your notice some points about each verse.

- v. 10. Here we have *inward strength* "Be strong in the Lord" resulting in *outward power* "And in the power of his might."
- v. 11. *God's Whole Provision* "Put on the whole armour of God."
- v. 13. *God's Whole Protection* "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God."
- v. 11. *Our position before battle* "That ye may be able to stand against . . ."
- v. 13. *Pressure during battle* "That ye may be able to withstand in the evil day."
- v. 13. *Our position after battle* "And having done all to stand."

Among the Greeks the armour or Panoplia was the whole equipment used by heavily armed infantry. From verse 14 to 17 we have given to us the whole/complete spiritual armour so that we can be heavily armed and protected as we wrestle against satanic forces that surround us. The armour given to us is spiritually made to measure and is unique to each individual Christian. It is moulded around our characters and the spirituality found within us, the Lord Himself being our strength and power enabling us to put to effective use the God given armour. Verse 10 is the key to our ability in wearing the armour effectively and our ability to stand in the evil day.

Three times the word stand is mentioned here, in chapter 6 verses 11, 13 & 14. The idea behind the word itself would be the standing of a solitary soldier facing an opposing army. There is no mention of movement either to march to meet the foe or indeed, of retreating.

We are told in verse 11 that the whole armour of God is to help us stand against the wiles of the devil. The reason why there is no mention of movement is because our stand

is one of defence, it is Satan who by different methods at his disposal attacks us with all his might and power (and never underestimate his strength) from the four different sources found in verse 12. The tactics of the devil change from moment to moment, his attack might be from only the first source mentioned "principalities" or maybe a combination of all the four, yes brethren and sisters, Satan's attacks vary from one evil day to another. Yet the tactics of the believer never change they always remain the same; **TO STAND, WITHSTAND AND BE FOUND STANDING.** The meaning of the word "Stand" is one of fidelity and stability. Another point to realise is this, *'even if we stand as an army we wrestle alone!* Earthly armies fight in groups, big battles are won on strength and superiority, but for the believer it is completely different. This is why Paul tells us that we wrestle not against flesh and blood. It is a totally different warfare, it calls for getting to grips with the enemy, arm to arm combat. Satan attacks us not as an army, where our victory would be most certain, but as individuals. It is when we are weak and vulnerable spiritually that we must be on our guard all the more. There is no talk of sitting for a rest, it is all standing, like a soldier on guard duty ever observant and watchful. Remember the exhortation to "Watch and Pray"? For clarification of what we have been thinking about read Luke 11. 21,22.

Therefore if we are to stand in the evil day that is the day of trial, which comes to all of us, we need to be strong in the Lord and in the power of his Might, that is what we shall consider now.

I am going to divide verse 10 into two sections. Firstly; "Be strong in the Lord. Second; "And in the Power of his Might."

The first denotes an inward strength and spiritual quality which comes from our total and absolute faith and reliance upon God's own Word.

The second is an outward power which is the result of that absolute faith and reliance upon God's own Word, for He alone can give us strength in soul and purpose and provide the means whereby we can wrestle against the forces of evil. An inward strength produces the ability to stand and wrestle in the evil day and having done all to stand.

## 1. BE STRONG IN THE LORD

Paul speaking to the Romans and chapter 4 speaks about Abraham's faith in God's own word, that Sarah would bear him a son. Paul says in verse 20 "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was *strong in faith* and being fully persuaded that what he had promised he was able also to perform and therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness."

To stagger implies not so much weakness of faith, but lack of it. The Lord said that even if we have faith as small as a grain of mustard seed we could move mountains. Abraham was strong in faith, that is the inward strength already mentioned and the result was a manifestation of God's outward power in that what he had promised he was able also to *perform*. So many of us stagger at the promises of God's own word, that the power of His might is often not witnessed. Hebrews 11, v. 34, that well known chapter and catalogue of men and women of faith says that there were those who "Out of weakness were made strong," (compare Romans 5.6) "For when we were yet without strength, in due time, Christ died for the ungodly." Sin here being the weakness found in us that saps the strength, the result being there is no strength in soul and purpose, because the Lord is not inside making us strong.

## 2. AND IN THE POWER OF HIS MIGHT

The wonderful conversion of Saul shows the power of God working in a person's life and experience. After the blinding light we read of Saul's fall to the earth, depicting a humble, broken and contrite heart before God and then his words of submission "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

Here was a man whose strength and purpose lay in the letters of authority from the high priest, to arrest and persecute any found to be of the way. But when he came into contact with the Lord Himself his strength disappeared and in verse 6 of Acts 9 we read "And he trembling and astonished," what a contrast from verse 1 where we read "Saul yet breathing out threatening and slaughter." He trembled at the judgement of a Righteous God and he was astonished at the fact that Christ had already borne that judgement. Remember Romans 5.6 "When we were yet without strength?" This was most certainly Saul's experience, but



now read further down the passage verse 22. "But Saul increased the more in strength," what a wonderful spiritual transformation no longer was he relying on strength that came from what was outside, but on an inward strength given to him, not by a high priest or even the letters of authority, but by the Lord Himself dwelling in Saul's heart and life, so that the Lord Jesus could say to Ananias "He is a chosen vessel unto me." The result was that everything for Saul changed including his name, a vessel of wrath fitted for destruction became a vessel of mercy (Romans 9.22,23). His stand was sure and steadfast in the Lord, why? Well maybe part of the answer lies in his submissiveness right at the beginning of his conversation and the fact of what he said "Lord what wilt Thou have me to do." The Lord Jesus wants all chosen vessels to be willing and submissive ones too. Can I ask you, Where does your strength lie? For us to witness any increase of strength in ourselves or in anything that we are involved in for the Lord, we firstly have to be Strong in the Lord then we will witness the power of His might. Remember it is from within out of the heart of man proceeds all wickedness, so therefore it follows that the new birth we have experienced is the new creation in Christ Jesus, all the old things pass away and everything becomes new and fresh, pure and Holy, righteousness not unrighteousness. The challenge I throw out to all who read this is, Be "Strong in the Lord and in the Power of his Might."

## **THE PROPHECY OF ZECHARIAH**

**by E. R. BOWER, Malvern Link, Worcester**

It is said that the name Zechariah has the meaning, "Jah remembers," and having regard to the content of the prophecy this is appropriate. The prophecy, like that of contemporary Haggai, has as its background the books of Ezra and Nehemiah and it is believed that it is the final link in the chain of O.T. prophecy and a fitting introduction to the continuing story of Israel as seen in the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Malachi, known as the "seal of the prophets" is the bridge which links Zechariah with John the Baptist of whom our Lord testified, ". . . there is not a greater prophet" (Luke 7.28) and yet how few are his recorded words. If his recorded words were a criterion

of greatness he might be classified as a 'minor' prophet! Zechariah is the prophet of a renewed hope for that remnant of Israel recently returned from captivity. Many writers seem to concentrate upon an historical past fulfilment of O.T. prophecy and much of what they write is possibly true, nevertheless it must be agreed that many of the ancient prophecies concerning the Land and the People of Israel are awaiting fulfilment and because of this it is believed that a great proportion of 'fulfilled' prophecy awaits a secondary fulfilment in the "end time."

It is within the bounds of possibility that Iddo and Zechariah as priests and prophets had some contact with Jeremiah and Ezekiel who were also priests and prophets, and maybe with Daniel and Zephaniah and, of course, Haggai. If so, then Zechariah's message is indeed the final message of hope in the O.T. and thus a reason for its Messianic and apocalyptic message. We may expect, as we read this book to find that some of the writings or utterances of his contemporaries 'rubbed off' upon the prophet. The message of hope brought to the remnant of Israel by the prophet is still of great relevance today, when we can see in current events, many of which concern Israel, a resurgence of that hope which has kept Israel alive. It is, too, a message of hope for the remnant yet to be, of which the prophets have spoken, for in this message we shall see the Servant of Jehovah, the Branch (3.8); the Man, the Branch (3.12); the King-Priest (6.13); the True Shepherd (11.4-11); and our Lord in His theophanic character as the Angel of Jehovah who becomes Intercessor and Comforter. "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick; but when desire cometh, it is a tree of life." (Prov. 13.12) How true this must have been for Zerubbabel prince of Judah; for Joshua high priest of Israel; for the 'ancient men'; for that remnant so pathetically small of the people of God.

The remnant out of captivity had given of their not inconsiderable wealth, their time and their labour and, without doubt, much prayer for the building of Jerusalem the city of God (2 Chron. 6.6; Pss. 46 and 48) and the House of God. They had rejoiced with weeping as the foundation of the House was relaid (Ezra 3); they had suffered bitter disappointment when 'adversaries' from within and without had caused a suspension of the work, but it was then that

Haggai and Zechariah appeared, for a short while, upon the scene, bringing encouragement and hope, not only for Israel, but for the nations. See Acts 15.13-18 and compare v. 17 with Zech. 14.16. The Apostles no doubt anticipated an early fulfilment of Messianic hopes, but alas, it was to be yet again a hope deferred. See Acts 28.23-28.

#### THE INITIAL WORD TO ZECHARIAH. (1.1-6).

v. 1. Upon the first day of the sixth month of the second year of Darius the word of the Lord came to Haggai, and the rebuilding of the House commenced upon the twenty-fourth (Hag. 1.1,15). Upon the twentyfirst of the following month Haggai (2.9) told of the "latter glory" of the House, and now in the eighth month comes Zechariah. The House was completed and dedicated four years later (Ezra 6.15).

Vv. 2-3. Haggai had stressed the need for repentance (2.14-17); Zechariah confirms this need. Full repentance would be met by a full blessing. Lessons taught the fathers should be taken to heart by the children. Not so much a turning but a 'returning.'

vv. 4-6. "Take hold"—overtake (margin); "turned"—repented. Let the 'wisdom after the event' of their fathers, be their 'wisdom before the event.' 'Former' prophets went unheeded: the 'latter' prophets gave new hope and new opportunity to Israel. They had rejected all previous pleas; this was to be their last chance in O.T. times.

(To be continued)

## HIDDEN THINGS

by EDWARD ROBINSON

The principle of hiding is to keep safe something that is exceedingly precious to the owner. Pearls, for instance, should not be cast before swine, which would not in any measure, be able to appreciate their value. Nor, (in another sense), does the preacher of the gospel, having no desire to impress with his knowledge of Scripture, present to the unconverted, the precious truths *hidden* in the word of God, but rather his need of the forgiveness of sins through the precious blood of Christ. And so the Psalmist says 'Thy word have I *hid* in my heart that I might not sin against Thee.' (119.11). His word, then, is a preservative against sin and therefore precious; to be safeguarded in the heart of the believer. How the enemy would snatch it away were it not securely entrenched in the heart, not just the mind,

but in the seat of his affections. These things are cherished in that feature in the saints so precious to Christ, 'the hidden man of the heart' (1 Peter 1.4).

There are 150 experiences of the wisdom of God in the book of the Psalms, in contrast to Paul's word to the Corinthians (1.3.19), 'For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.' The intellectual is confounded, failing to realise that any knowledge of truth is known only by the humility of mind which is dependent for understanding on the sovereign revelation of God. The Lord Jesus Himself gives thanks and praise to the Father, 'Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.' (Luke 10.21). He adds also that the knowledge of Who the Father is, is confined to those only to whom the Son will reveal Him.

The divine Author of the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit, is Himself the model of that which is hidden. His ministry is largely subjective, i.e. to effect in ourselves the results of His presentation objectively of God, of the Father and of the Son. (Incidentally, the Lord Jesus ensures that the Spirit is not out of sight as He presents Him objectively in John's Gospel (15 and 16), 'The Spirit of truth . . . , ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you and shall be in you.' (John 14.17). The Colossian Epistle, so full of the moral glories of Christ, says little of the Spirit personally, having only one passing reference to Him ('the love of the Spirit'). There is, however, an important reference to this principle of hiding (3.3), 'For ye are dead and your life is *hid with Christ* in God.' This stupendous, magnificent truth leaves the man of the world entirely in ignorance. He is able only to take account of what makes an outward show and display, whereas there is afforded to the simple believer immense satisfaction and peace that his life is beyond the possibility of disturbance.

There are in the O.T., characters who are ahead of their dispensation. Outstanding of them is the prophet Isaiah: some of whose writings could well have been taken from the pages of the New testament, e.g., of course, the much-loved chapter 53. Again (42.1-4), what makes his prophecy so attractive, is the clear presentation of the Person of the Lord Jesus. Yet again, 'And a man shall be as an *hiding-place* from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.' (32.2). Here are four beautiful and arresting

similes hardly equalled even in the annals of scripture; certainly unapproached in the greatest of secular literature. The difference, of course, lies in the inspiration (in-breathing) of the Holy Spirit, He Himself finding His pleasure in depicting the moral glories of the Man, Christ Jesus. And what a Refuge for the pilgrim throughout his journey after he meets his beloved Lord and Saviour, strong and so sweetly refreshing. Well might the poet, Toplady, sing of the 'Rock of Ages.'

David re-echoes Isaiah's prophecy that a man shall be as an hiding-place, and addresses the Lord. '*Thou art my hiding-place; Thou shalt preserve me from trouble; Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance, Selah.*' (Ps. 32.7). The sweet singer of Israel was in close touch with his Lord and in the full confidence of His salvation. And in the previous psalm he says, speaking of those who fear the Lord, 'Thou shalt *hide* them in the secret of Thy presence from the pride of man: Thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues' (31.20) Closely connected with the thought of what is hidden is that of mystery, which is not something impossible of understanding, but known and understood by the revelation of God. And so we return to Colossians, the Epistle so much connected with the thought of that which is hidden. Paul writes, 'I am made a minister to fulfil (fill out or complete) the word of God; even the mystery which hath been *hid* from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you the hope of glory.' (1.25-27). May our God make known to us the riches of the glory of this mystery in the power of the Spirit of God.

## THE PRECIOUS BLOOD

by JOHN PETERS

(Reading: 1 Peter 1. 18-19)

Isaac Watts exclaimed:

All the vain things which charm me most  
I sacrifice them to His blood.

Charles Wesley mused:

And can it be that I should gain  
An interest in the Saviour's blood?

Augustus Toplady desired :

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,  
Let me hide myself in Thee;  
Let the water and the blood,  
From Thy riven side which flowed,  
Be of sin the double cure—  
Cleanse me from its guilt and power

The three hymn-writers quoted above are in perfect accord with the theology of the New Testament in proclaiming the virtue and worth, indeed the greatness of our Lord's 'precious blood.' In this paper we shall meditate briefly upon what it has brought about.

### 1. REDEMPTION.

This is one of the most glorious words in the Bible, linked as it is to the whole idea of a ransom. Paul reminds us that it is through His blood we have redemption (Ephesians 1.7). It has to do with rescuing men and women from a situation from which they cannot rescue themselves. Jesus, the Saviour, redeems us then through His blood, releasing us from the imprisonment of our sin, enabling us to sing :

I am redeemed, O praise the Lord,  
My soul from bondage free

It is a redemption that is solely and entirely 'in Christ Jesus' (Romans 3.24) who is the mediator 'of a better covenant' (Hebrews 8.6); and it carries with it the 'promise of eternal inheritance' (Romans 8.23).

### 2. JUSTIFICATION.

In Romans 5, Paul wishes his readers to remember that Christ had died while they were 'yet sinners' (v. 8), then adds : 'Much more then, being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him' (v. 9). There are two thoughts here : our sin is removed and God's righteousness is imputed to us; then in Him, because of His shed blood, we are reckoned to be justified (as if we had never sinned), we are truly 'new creatures' in Christ (2 Cor. 5.17).

### 3. CLEANSING.

That sin defiles is declared to be so by the Bible and confirmed by our own experience. Two verses from the New Testament will help to illustrate the sort of cleansing which Christ's blood effects for us. In Hebrews 9.15, we are told that our Lord's voluntary and spontaneous sacrifice is able

to 'purge' our consciences from 'dead works' so that we are fitted to serve 'the living God:' while in 1 John 1.7 the apostle delights in affirming that the 'blood of Jesus' 'cleanses us from all sin.' Commenting on this verse, F. F. Bruce says: 'What John has in mind here is that cleansing of the conscience from guilt and moral defilement which is so insisted on in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and which takes a leading place among the saving benefits of the redemptive self-sacrifice of Christ. Or, as Wesley put it :

He ever lives above  
For me to intercede,  
His all-redeeming love,  
His precious blood, to plead;  
His blood atoned for all our race,  
And sprinkles now the throne of grace.

#### 4. NEARNESS.

Nowhere is this more eloquently demonstrated than in Ephesians chapter 2. The whole chapter is based on the differences between what 'we once were' and what 'we are now.' We were dead in trespasses and sins, we were by nature children of wrath, we were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, we were without hope and without God. In total contrast, 'now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were afar off are brought nigh by the blood of Christ.' What a tremendous change has occurred:

For in the person of God's Son  
I am as near as He

#### 5. BOLDNESS.

Clearly this follows on from the access or nearness referred to above. The contrasts between the old dispensation and the dispensation of grace are numerous, and the writer of Hebrews speaks about the 'new way' in the following terms: 'Having therefore, brethren boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus' (10.19). No cringing, no fear of rejection, rather the ready acceptance or liberty that gives the Christian enormous dignity.

#### 6. PEACE.

The Bible conceives of peace in two senses. There is peace 'with' God (Romans 5.1 and Colossians 1.20), because we are justified; then there is the peace 'of' God (Philippians 4.7 and Colossians 3.15), which is the double peace of heart

and mind. The first peace is the result of our Lord's sacrifice on the cross; the second is conditioned and controlled by the way we live. All these blessings and privileges are ours because of our Lord's precious blood, and Peter's point in the verses alluded to at the head of this article is that the blood of Christ is in complete contrast to such corruptible things as silver and gold; it is to be valued highly, especially by those who have proved its saving power.

## **FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTALS**

by J. B. HEWITT, Chesterfield

### **(24) The Priesthood of Christ**

#### **PART ONE**

Teaching concerning the Priesthood and the priestly work of the Lord Jesus is confined to the Hebrew Epistle. This is pictured for us in John 17 and the Resurrection ministry of our Lord. The Hebrews teaches the finality of the Gospel. Jesus Christ is God's last word to the world. He has fulfilled all the O.T. foreshadowings, and there is nothing more to follow. This book is an exposition of the final supremacy of the priesthood, sacrifice and covenant of Jesus Christ. Never had priest been known, nor had intercession been made before by One radiant with the majesty of the everlasting throne (ch. 1.3; 4.14; 8.1; 10.12).

#### **HIS SUITABILITY FOR PRIESTHOOD**

The Incarnation of Christ is linked with redemption in Gal. 4. v. 4,5; and in Hebrews with priesthood. His conformity to His brethren in "all things," sin excepted (ch. 4.15), was necessary so that He might become their High Priest (ch. 2.17; 5.1,2). Whenever the source of priesthood is described to us in Scripture it is always a matter of sonship. "Thou art my Son" (5.5); "Thou art a priest for ever" (5.6).

**IDENTIFICATION.** Christ took on Himself the seed of Abraham, and in manifestation lived His life environed by the splendours of the supernatural, the qualities of heavenly virtue and the dignity of holy associations. He passed by angels, partook of flesh and blood at the incarnation, to become "a merciful and faithful high priest." Two features of His work are mentioned : (1) "make propitiation," the day of atonement in Lev. 16; (2) "to succour them that are



tempted" (2.17,18). He shared in man's sufferings and temptations. He cares (Luke 22.31,32).

**QUALIFICATION** (Heb. 5.1-10). The first qualification of the Aaronic priest was that he had to be chosen, to be a man himself. The second, appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God (v. 4). Christ's priesthood, though similar to Aaron's in its Divine appointment, was utterly superior, being of a higher and different order. His priesthood like Melchizedek's combines kingship with priesthood (7.1).

Christ the Son, supplants and supersedes the virtue and vocation of priestly service. The Priest must resemble man and be human, he must reveal God, and be holy (v. 6).

Our Lord qualified by incarnation (2.17); by identification (5.1) and by compassion (5.2). Chapter one unfolds His Deity (5.6); chapter two unveils His Humanity (5.1).

He was divinely chosen by God his Father (5.5); and divinely appointed to be a Priest (5.6). He has compassion (v. 2), and v. 4 dignity. He is majestic and merciful, glorious and gracious. The office could not be held apart from Divine approval, Divine appointment, and Divine anointing. Two quotations from the Psalms confirm this. In Ps. 2 He is heralded as Son at the Incarnation, while Ps. 110 declares He was honoured as Priest at the Ascension. His devotion in suffering (v. 7). He knew the agony of suffering and the anguish of death. His education through suffering (v.7b, 8); His full abandonment to obedience (v. 8), and His full acceptance by God (v. 10). Thus He was made perfect in His office as our Saviour. Having returned to Heaven, He became the Author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him (5.9). As He was made Man, so He was made a High Priest (v. 10).

#### **HIS SYMPATHY AS A PRIEST**

See ch. 4.14-16. In ch. 5 we see the excellency of His Priesthood; in 4.14-16, we find its encouragement for tried saints today. This stresses His preserving ministry as we journey home.

**HIS RELATION TO US.** "Having then a great high priest (v. 14RV). This glorious Person is replete in resourcefulness and possessed of royal dignity. He is merciful in the tender sympathy of His heart and faithful in its outflow of intercession and grace.

(a) **A REAL PRIEST—HIS NAME “JESUS”** the name of Intimacy that charms and captivates, assuring us of salvation from sins, and sympathy above in the heavens. It is a conquering name (2.14) for the Devil is robbed of his power and prey. “**SON OF GOD**” is the title of Infinity in sovereignty of will, in glorious majesty victorious over all our foes, He is crowned our own High Priest. He is divine, His deity from God’s viewpoint, His absolute equality with God the Father.

(b) **A RELIABLE PRIEST—HIS NATURE** (v. 5). He sympathizes with our weakness because He was tested in all particulars as we are, sin excepted. He was the absolutely sinless One, Perfect Man.

**WHAT HE IS** (v. 14a). No insignificant person. He is “great” in His Person, and “high” in His office. The old types are now completely obsolete and redundant.

**WHERE HE IS** “passed through the heavens” (v. 14b). This tells of His victory and superiority, developed in (ch. 8.1; 9.24). This gives us convincing proof that His sacrifice was acceptable to God (ch. 1.3). Now in the immediate presence of God, He is available and accessible to all His saints. As Son of God He has authority from God and capacity to understand us.

**OUR RELATION TO HIM** (v.14,15,16). The writer deals with the practical value of His priesthood. Here is a strong affirmation of His sympathy and help; He fully shared their infirmities. His exaltation leads us to confession (v. 14). We must at all times maintain our confidence in Jesus the Son of God and never be ashamed to confess His name. His experience gives us confidence (v.15b,16). His sufferings make Him tender-hearted, for He experienced very form of trial and affliction. The truth is, He not only can be touched, but cannot but be touched. His example brings us courage for He provides us with the means of victory—“the throne of grace.”

His assurance brings comfort. “Mercy” is the love that helps the wretched, “grace” the love that pardons the guilty. No infirmity mars His work and no inability weakens His service. He is invincible. Help can be ours before we are overwhelmed by temptation. Think on all “He is able” to do for us.

## HIS SUPERIORITY AS A PRIEST. (Heb. 7.1-10).

Chapter two deals with His nature; ch. 4, His character; ch. 5, His appointment by God; ch. 7 the glory of His Person; in chs. 9 and 10 with the greatness of His work as a Priest. The first personal instituted type of Christ was a priest; this was Melchisedec. He is presented historically in Gen. 14; prophetically in Psa. 110; and in this chapter doctrinally. He is a *Royal Priest* v.1 (1) ITS DIGNITY (v. 1-3). Under the Mosaic system a priest could not be a king, nor a king act as a priest (Isa. 6.1). Under the Melchisedec order it was otherwise: and Christ is both kingly and priestly in His administration (7.1,14). This new order of priesthood is *Special* — “this,” the first in the Bible. *Royal*—“king of Salem,” he has majesty and authority. “Both the personal name Melchisedec, and Salem were chosen in order that, as king of righteousness and peace, he might set forth anticipatively the character of the sovereign power of Christ” W. E. Vine. It is *Helpful* “He blessed Abraham” (v. 1) He came with regal authority and acted in priestly ministry. He brought abundant joy and abiding peace.

It is *Spiritual*—“priest of the Most High God.” It expresses union and communion being made between heaven and earth. Melchisedec made Abraham independent of anything the world had to offer. It is *Peaceful*—“king of peace” (Psa. 85.10; Isa. 32.17). This will be fulfilled in Millennial blessing (Psa. 72; Jer. 23.6; Zech. 6.13).

It is *Immortal* (v. 3). The Levitical priesthood must have a genealogy but no details are given regarding Melchisedec. All is omitted for this king-priest was “made like unto the Son of God.” This makes clear the eternal existence of our Lord Jesus (John 1. v.1,2). The former is introduced suddenly and presented symbolically, so no genealogy is mentioned. His priesthood like our Lord’s is ageless, deathless and timeless.

ITS SUPERIORITY (ch. 7. v.4-10). It is viewed in its relation to the *Levitical* order. Melchisedec in his sacred character was superior to any priest under the legal economy.

Better by **BENEFACTION** (v. 4). Abraham acknowledged the progenitor, he did homage to Melchisedec. Better by **ASSOCIATION** (v. 5). Tithes presented in voluntary recognition of the pre-eminence of Melchisedec. Better in **DIS-**

TINCTION (v. 6) and by COMPARISON (v. 7), "the less is blessed of the better." There are many other contrasts: The nature of Aaron and his sons was not ROYAL, the office held was not PERPETUAL, the sacrifice presented was not SPIRITUAL, the offerings made were not EFFEC-TUAL, the redemption effected was not ETERNAL and the sanctuary entered was not CELESTIAL.

## **THE CHURCH**

by **JOHN CAMPBELL, Larkhall**

### **ITS LOCAL SETTING**

In most English dictionaries, the word Church is explained as a building for public Christian worship. This is never the meaning in the New Testament, which has over one hundred mentions. The word Assembly has but five, derived from three distinct Greek words, namely EKKLESIA, SUN-AGOGE and PANEGURIS; the first, meaning those called out, the second, a Jewish meeting place, and the third, a convention for all in celebration. In Acts Ch. 19, three times Assembly is mentioned; once describing an illegal, tumultuous assembly, led by Demetrius, a Silversmith, (v. 39) The word in Acts Ch. 19 is EKKLESIA, derived from a lawful Assembly of persons possessing the rights of citizenship, called out from the mass of the populace. The next mention of Assembly is in Heb. 12.23, and the word is PANEGURIS, only mentioned here, describing the ecstatic, exultant joy, of the Heavenly assembly, in praise to God! SUNAGOGE is used by James to describe the Assembly, (2.2) probably because he writes to the twelve tribes in the transitional period, immediately after Pentecost.

To summarise; the word Assembly is used to describe a Trade Union Meeting, a Jewish Congregation and a company of Heavenly Beings, praising God, providing us with the triple thought of Called out, Gathered out and Gathered together. All this by way of introduction and explanation.

In considering the status of the Local Assembly, we shall approach it under three important and distinct headings.

The Facts of the Assembly.

The Functions of the Assembly.

The Future of the Assembly.

### **THE FACTS OF THE ASSEMBLY**

For the sake of clarity, we speak of the Church Dispen-

sationally and then the Church Local; although these appellations have no scriptural authority, they serve to convey ideas of difference, which must be noted.

The Church Dispensational, is the aggregate, from Pentecost to the Rapture, in all generations, of all who have, or will yet take, Christ as their Saviour and Lord.

1. The Church Local is composed of all believers, scripturally baptised, sound in faith and godly in life, who, after due examination by the Local Church, are deemed suitable subjects for the fellowship corporately, of all who profess Jesus as Lord.

2. The Church Local is often less in number than the total of Believers in any locality. Many believers do not gather with the Local Church.

3. The Church Local could be more in number than the total of Believers in any locality, since some unbelievers could mistakenly be received.

4. The ideal is, all believers in any locality, scripturally baptised, meeting with fellow-believers.

5. The New Testament recognises that all the saved in a locality, may not meet with fellow-believers (1 Cor. 14.23). When the *whole* Church is gathered together, two visitors arrive, one an unbeliever, and an unlearned person. Note the "or." The unlearned is distinguished from the unbeliever. IDITOTES is the word. He could be a believer, certainly not in the Church Local, for it was a **WHOLE CHURCH** before he entered, and an unlearned one at that, not appreciating the selective dignity and standing of the company he visits.

6. The New Testament provides for those not saved and those not in fellowship being present to observe the Holy decorum of our gatherings, with a view to conviction being stirred, and an acknowledgement of God's presence among us.

7. There appears to be another "unlearned person" present in verse 16, already there and "occupying the room of the unlearned." He is compelled to express his assent at "THE AMEN."

#### THE LOCAL CHURCH, IDEALLY.

It should be marked by seven features, namely:—  
Elders, Plural, Not appointed, but recognised.  
Deacons, Plural, Appointed, after being proved.

Teachers, Plural, Exercising Spirit bestowed gift, in Ministry.  
Preachers, Plural, Exercising Spirit bestowed gift, in Gospel.  
Both Brethren and Sisters. Received by the Church.  
Both Young and Old. Blending in Fellowship.  
All Together. Constituting a Fellowship.

It should express :—

Fellowship with similarly gathered companies.

Commendation to such fellowships.

And Receive Commendations from such fellowships.

The Local Church exercises :—

Reception to and excommunication from, the fellowship.

Discipline in the fellowship:— Warning, Silencing, Withdrawing, Rejecting.

A Local Church after the New Testament pattern owns no name but Christ, takes no title but brethren—small b,—acknowledges no authority but the Scriptures, takes no fee from the unsaved, disowns Clericy, preaches Christ crucified as the only Atonement, and holds the Doctrine of eternal bliss of the saved and eternal punishment of the lost to be alike unending. Such a Local Assembly recognises but two ordinances; baptism by immersion, and the Breaking of Bread. This will suffice for the Facts of the Assembly.

## **MARK, CHAPTER TWO**

by **JAMES PENDER**

Conditions were such that the Lord could move in. He had freedom of movement. He had introduced something in which there was power.

**KINGDOM.** Freedom and room to move locally is necessary not only for the Lord but for everyone. This makes service effective. There was freedom to bring to the house, one man carried by four. The Lord puts forgiveness of sins before bodily healing. The order is forgiveness then walk. The one is the proof of the other. Both require Divine Power. The Lord always goes beyond the apparent need. He knowing their thoughts proves HIS authority and the man's ability to walk proved a divine work in the soul.

**ALL OF GRACE** (v. 14). They had challenged His power now His grace. He meets their objection by reminding them of the need of those He sought to benefit.

**ANNULLING OF THE LAW.** (18-22). The joy of the Kingdom cannot be expressed by Legal Methods. There is

no yield in the law. It should neither yield, stretch nor bend. It could only be broken. Grace cannot be used to patch up the Legal system. It was wearing out in Isa. 64.6. The Kingdom of God is set forth in the Person and work of Christ, and those who through Grace left all and followed Him, came into it and exercised the Power of it (Rom. 14, Mark 2.18-22). The rigid form of Judaism must give way to the expansive freedom of the Spirit. The Joy of the Kingdom could not be expressed in Legalism. He was introducing something that was free and expansive. The more you enter into it, the more expansive it becomes (Mark 2.23-28). Ezekiel's sabbath was a sign. God's anointed was in rejection (1st Sam. 21) also the Power of HIS TESTIMONY. God sets FAITH above ORDINANCES. The scanty of the consecrated things had departed from them. They had dishonoured the one who had instituted the ordinance. Ordinance, symbol and figure will pass away, being provisional, but it is said of the one of whom they speak THOU REMAINEST. Occupation with literal and Legal things however correct they may be, will only obscure spiritual vision keeping us occupied with the MEANS instead of the END in view. The emancipating and liberating effect of true Levitical service is reflected in the assembly.

**PALSIED MAN** had Power over circumstances and ability to walk and bring Glory to God.

**(JOINED)** Jacob's third son by Leah (Gen. 29.4). Joined to Aaron and his sons to minister in the tabernacle (Num. 28). Power to follow the Lord and leave things Lawful, but cruel. Instruments of cruelty are in Thy Habitations (Gen. 49.5). Grace to sit with the despised.

**PUBLICANS AND SINNERS** (v. 18). Those are joined to The Lord and experience His Grace and possess the Joy of the Kingdom. No failure now; they are not patched up. They are **NEW BOTTLES** capable of expansion beyond rigid legislation (v. 23). Freedom from Legality and possessed of the joy of the Kingdom gives ability to live above ordinances and feed upon CHRIST, exercising priestly rights and privileges (1 Sam. 21) in a day when THE LORD'S ANNOINTED is rejected and denied HIS place. FAITH can see beyond ORDINANCES and finds its rest in the one of whom the ordinances speak. (Matt. 11.28).

## REVIEW

### **RITCHIE NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARIES "WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES"**

John Ritchie, the founder of the firm of John Ritchie Limited, was a full-time evangelist who, in the course of his labours soon realised that the printed page had a very useful part to play in the spread of the Gospel, the establishment of assemblies and the building up of God's people. He therefore began to use his pen in preparing articles, magazines, tracts and booklets, and finally books. These latter have had a very wide circulation, in many editions, in a number of languages and have been greatly used to the edification of the saints.

Since those early days and the establishment of the business many excellent works have been published. The volume that now lies before me is one of the best that has been produced. It is, in fact, the best since the publication of "Bible Problems and Answers" by Wm. Hoste and Wm. Rodgers. I am the more pleased because this volume is the first of nine volumes which will cover the whole of the New Testament and I understand that many of the contributors are at present engaged in preparing their particular parts. The authors of this present volume and all the others whose work will eventually appear are living writers, men who are well-known amongst the saints, real "assembly men," men who have built by their service something solid for God. Thus, these are men on whom the saints of God can rely, men who have proved themselves to be faithful to the Lord and to His Word. Tom Wilson, in his preface, clearly states the doctrinal standpoint of the commentaries and with this statement we heartily agree.

"The doctrinal standpoint of the commentaries is based upon the acceptance of the verbal and plenary inspiration of the Scriptures so that their inerrant and infallible teachings are the only rule of conscience. The impeccability of Christ, His virgin birth, vicarious death and bodily resurrection are indeed precious truths worthy of the Christian's defence, and throughout the volumes of this series will be defended. Equally the Rapture will be presented as the Hope of the Church. Before the great Tribulation she will be raptured and God's prophetic programme will continue with Jacob's trouble, the public manifestation of Christ and the Millennium of blessing to a restored Israel and the innumerable Gentile multitude in a creation released from the bondage of corruption."

These are "the things most surely believed among us."

This first volume is written by Jack Hunter (Galatians), Albert Leckie (Ephesians), Sidney Maxwell (Philippians), Thomas Bentley (Colossians) and Albert McShane (Philemon). Each con-



tributor has supplied introductory matter relative to authorship, date of writing, destination, purpose of writing, verse by verse exposition with additional notes at the end of each section, with a useful bibliography relative to each epistle.

The work will, I have no doubt, prove a source of instruction and help for all who read it. There is much in the volume that will be for the edification of young and old. I do most heartily commend this work to the saints of God, containing as it does, sound, painstaking, scriptural exposition in a day when so much is written that is not sound. This is a book that should be possessed and read carefully by every reader of Assembly Testimony.

—A. M. S. Gooding.

Published by John Ritchie Ltd. £7.95 (post and packing £1.30) and obtainable from all Bible Book Shops.

---

**HYMNS AND THEIR WRITERS (20) by Jack Strahan, Enniskillen.**

## **“AND CAN IT BE THAT I SHOULD GAIN”**

**CHARLES WESLEY (1707—1788)**

The face of 18th century England was changed by two brothers—John and Charles Wesley. They were the two youngest surviving sons of the very large family of Samuel and Susanna Wesley. Both were born at Epworth Rectory in Lincolnshire, both were greatly used of the Lord in their respective and complementary roles during the nation-wide spiritual revival of their day, and both are now enshrined side by side among England's great in Westminster Abbey.

At the beginning of the 18th century, church life in England was neglected and corrupt—the clergy were worldlings, church services were frequently omitted and parish visitation almost unknown. At Epworth, however, things were different for there Samuel Wesley sought to fulfil a faithful ministry for God. Though poor in circumstances and often lacking the bare necessities of life, his faith and morals were of the highest standard and he sought to impart the same, both to his parishioners and to his own family. But, perhaps, the central figure of that home at Epworth rectory was the mother, Susanna Wesley, a woman remarkable in faith and diligence who cared meticulously for the physical and the spiritual welfare of each one of her children. Susanna Wesley made herself personally responsible for the education of her sons until they went away to school and, thereafter, she pursued them with earnest letters. In writing to her youngest son, Charles, she spoke to him exultingly of her Saviour. “Oh, my dear Charles, when I consider the dignity of His person, the perfection of His purity, the greatness of His sufferings but, above all, His boundless love, I am astonished and utterly confounded. I am lost in thought. I fall into nothing before Him.” And having such a mother as

Susanna Wesley, the Wesley children were blessed indeed!

Charles Wesley, at the age of eight, left home for Westminster School in London. He became captain of the school there and after ten years gained a "studentship" to Christ Church, Oxford. He was a brilliant classical scholar and took his M.A. degree at the age of 21. The following six years were spent at Oxford as a college tutor and he then, in company with his brother John, left England for Georgia in North America but his experience there was very disappointing and he soon returned to England.

Charles Wesley's spiritual awakening and conversion to God took place soon after his return to England. As he lay ill in the home of a friend in London, he was visited by the influential Moravian, Peter Bohler. "Do you hope to be saved?" Bohler enquired, "I do" replied Charles and Bohler asked upon what ground. "On the ground that I have used my best endeavours to serve God," Charles answered, whereupon Bohler shook his head, obviously dissatisfied. This simple encounter was used by the Lord to impress upon the heart of Charles Wesley his need of personal salvation. He sought it and he found it. That never-to-be forgotten experience took place on Sunday, May 21st, 1738. As Mrs. Turner, a poor Moravian woman, spoke to him words of light and life, he exclaimed, "I believe, I believe." On that very same day, Charles read from his "Book of Common Prayer" the words of Psalm 40, "He hath put a new song in my mouth, even a thanksgiving unto our God." These words were prophetic, for in the 50 years that followed, Charles Wesley wrote no less than 6,500 new songs of praise to God (the equivalent of one new song every three days for 50 years). From 1738—1778, in conjunction with his brother John, he issued 39 different books of hymns and poetry.

Charles Wesley's hymns are not only numerous but many are of a very high quality. Dr. J. H. Overton's considered opinion is that, "taking quantity and quality into consideration, Charles Wesley, perhaps, is the great hymn-writer of all ages." Dr. J. W. Bready's testimony is that, Charles Wesley's ministry, "gave to the English-speaking world its richest heritage of sacred song." A natural aptitude to express things in verse, a complete classical education and a sense of spiritual urgency resulted in compositions, many of which will never die. Will the church of God ever exhaust this spiritual richness or will it ever grow weary of singing such majestic hymns as Wesley's, "Jesus lover of my soul," "Oh for a thousand tongues to sing!" "Hark! the herald angels sing," or "Love Divine, all loves excelling"? Mr. Bernard Manning records that, "Wesley is obsessed with the greatest things, and he confirms our faith because he shows us these things above all the immediate, local, fashionable problems and objections to our faith. We move into the serener air. We sit in the heavenly places with Christ Jesus" and he adds, "Wesley's hymns . . .

show us something of the life of one of the pure in heart who saw God." Charles Wesley wrote when religious revival swept the country. As his brother John rode up and down the English countryside on horseback preaching the everlasting gospel, Charles set that epoch-making revival to deathless music. Dr. F. W. Boreham says, "John set the country weeping, Charles set it singing, and those tears of bitter repentance and those songs of plenteous redemption were the outward and visible evidence of the mightiest spiritual surge in the nation's experience" and he adds that, "the movement that brought new life to the world in the 18th century stands crystallised in the throbbing verse of Charles Wesley."

From the moment of conversion to God, hymns started to flow from Charles Wesley's pen and these continued right until his death on March 29th, 1788. At the age of 80, when he could no longer write and just a short time before he died, he dictated to his wife his final hymn, only a single stanza but full of pathos and beauty.

"In age and feebleness extreme,  
Who shall a sinful worm redeem?  
Jesus! my only hope Thou art,  
Strength of my failing flesh and heart;  
Oh! could I catch a smile from Thee  
And drop into eternity."

Christ, the Redeemer of men, was ever his theme. "Jesus! my only hope" he cries as he comes to the close. The thought of "the Saviour and His blood" had filled and flooded his heart at the beginning when he first lifted his pen and though only within two days of conversion's experience, he penned immortal words,

"And can it be that I should gain,  
An interest in the Saviour's blood?  
Died He for me who caused His pain?  
For me who Him to death pursued?  
Amazing love! how can it be  
That Thou, my Lord, shouldst die for me!  
'Tis mystery all! the Immortal dies;  
Who can explore His strange design?  
In vain the first-born seraph tries  
To sound the depths of love divine;  
'Tis mercy all! let earth adore,  
Let angel minds inquire no more.  
He left His Father's throne above—  
So free, so infinite His grace—  
Emptied Himself of all but love,  
And bled for Adam's helpless race.  
'Tis mercy all, immense and free;  
For, O my God, it found out me!

Long my imprisoned spirit lay  
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;  
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray—  
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;  
My chains fell off, my heart was free,  
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.  
No condemnation now I dread;  
Jesus, and all in Him, is mine!  
Alive in Him, my living Head,  
And clothed in righteousness divine,  
Bold I approach the eternal throne,  
And claim the crown, through Christ, my own!"

Oh, the majesty of Divine grace, coming from such heights to such depths and in return lifting from such depths to such heights! Charles Wesley felt that he personally was the object of such Divine grace. The thought filled his heart and overflowed in song—truly a thanksgiving for salvation.

## ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY

Editor : A. M. S. Gooding.

Correspondence relative to Editorial matters should be addressed to the Editor : 7 Sparrow Gardens, off London Road, Kilmarnock, Scotland. (Telephone 24245).

Assistant Editor : B. Currie  
49 Glenburn Road, Dunmurry, BT17 9AN, N. Ireland.  
(Telephone Belfast 621343).

### Committee :

Tom Armstrong, Thomas Beggs, Ronnie Johnston,  
James McKeown, James Moore.

Secretary : William Neill.

This magazine is supported solely by the freewill offerings of the Lord's people.

Friends residing in England, Scotland and Wales may kindly forward their donations to :

John Glenville, Nestor, Hillhead, Colyton, Devon, EX13 6HH.

Friends residing elsewhere should please forward gifts to :  
William Neill, "Beth-Asher," 109 Lurgan Road, Banbridge, Northern Ireland, BT32 4NG.

Please address correspondence, including all new orders, orders for back numbers and extra copies, cancellations and changes of address to William Neill at above address.

You can HELP US by stating the NUMBER of copies required, and submitting NAME and ADDRESS, including POSTAL CODE, IN BLOCK LETTERS, please.



# **ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY**



## **CONTENTS**

### **NOTES ON REVELATION**

by J. Flanigan

### **FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTALS**

by J. B. Hewitt

### **ZECHARIAH** by E. R. Bower

### **JUSTIFICATION** by A. Leckie

### **MARK, Chapters 3 - 5**

by James Pender

### **THE CHURCH** by J. Campbell

### **CHRIST IN THE APOCALYPSE**

by J. B. D. Page

### **THE PLEA OF THE CAPTIVE**

by H.M.M.

### **HYMNS AND THEIR WRITERS**

by Jack Strahan

## **EMMANUEL — 'GOD WITH US'**

### **WHEN DID HE COME?**

Not when the glowing sun had reached its height,  
Of full-orbed splendour in the Eastern sky,  
But shadowed by the gentle shades of night,  
He came unsought, unseen by carnal eye.

### **WHERE DID HE COME TO?**

Not to a palace grand or mansion fair,  
Where courtiers rushed, His every need to meet,  
But to a cattle-shed where stench-filled air,  
Came wafting o'er His sleeping form so sweet.

### **HOW DID HE COME?**

Not on a prancing steed, commanding awe,  
With scintillating sword, Rome's power to break,  
But as a lowly babe among the straw,  
The weakest form of human life to take.

### **WHY DID HE COME?**

Not to condemn the world of fallen man,  
Whose crowning crime would nail Him to a tree,  
But to fulfil Redemption's glorious plan,  
And save us from a lost eternity.

### **TRISTE INFANDUM**

But many still give Him the outside place,  
Who entered history through its lowest door,  
No room for Him or for His wondrous grace,  
Who died that we might live forevermore.

—C. F. GEDDES, Portessie.

## NOTES ON REVELATION

by JIM FLANIGAN

### “CONCLUDING VISIONS”

We have now come to the chapter of final revelations in a Book which is all Revelation. It is a chapter of great variety. There is glory and gloom, blessing and warning, promise and prayer.

After the Book of Life in chapter 21.27, we are now introduced to the River of Life and the Tree of Life. All is Life here, because the curse that brought Death in all its forms is now no more. The crystal stream has its source and origin in the Throne of God. Where God's rights are fully known and acknowledged there is Life. And it is interesting and touching that in these last visions of the Throne it is, “The Throne of God and of the Lamb.” The death of the Lamb has vindicated that Throne and ensured Life in the eternal state. God and the Lamb are enthroned. At the Throne we have our last vision of the Lamb.

The Tree of Life is a collective term. We must not try to imagine one solitary tree in the midst on every side. As we may perhaps say, “The Apple Tree grows well in such and such a country,” meaning the Apple Tree as a “kind,” so here, the Tree of Life, in the vision, grows along the street and by the river, on this side and on that side, in abundance, and produces its fruit with profuseness and regularity every month.

The leaves of that tree are for the health of the Nations. It is not “healing,” as if implying sickness that needs to be remedied. There is no sickness then. These are health-giving foliage ensuring that the ills of former days do not recur now, nor forever. The curse, with all its sad implications, is gone, and shall not exist any more.

His servants shall serve Him; not in arduous toiling, but in willing, delightful, happy service, which is a joy. If these servants are sons, that does not preclude service, for even that Blessed One was a Servant-Son. In the joy of that service we shall gaze on Him. We shall contemplate, with unclouded vision, the Face of Him Whom we have loved for so long without seeing; and as we look on Him, His likeness will be, for His pleasure, imprinted upon us. “His Name shall be on their foreheads.”

In that glorious place the light is unfading and the day unending. But it is a divine light, independent of either Sun

or Lamp. It is the Lord God Who shines upon them.

Like the Christ Himself, the words given to John are, "Faithful and True." They are the words of the God of the prophets, Who for so long spake to men and through men, conveying His Mind, but now the consummation has come. Blessed is that man whose life is ordered by the words of prophecy.

For a second time (see 19 :10) John falls to do homage to an angel. Again he is reminded that even the angels are but fellow-bondmen. Homage is for God alone.

The time is near now. The unsealed Book is given to men, and men will be judged according to their response, or lack of it, to the revelation of God. The coming of the Lord will settle destinies for the righteous and unrighteous alike. Happy are those, who, when He comes, are found with white robes, for this is right to the Tree of Life and the Glory, and all outside is uncleanness and sin.

"Alpha and Omega" of v. 13, is "Jesus" of v. 16. All the purposes of God, the beginning and the ending of them, are in Jesus. He is the Root of David, because He was before David, and He is the Offspring of David, because He came after David and from David's line; and when He came, He came to David's town. Here, however, He is not the Sun of Righteousness but the Morning Star. The Church waits for Him as such, but as such He will not be known to Israel or to the Nations. As we wait for Him, and look for Him, we watch the horizon and say, "Come!" It is the voice of the Spirit in the Bride. This is not a gospel invitation. We shall have that shortly. This is a cry from a waiting Church to her absent Lord—"Come!" Let every saint who hears join in the call. We long for Him. We yearn for Him. We cry—"Come!" But now we look about, and think of others. Is there yet a soul around with no Saviour? a thirsty one? Let him come, and whosoever he be let him take the water of Life. Gratuitously, freely, it is available still to him who will but come to Christ.

The last warning of our Bible now is sounded. Let no man tamper with the inspired volume. Let no man dare to add, or detract, from what God has written. If a man so dares, God shall add judgment to him, and deny him any part in the Life of that City.

The last promise follows. How many promises we have had in sixty-six books of Holy Scripture. Here is the last



one; and how sweet, "Surely I come quickly." May we each, and all, be able to join, unhesitatingly, unreservedly, in the concluding prayer of all scripture, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." May we be so weaned from earth's things, so willing to leave them at any moment, that we can say resolutely with John, "Amen, come, Lord Jesus."

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

"Lord we shall see Thee as Thou art,  
In all Thy glory there;  
We shall behold Thee face to face,  
Thy glorious image bear.

With what delight, what wond'ring love,  
Each thrilling heart shall swell,  
When we, as sharers of Thy joy,  
Are called with Thee to dwell."

—(Concluded)

## **FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTALS**

### **(25) The Priesthood of Christ (Part 2)**

by J. B. HEWITT, Chesterfield

**THE SUFFICIENCY OF HIS PRIESTHOOD.** (Hebrews 7.25-28. The writer has shown the inferiority of the Levitical priesthood, it was temporary and provisional (v. 18,19); the new order will be unchangeable and uninterrupted by death (v. 20-25). Christ's priesthood will be perpetual, marked by endless life and a perfect salvation (v. 24,25).

This Priest could not have had a predecessor and most certainly can never have a successor.

**HIS POWERFUL PROVISION** (v.25a). He is not only a continuing priest (v.24); but a capable priest (v. 25). He has ability because "He lives for evermore" (Rev. 1.18). He is able to sympathize (4.15); able to succour (2.18); and able to save (7.25). This truth is given great prominence in the N.T. (See Rom. 14.4; 16.25; 2 Cor. 9.8; Acts 20.32; Eph. 3.20; Phil. 3. 21; 2 Tim. 1.12; and Jude 24). May we be occupied daily with Divine Ability, His Activity is not only continuous but, it is a complete salvation, "to the uttermost."

**HIS PERPETUAL INTERCESSION** (v.25c) gives us assurance. He saves and keeps. Priesthood is preventative, Advocacy is restorative (ch. 9.24; 1 John 2.2). Three functions are linked with His priesthood—offering, intercession and

blessing. Of these the first was completed at the Cross, the second shall be finished when all need for it is passed, but the third shall never cease. We can approach God through Him (John 14.6), "Them that draw near" is another theme in this book (4.16; 7.25; 10.1; 10.22; 11.6; 12.18,22).

**HIS PEERLESS PERSON** (v.26). Here is the purity of the priest. These are the personal characteristics of Christ: "*Holy*"—Godward. Holiness of character and reverence toward God. He is the most suitable, acceptable and admirable person to officiate in the presence of God for us. "*Guileless*"—manward. Seeking not their hurt, but only their salvation. He is blameless and guileless and unstained is His dealings with men. "*Undefiled*"—inward. Free from all moral impurity or defilement. In Him beauty is combined with purity. His life was one of essential and unblemished purity, free from all taint, impossible of contracting defilement. "Separated from sinners"—upward. By the wonder of His character in life, and in death and in ascension. His moral excellence makes Him utterly unique. "*Made higher than the heavens*"—Godward. His moral glory is attested by God and He has been received to God's throne as entirely worthy of His place there. His life is endless (v.25); His intercession ceaseless (v. 25); and His character sinless (v. 26).

**HIS PERFECT SACRIFICE** (v. 27). Their sacrifices were frequent. His was final; they offered animals, He offered Himself; they were sinners, He was sinless. His all-sufficient sacrifice required no repetition, but dealt with sins once for all (10.11,12). Christ on the Cross guarantees peace of conscience, while Christ on the Throne gives peace of heart.

#### **THE SOVEREIGNTY OF HIS PRIESTHOOD** (8.1-3)

This consecrated Priest is now in the place of Majesty (v.1), and the place of ministry (v. 2-5). His heavenly enthronement is in contrast to the earthly sanctuary. A Priest not of the material and the transient, but of the spiritual and the eternal, all is heavenly and divine.

His supremacy as priest in a position of status and honour—"right hand" (v.1). His sanctuary is heavenly in character and construction (v.2). The More Excellent Ministry is bound up with the new Covenant of Love (v.6).

(a) *The Ground of it*—based on His better ministry, His better covenant, His better promises. (b) *The Grace of it*—God deals with Israel mercifully. (c) *The Gifts of it*—set forth in v. 10-12, in quoting Jer. 31.31-34. These are the

receipt of His pardon, the sweetness of His pity, the fellowship with His Person, the communion of His presence, and delight in His precepts.

**THE SATISFACTION OF HIS WORK** (chapter 10). In chapter nine we have a better sanctuary (v. 1-12); then the better sacrifice (9.13-10.10). The shortcomings of the Old Order (v.1-4). It was Divinely made; but it fell far short of God's full and final purpose. It was a temporal arrangement (v. 3). It was a partial arrangement (v. 1,4). Under the New Order, love offers a voluntary sacrifice which forever takes away sin (v.12,14). The Lord Jesus came with the prepared body (v. 5), the sovereign will (v. 7,9), the old promise (v.7), the full and final offering (v.10). Thus the sinner is "purged" (v.2), "sanctified" (v.10), and perfected (v.14). The witness of the Spirit confirms all (v.15-18), these secure the way into the Holiest (v.17-25). Where the worship of the saint is accepted.

## **ZECHARIAH**

by **E. R. BOWER, Worcester** (continued)

### **THE FIRST VISION.**

The horseman upon the red horse. (1.7-17).

vv. 7-8. "I saw by night—the night of the 24th Sebat; "stood" —was standing; "the bottom"—a certain hollow; "red, speckled and white"—perhaps, red, sorrel and white.

There is a three month interval between vv. 6 and 7 during which came Haggai's revelation of the 24th day of the ninth month (Hag. 2.10-25)—which see and compare, especially 2.20-23. From what follows it is obvious that there was more than one horseman, but it is the rider upon the red horse who catches the eye of the prophet and who is "beyond controversy" the Angel of Jehovah. Cf. v. 11.

vv. 9-10. "The angel that talked with me" (lit. 'IN me'; see Num. 12.6-9 where 'in him' should be read, and Hab. 2.1 (margin)) appears to be an interpreter guide and we see him again in 1.18; 2.3; 4.1,5; 5.5,10; 6.4; Such guides are not infrequent in Scripture, e.g. Acts 12.7 and often in the Revelation. It is not the angel who answers the prophet but the horseman upon the red horse—the Angel of Jehovah. Upon the coincidence of the prophet's question and its answer, with the question and answer at 6.4-5, it seems as if the horsemen and the chariots are identical—if not in fact, then in purpose. Cf. Rev. 6.1-8. Whether the horses

here and in Rev. 6 are identical seems uncertain, but in any case only one rider is identified here. The 'messengers' are identified simply by the colours of their horses. In chap. 6 the 'chariots' appear to identify with the 'horses' of Rev. 6. The mission of the horsemen reminds us of Job 1.

v. 11. "They"—the anonymous horsemen. Another reminder of the duties of the heavenly host. Their report is that the earth was at rest, and the heathen at ease (v. 15). But not for long! Cf. Is. 14.7.

v. 12. See 2 Chron. 36.21; Jer. 25. 9-12 (v. 12 in particular—"WHEN 70 years are accomplished"); Dan. 9.1-2; If the teaching concerning Daniel's 70th week is accepted, i.e. that this particular week awaits fulfilment, this 'when' is significant in the present context. Is Zechariah, like John, transported in Spirit to the "day of the Lord"? For the believer, cf. Rom. 8.26-27.

v.13 conveys a "Fear not" such as those given at times of revelation, e.g. Dan. 10.12; Rev. 1.17. These are words of comfort for a waiting people. See Is. 51.3.

vv. 14-15. "A little"—a little while. Jehovah has always shown His jealous love for His people by His constant longsuffering and care for them, and His love will continue through until the completion of His purpose for them—and beyond—for His love, as He Himself, is eternal. See Ex. 20.5. We notice that it is Judah rather than Israel here; this because the 70 years concerned Judah (Jer. 25). It is true that Judah may embrace the whole nation for Jerusalem was the 'place of the Name' for Israel as a whole. The heathen were, and are, the instruments of God for the working out of His purposes, including His judgments, for Israel, but this time they had gone too far. See Is. 47.6. The LXX reads the second part of this verse as, ". . . the heathen which combine to set upon (Israel) . . . and they combined to set upon . . ." Still true today!

vv. 16-17. "Yet . . ." Zechariah and Haggai had urged forward the building of the House (Ezra 5; Hag. 1.8;) but it was but a shadow of its former glory (Hag. 2.3) nevertheless the "LATTER glory shall be greater than the former" i.e. greater than the first (Solomon's) Temple (Hag. 2.9). This we know awaits its fulfilment and the fulfilment of Hag. 2.6-7. The stretching of the line is in chap. 2. Cf. Ezek. 40 and Rev. 11. Jerusalem is to be chosen AGAIN. See 2.12;

3.2; Is. 14.1 and cf. Hos. 5.15-6.3 with Zech. 12.10. Israel acknowledges their offences and pleads, 'Guilty.'

**THE SECOND VISION.** The four horns and the four smiths. (1.18-21).

vv. 18-19. Horns are symbols of power and hostility. e.g. 1 Kings 22.11. It is possible that the beasts of Dan. 7 are seen here, but there are diverse opinions, but certainly Gentile powers are represented. If the 'workmen' are to 'frighten' the Gentiles, then who are the workmen? The "How long?" of v. 12 has an echo in Rev. 6.10. Are the horsemen and the workmen connected? Or the workmen and the living creatures of Rev. 4 and 7?

vv. 20-21. "Carpenters"—workmen; "fray"—frighten. The then present or the yet (even now) future? The apocalyptic language of the visions is obvious and reminiscent of the visions of Daniel, hence the workmen could be representative of the supernatural powers that control the nations. See Dan. 10. Some suggest that the wording of the vision suggests that each succeeding Gentile nation is the workman that frightens its predecessor — Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome. In reading these visions the prophetic present whereby future events are seen as having already taken place, must be borne in mind.

**THE THIRD VISION.** The measuring of Jerusalem. (2.1-13).

vv. 1-2. In 1.19, Judah, Israel, Jerusalem; 1.21, Judah alone; here, Jerusalem. There appears to be no definite indication that the 'surveyor' was an angel, and in any case the survey was called off. Cf. the 'man' of Ezek. 9 and 40, and recall the 'measuring' of Rev. 11. 1-2. Think, too, of Ps. 48, "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth" and see the force of Is. 14.13. See 1.16.

vv. 3-5. These words appear to mean, ". . . the angel that talked with me went forth (to meet the man with the line) and another angel appeared to meet him, and said to him (i.e. the angel interpreter), Run, speak to this young man (the surveyor), saying . . ." Some see the 'surveyor' as the rider upon the red horse, and the young man as the prophet. The implication is that the surveyor was told not to measure the city, for it was to be enclosed with walls no longer. Cf. Is. 26.1-4, ". . . salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks," perhaps a reminder of the pillar of cloud and of fire of the wilderness journey, and was not the Angel of

Jehovah in the cloud? Jerusalem is the great concern of these visions and will, without doubt, be the concern of the prophet's further revelation. Our Lord's preview of the last days, ended with His lament, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem . . ." Refs : Ps. 34.7; Is. 4.5,6; 49.19-20; Matt. 23.34-39).

vv. 6-7. "Ho! ho!" or, "Woe! Woe!"; "Deliver thyself, O Zion" or, "Ho! Zion" or, "Woe! Zion!" Israel and Judah had, quite literally, been scattered to the winds. Israel to Syria and the cities of the Medes (2 Kings 17.6); Judah to Babylon (2 Kings 25.21) and the book of Esther records that the Jews had been scattered from India to Ethiopia (1.1; 3.8; 3.12-14; 8.5-9). From these dispersed people, earlier calls to return had resulted in a mere 42,000 returning (Ezra 2.64; Neh. 7.66)—not enough to repopulate the land (Neh. 11.1-3) — for many remained in the land of their captivity and must have numbered many thousands. It is to them that the call goes out, "Back to the Land"—to Zion and the safety of the wall of fire; to the indwelling glory of their God. (cf. Is. 48.20; 52.11; Jer. 51.6,9,45. It has taken many centuries for the call to be obeyed but in this 20th century A.D. we may see fulfilment taking place before our eyes.

vv. 8-9. It has been said that v. 8 is the most difficult verse in this prophecy and it is possible that the "oracle of Jehovah" (i.e. the 'thus saith the Lord') belongs to vv. 6-7 thus completing a threefold 'saith the Lord' in those verses. This would clarify what follows here.

"After the glory" for His own glory, or after the vision, or with the glory, or with insistence, are other renderings. Who is the speaker here? The pronouns point to no particular person hitherto introduced. As vv. 10-13 are admittedly Messianic by both Jewish and Christian commentators, is not the speaker, by inference, the Messiah Himself? "Jehovah sent by Jehovah" (Baron). The Servant-Messenger of Jehovah?

"His eye"—My eye. A reference to Deut. 32.10—the Song of Jehovah (31.19, 22,30) in which the judgments and the mercy of God for Israel at their "latter end" are set forth. Cf. Hag. 2.20-23. "Escape to Zion" for the anointed King is there; the Son of God reigns and has the heathen among whom you dwell as His inheritance, breaking them with a rod of iron (Ps. 2; Rev. 2.27).

"A spoil to their servants"—see Hab. 2.7-8. "Ye shall

know" —a frequently occurring phrase among the prophets, e.g. Ezek. 6.7-10; 39.10. Cf. Is. 61.1-3; Luke 4.16-21;

vv. 10-12. "Joined to the Lord"—flee for refuge to; "To Him" or, "To Me" for a people; "I will dwell"—they shall dwell; 'unto thee' i.e., to the daughter of Zion.

Surely we are upon Messianic ground. God with us, Immanuel (Is. 7.14; 12.6; Zeph. 3.14-15). An ancient promise fulfilled (Is. 7.14; Matt. 1.22-23). God is manifest in flesh (1 Tim. 3.16). The Gathering of the nations was also promised (Is. 2.1-4) for the last days. Isaiah's vision also concerned Judah and Jerusalem. See Zech. 8.20-23; 14.16-19; Is. 40.9; Matt. 25.

"Holy Land"—the sole occurrence in Scripture of this delightful phrase, but common enough today. Has the Land ever been a truly 'holy' land, as for instance in 14.20-21? The fulfilment of Ex. 19. 5-6 is still future (cf. Deut. 7.6; Is. 62.12; Lev. 20.22-26). Jerusalem had been chosen before (2 Chron. 6. 1-6; Cf. Ps. 48); it will have a second choosing.

v. 11. "Be silent"—hush; "Holy habitation"—the habitation of His holiness. See Hab. 2.20—Jehovah is in His holy Temple; Zeph. 1.7—the day of Jehovah is at hand. Cf. Ps. 46 (10); Rev. 11.19; 15.5-6; (To be continued)

## JUSTIFICATION

by A. LECKIE, Airdrie (continued)

Now let us consider *justified by His blood*. In Romans 5.9 we read "Being now justified by His blood we shall be saved from wrath through Him." Here is the *basis of justification*. The Basis is Calvary. There are other Scriptures that direct our attention to this truth. In verse 19 of this same chapter, the apostle goes on to say "for as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One, shall many be made righteous." In 2 Corinthians 5.21, the same apostle writes "For He made Him to be sin for us, Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." We shall think of these three portions of God's Word. Romans 5.9 teaches that the basis of justification is His blood shed sacrificially at Calvary; blood shed that has satisfied the claims of divine justice against sin. This justification is a present possession; note the apostle's use of the word "now." The sinner who believes in Jesus neither hopes nor expects to

be justified, he is now justified. How absurd it is then to suggest that the word "being" in this verse signifies that justification is a process. "Being" simply refers to all who during the course of this day of grace are justified. In verse 19 of Romans chapter 5, the basis of justification is "one man's obedience," our Saviour's obedience; not His obedience during His entire life, but that one act of obedience on the Cross when He handed Himself over to the judgment of a Holy God against sin. Certain who relate the two unrelated truths of Election and Atonement make much of the apostle's statement, "Many shall be made righteous." The word "many" is not used by the apostle in terms of availability but in terms of result, or better, in terms of ultimate classification.

And now that solemnly interesting verse in 2 Corinthians 5.21. I like to think of this verse in this way, "God made my Saviour to be what by no process He could have become that I might be made in Him what by no process I could personally have become." God made Him to be sin for us. Some like to render the verse in this way "He made Him to be a sin-offering for us;" I, however accept it as it is in our Authorised Version "He made Him to be sin for us." What a thought! On the Cross God made the Saviour, Who knew no sin, to be sin for us and dealt with Him as He must deal with sin. I heard of a preacher who said "God made Him to be me that I might be made Him." I am sure the preacher did not realise this was tantamount to blasphemy. God did not make the Saviour a sinner for that's what I am. God made Him to be sin that we might be made, not here righteous in a practical way, but the **RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN HIM**—What I have been made **IN HIM**. This righteousness is therefore neither practical nor progressive in its character.

We think now of being *justified by grace*. This relates to the *bestowal of justification*. In grace God bestows justification. What a verse is this in Romans 3.24! "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." In Titus 3.7, the apostle repeats this great truth, that being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." In Romans 3.24 the apostle speaks not only of being justified "by grace" but being justified "freely." This word "freely" is used frequently in the New Testament; our Lord uses it in John



15.25, "They hated Me without a cause" (freely). The apostle Paul uses it in 2 Thessalonians 3.8, "Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought (freely)." Upon believing in Jesus we were justified "without a cause" because we were sinners without merit and we were justified "for nought" because we were bankrupt and without means. This justification was bestowed upon us "by His Grace." This takes account not so much of our unworthiness but the disposition of God's heart. God might righteously have left us in our guilt and without hope but in wondrous grace He took the initiative; in grace and at infinite cost He procured our justification and by the same grace bestowed it upon us.

We next consider "*justification by faith.*" This relates to the means by which we obtain justification. If grace is God's side in the matter, faith is ours. In Romans 5.1, we read "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God." We have already thought of Romans 3.26 "that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." If however the Bible tells us how we can be justified it also tells us how we cannot be justified, (Romans 3.20). "Therefore, by the deeds of the Law shall no flesh be justified in His sight." And Romans 3.28, "therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the Law." Justification by faith and not by works is the subject of Galatians 2.15-21. Let us think of the means by which we obtain justification (Romans 5.1). "Therefore being justified by faith." The faith by which we are justified is not faith in any abstract way; much more is necessary than faith in everything God reveals or faith in Jesus' existence. It is faith in Jesus' Person and work that is required, "Him which believeth in Jesus." Faith in the Person of God's Son enables God to reckon to that individual the value of His precious blood. In that connection it might be well to consider the difference between James 2.21 and Romans 4.2,3. In Romans 4.2,3 we read "For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory but not before God. For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." In James 2.21 we read, "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?" These two portions appear at first sight to be contradictory; Romans 4.2 states that Abraham was not justified by works but by faith. James 2.21 states that Abraham was, in fact, justified by

works. There is quite a simple answer to this apparent difficulty. In Romans 4.2,3 where we are told Abraham was justified by faith, the Old Testament quotation is from Genesis 15.6 and this was in connection with the promise of the birth of a son. Naturally, physically, this promise was incapable of fulfilment but Abraham abandoned all that pertained to nature of itself and put his trust in God and was accounted righteous. In James 2.21 where we are told that Abraham was justified by works the reference is to Genesis 22 where Abraham offered up Isaac. Abraham was justified by faith before Isaac was born; he was justified by works some thirty years afterward, "in that he offered up Isaac." Abraham wasn't justified by works because his faith was weak, rather Abraham's works were conclusive proof of the genuineness of his faith. Justification by works is not really related to what men might see or say; men can easily lead astray. Only God saw Abraham offer up Isaac. The other example in James Chapter 2 of justification by works is that of Rahab when she received the messengers. Only God saw Rahab do this. Justification by works is something deeper than what men might see. An important matter too, is this; when we read in Romans 4.3 and elsewhere of "faith being reckoned unto Abraham for righteousness," this does not mean "faith" instead "of righteousness," but faith unto righteousness." "Faith instead of righteousness" makes faith to be meritorious; there is only one ground of justification and that is Calvary.

In conclusion, let me briefly refer to some of the blessed results of justification. Romans 5.1 states "We have peace with God." In Philippians 4.7 we read of "the Peace of God." "The Peace of God" has to do with the heart and mind, is connected with the cares of this life and is God's daily provision for me. "Peace with God" has to do with the conscience, is connected with my guilt and relates to my eternal well-being; my conscience no longer connects divine judgement against my sin with the future but with the past, past and past forever on my Sinless Substitute and Saviour on the Cross. There is now judicially nothing between my soul and God and thus we consciously enjoy Peace with God. Romans chapter 8 informs that another blessing of justification is, there can be no accusation against the justified. Verses 33 and 34 of that chapter should read like this, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's

elect? Shall God that justifieth? Who is he that condemneth? Shall Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again . . . ?” The moment I believed in Jesus every accusing voice that might be raised against me was forever silenced, be that voice from Heaven, Earth or Hell.

“I hear the accuser roar  
of ills that I have done  
I know them all and thousands more  
Jehovah findeth none.”

## **MARK**

by **JAMES PENDER**

### **CHAPTER 3**

1. When superior to ordinances, help and restoration can be rendered to those who are crippled in service.

2. This draws out the enmity of those who are unable to serve, being blinded by ordinances (the Sabbath).

3. If we are to be made available for service we must take a public stand.

4. He silences them with His word and wisdom.

5. With His work. Blindness and hardness of heart in those who are the Custodians of God's things (Matt. 23.2) is grieving to the Lord. **HE WAS ANGRY.** They were seeking to justify themselves before men (Luke 16) abomination. It takes the Power of God to render Levitical service in the midst of opposition.

6. Elements of opposition that a true Levite has to guard against— (1) The Pharisee—appearing before men to be what he is not. (2) The Herodian—moving politically in support of his own party, a combination of these two elements is destruction to the truth and destroy any features of Christ in the believer.

7. Escape from that element of opposition is by withdrawing from the Synagogue **TO THE SEA** where there is room for expansion of service so that outside of this system that is dominated by evil and controlled by those who are blinded themselves and who confuse and blind others, the people are attracted to His person.

8. His great power is displayed in liberating and emancipating all who come in contact with Him. He takes up an elevated position. v. 13.

12. He does not accept testimony from what is connected with uncleanness. Moral elevation is necessary to render testimony to HIS person and work, so in HIS Sovereignty He Calls His servants and APPOINTS them and SENDS them forth to preach.

14. He works through persons who are morally elevated, having given them moral power.

15. What is their qualification for going forth in HIS service? HE NAMES them. HE takes account of their character. In numbers progress increases, so that the order is—You withdraw from that which, although religious is destructive, to the SEA where there is expansion—where you get enlarged thoughts of SERVICE and an enlarged SPHERE and freedom of movement where you are morally elevated and fitted for SERVICE PUBLICLY.

#### MARK CHAPTER 4

Key parable v. 13. Interpretation (14-20) The seed is first by the wayside (INATTENTIVENESS)—Satan v. 15. Then on stony ground, (IMPULSIVENESS)—Flesh v. 16-17. Then among thorns (INDULGENCE)—The World v. 18-19. Then in good ground (REALTY) — Faith v. 20. Light v. 21-25. These verses at the end of the interpretation correspond to verses 9-13 at the end of the parable. The word received in FAITH gives LIFE and yields fruit. It must also SHINE forth in testimony. Light is given to be seen. The WORD goes forth to be heard yet these ends may not be realised (v. 12-23). With use goes INCREASE, with neglect goes LOSS (v. 24-25). GROWTH (only given by Mark)—it assumes the good soil. Growth is of God. Paul may plant, Apollos may water, but God giveth increase. The seed once sown is beyond the power of the sower.

THE MUSTARD SEED the smallness, its beginning and the vastness of its end. Small beginning but great issue.

PRINCIPLE OF TEACHING He adapted His instruction to the capacity of HIS hearers.

THE STORM (v. 35-36). It is night and it is stormy. The assembly is tossed on the sea of the world. HE still rebukes our unbelief by turning great storms into great calms.

THE MUSTARD TREE (v. 30-32). Abnormal growth during the absence of the Sower. The eternal growth, the mustard seed and INTERNAL CORRUPTION in the Leaven of Christianity. Christendom has developed into a

powerful world constitution, and has become the lodging place of the fowls of the air, unclean beings (v. 15). The church has assumed a form upon earth which was never according to the mind of God. We do not accept the form which things have taken in the world. The great worldly organisation into which christianity has dropped. We stand outside them all.

**THE KINGDOM OF GOD** (Rom. 14). The moral sway of God. The reign of Grace brought about by the sitting of a man in Heaven. The one who believes comes under HIS sway. The testimony of Christ has been adopted by man down here and been made to serve man's ends and the outcome is the **MUSTARD TREE**, a great conspicuous system which affords shelter to all the fowls of Heaven. In v. 3 the Parable, the rejected servant sowing the seed (v. 26). He leaves the earth while the seed grows. Th picture of **THE LAKE STORM** shows the trials and dangers of HIS own during this age, but He is with them.

### MARK CHAPTER 5

There are prayers here (1) The Demoniacs v. 10. (2) The Demons v. 12. (3) The Gadarenes v. 17. (4) The Healed Man v. 18. He is self tortured yearning for deliverance yet unwilling to be set free.

**DOUBLE PERSONALITY.** Longing for Liberty, yet clinging to possessions. Two forces within us. A love for evil and a longing for good. The Gadarenes thought more of their financial and material loss than the Man's moral gain. Countless numbers still with Christ far from them, for fear HIS fellowship may occasion some financial or personal loss. Seeking to save their possessions they lose their souls.

**MISERABLE SOUL** (v. 1-5). **A MIGHTY SAVOUR** (v. 6-10). **A PANICK AMONG SWINE** (v. 11-13). **A GREAT SENSATION** (v. 14-17). **AN OBEDIENT SERVANT** (v. 18-20). **PANICK AMONG SWINE** (v. 11-13). The servants power over **SATAN, WORK, DISEASE, DEATH, JAIRUS DAUGHTER.** He was a ruler, an exponent of the Law, but cannot give Life. Do we go to the Lord about our children when they are in dangerous ways both Physically and Morally? If there were more parents resorting to the Lord on their behalf, fewer children would go astray.

**WOMAN WITH THE ISSUE OF BLOOD.** The works of Sin, Interruption, Blessing suspended to strengthen faith, HIS power to heal Jarius' daughter would be no less by means of healing this poor woman. She had suffered as long as the little girl had lived (12 yrs.) No-one is ever blessed at the expense of another. What we regard as interruptions may be Divine interventions. Our own need should teach us to be sympathetic to others.

**WOMAN** The human side, responsibility (Rom.)

**MAID** The Divine side, Sovereignty (Eph.)

**ROMANS** Without strength **EPHESIANS** Dead.

**THE WOMAN.** Grace to the Gentiles during the suspension of Israel's blessing—this is dispensational.

**THE LITTLE GIRL.** In spite of her desperate condition and the unbelief that mocks at Him, she arises at HIS word. So will Israel (Ezek. 37 and Dan. 12). When Satan rules men they become unclean and dangerous. The mouthpiece of Satan. They speak with the voice of the possessed. They can imitate the dead. They have intelligence as to the person of Christ and do not dispute His right. They recognise him as their future judge.

**THE DEMONIAK MAN.** The work of God takes in mankind in its varied relations—**MAN, WOMAN** and **GIRL.** shows the doctrine of the gospel. **ROMANS—INTELLIGENCE—MAN INWARD DELIVERANCE WOMAN—NEWNESS OF LIFE** (Rom. 6.6) **THE GIRL** in order that we may serve in newness of Spirit (Rom. 7.6) Christ is seen.

**CHRIST IS SEEN** delivering **THE MAN** from the **POWER OF SIN.** **THE WOMAN** from the **PLAGUE OF SIN.** **THE GIRL** from the **PENALTY OF SIN.** The Lord occupies the ground He clears. **THE GIRL,** 12 yrs. old. Life given—Newness of Life in Rom. (Walk) **THE EVIDENCE OF LIFE —MOVEMENT** (walking) **FOOD**—that which sustains life and builds up constitution for service. What Romans produces, Ephesians finishes. The girl has not reached maturity. God's idea is a woman (**THE CHURCH**)—development. This involves moral process Eph. 4.12-13 Mark 5 The option is from within ourselves. In Ch. 6 the opposition is from without. From His own countrymen and the Herodians. It is necessary to know ourselves. In me that is, in my flesh dwelleth no good thing. The woman with

the issue. The Law of the Spirit of life—making free from the law of sin and death (Rom. 8) seen in the ruler's daughter. His own countrymen were astonished at His teaching but were offended. His sending forth His servants answered to the teaching of Rom. 12.1—living sacrifices—intelligent service. That is being susceptible to the teaching of what goes before fits for service. All service being rendered in the power of the Spirit (v. 13). They annointed with oil many that were sick and healed them.

## THE CHURCH

by JOHN CAMPBELL, Larkhall (continued)

### THE FUNCTIONS OF THE ASSEMBLY

The Church Local claims Matt. 18.20 as its ground and authority for gathering; while in actuality the verse in its immediate context, is linked with reconciliation between persons in disagreement in the matter of trespass. A more appropriate verse would be Acts 20.7: —Upon the first day of the week, the disciples came together to break bread. The Apostle Paul was not present when the Remembrance Feast was instituted, yet gives a detailed history of its inauguration in 1 Cor. 11, 23-34. Among the many functions of the Church Local, this should surely take precedence. A few thoughts on these verses may be helpful in explaining this ordinance.

#### 1. THE BREAKING OF BREAD

|                |            |                                 |           |
|----------------|------------|---------------------------------|-----------|
| Of Divine      | Origin     | —Received of the Lord           | v.23      |
| A Distinct     | Obligation | —I delivered unto you           | v.23      |
| A Dire         | Occasion   | —The same night—<br>betrayed—   | v.23      |
| A Demonstrated | Ordinance  | —He took the bread—<br>cup      | v.24      |
| A Deliberate   | Object     | —In remembrance<br>of Me        | v.24 & 25 |
| A Delightful   | Occupation | —As often—ye do shew            | v.26      |
| A Definite     | Order      | —Let a man examine<br>himself   | v.28      |
| A Deadly       | Outcome    | —For this cause—<br>weak & sick | v.30      |

#### 2. THE BAPTISM OF BELIEVERS

The Church Local recognises one other ordinance, be-

lievers baptism. *As an ordinance*, the Church Local, upon request, will baptise all or any who profess Jesus as Lord. In the grand commission of Matt. 28.19,20 gospel preachers are authorised to baptise those who believe. Four questions clarify this important ordinance.

|                              |                                     |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Who are baptised?            | Only believers in the Lord Jesus.   |
| How are they baptised?       | By immersion.                       |
| Why are they baptised?       | It is the Lord's command.           |
| When should one be baptised? | As soon as the truth of it is seen. |

*As a doctrine*, Heb. 6.2, it carries spiritual responsibilities.

|                               |              |
|-------------------------------|--------------|
| It is an act of obedience     | Acts 10.48   |
| It is an act of righteousness | Matt. 3.15   |
| It is an act of conscience    | 1 Peter 3.21 |
| It is an act of identity      | Rom. 6. 5    |

To be taught the truth of Baptism, and to understand, in measure, its implications, and then disobey; is an act of rebellion. While God is lavish with His Grace, He is restrictive with His Truth. John 7.17 discloses a basis condition for progress in the knowledge of Divine things. "If any man will *do* His will, he *shall know* of the doctrine."

Baptism is the first essential public act of acknowledgement of the Lordship of Christ; a testimony to the world that you have forever severed your links with it. Thus it is an act of *Obedience*.

When the Lord Jesus was baptised by John in Jordan, He silenced John's protestation by declaring, "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." Not only does the Lord ratify John's ministry; He endorses it! If the Son of God saw in Baptism, an act of *Righteousness*, who are we to question its fitness!

The Apostle Peter, in his first epistle, chapter 3.21, by inspired analogy, reasons from Noah's salvation by water, that our salvation and baptism provide sufficient testimony to establish inner peace and harmony of conscience; that moral monitor of the soul. The word "answer" in v. 21 of 1 Peter 3, differs from v. 15 of the same chapter. The former, v. 21 is the result of diligent investigation, a question settled; the latter, v. 15, is a defensive reply. From v. 21, we learn, Baptism is an act of Conscience.



The Apostle Paul, in Rom. 6.3-11, presents baptism as an act of Identify with the Lord's death, burial and resurrection; Vs. 3, 4 & 5. What the Lord Jesus passed through actually, we undergo typically. The practical truth of this section, particularly vs. 11-13, is explained by the verbs therein:—Reckoning, dying, reigning, obeying and yielding.

|           |  |             |
|-----------|--|-------------|
| Reckoning | —yourselves dead unto sin.               |             |
|           | Give sin a Sadducee's burial.            | Acts. 23.8. |
| Dying     | ( —baptised into His death.              | v.3.        |
|           | ( —buried by baptism into death.         | v.4.        |
|           | ( —raised up from the dead.              | v.4.        |
|           | ( —planted in the likeness of His death. | v.5.        |
|           | ( —reckon yourselves dead to sin.        | v.11.       |
| Reigning  | —sin dethroned, obedience withdrawn.     |             |
| Obeying   | —loyalty by lustful living, terminated.  |             |
| Yielding  | —loyalty transferred from sin to God.    |             |

#### A NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH EXERCISES—

|                 |                   |                                |
|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| Reception       | to the Company.   | Acts. 9.26.                    |
| Instruction     | in the Company.   | 1 Cor. 14.3.                   |
| Discipline      | in the Company.   | 1 Thess. 5.14,<br>1 Cor. 5.13. |
| Excommunication | from the Company. | 1 Cor. 5.11.                   |

#### RECEPTION TO THE COMPANY.

When Saul, after his conversion, the leading persecutor of the early church — known then as those of "This Way", sought fellowship with the disciples, they were rightly afraid; because of his opposition to Jesus of Nazareth, boldly proclaimed as the Christ. Suspicion of him, engendered serious doubt regarding his professed conversion. Until Barnabas introduced him to them, giving a clear account of all that had happened to him on the Damascus road, where he met the Lord. Here we learn an important lesson in the matter of Reception. No one is received on their testimony. Accredited persons, known to the company, testify to the genuineness of the applicant. Care exercised here, saves many a later sorrow. Better questioned at the door than the desk.

Where there is reasonable doubt, delay is advisable. Until the Church is satisfied the applicant is born again, godly in life and clear in Doctrine.

A past generation bore the stigma of association with the

local church; both from the religious and social spheres of life. The epithet, "The Dippers," was keenly felt from the latter, while persecution was meted out from family and friends and clerics; who with disdain criticised those who desired the joy of the separated position of the Local Assembly.

After the incidents reported in Acts Ch. 5, when Ananias and Sapphira were taken away in death for lying to the Holy Ghost, great fear came on all; and v. 13 states, "Of the rest durst no man join himself to them." It is a serious matter to be received into fellowship, and more serious to act flippantly with God!

## CHRIST IN THE APOCALYPSE (1)

by JOHN B. D. PAGE

### INTRODUCTION

Reading : Revelation 1.1.

Of the opening words to the last book of the Bible, "The revelation of Jesus Christ," one writer says, "There has been much divergence of opinion as to how the term *revelation* is here to be taken; whether in an objective sense as a revelation of Jesus Christ in His manifested glory, or in a subjective sense as a revelation of the ultimate purposes of God given to Jesus Christ in order to show them, by His angel, to His servant John."

In considering these two opinions, there appears to be no need for such divergence. If the book is studied *objectively*, then it is a revelation of Jesus Christ in His manifested glory, which is probably unequalled within the canon of scripture. In fact, A. C. Gaebelein says, "Inasmuch as this last Bible book is the Revelation of Jesus Christ, an 'Unveiling' of Himself, we find in it the completed revelation of His Person and His Glory."

Alternatively, if the book is studied *subjectively*, then it is a communication, which is revealed by God to Jesus Christ for His servants concerning "things which must shortly come to pass." In other words, it is a prophecy which revolves around Christ, for He is the Executor of divine judgments after the rapture of the Church, He is the glorious Bridegroom of the Church at the marriage supper, He is the victorious Warrior in the hour of Israel's apparent defeat,

and He is the Supreme Potentate with all His enemies subjugated under His feet.

Briefly, with an objective study, its purpose is Christological; with a subjective study, the aim is prophetic. But, with both studies, the glories of Christ should be evident, if not foremost.

In many expositions of the Revelation, writers have been occupied chiefly with the symbols and judgments of the book besides the ultimate consummation promised, but such writings, although excellent prophetically, contain little about the manifold glories of Christ Who is paramount throughout the book.

Dr. F. A. Tatford writes, "Prophecy and prediction may find their place herein, but the supreme subject of the Revelation is Christ." He continues, "God is more concerned with the honour and glory of His Son than with the fate of empires, and His final vindication of His Beloved will bring heaven, earth and hell to bended knee and universal acclamation of the Supreme Lord."

In pursuing the Christological theme of the book, we shall endeavour to emulate the Divine Expositor on the Emmaus road as He sought to bring out "things concerning Himself" from the scriptures (Lu. 24.27). Also, the present ministry of the Holy Spirit is to glorify Christ (John 16.14), and so our aim for this series of articles will be Christ exalting.

A distinctive and unusual feature of the Apocalypse is the 285 quotations from, and allusions to, almost every book in the Old Testament, which is unparalleled, for no other New Testament book is comparable. This means not only John's immense knowledge of the Old Testament scriptures but many symbols and much of the underlying imagery in the book are drawn from the Old Testament. Another feature is the many references to the temple and its furnishings besides allusions to its worship, all of which form some of the background to the book.

Thinking of the word "revelation" with which the book opens, we go back in thought for the first mention of the word to a scene in the court of the temple where Simeon, elderly in years but full of the Messianic hope, took the child Jesus, barely six weeks old, into his arms and said with ecstasy, "Lord, . . . mine eyes have seen Thy Salvation,

. . . a Light for *revelation* to the Gentiles, and the Glory of Thy people Israel” (Lu. 2.29-32, RV). With wonder in his eyes, he saw the Babe to be a Personification of Salvation, Light and Glory. The noun “revelation” (*apokalupsis*, Gr.), the first of sixteen occurrences, is used of Christ as “a Light” and, as such, the aged Simeon foretold that Christ would be ‘unveiled’ one day “to the Gentiles.”

Turning to the last mention of the word “revelation,” John who was advanced in years, beheld the same Person, not as the Babe but the Man, Jesus Christ, in the splendour of His glory and majesty, not in the court of the earthly temple but in the heavenly temple. The whole book, entitled “The Revelation,” is devoted to the unveiling of the manifold glories of Christ, which are unfolded in various visions and by several symbols besides being found in numerous and varied names and titles ascribed to Him, which are probably greater in number and variety than those found in other books. To some names and titles, we shall direct our attention to discover a few of the glories of Christ.

A list of these appellations applied to this eminent Person will bring together His many glories. (Note : An ‘X’ after the numeral in the following list is an abbreviation for ‘times’ in the list. E.g. 3X should be read as ‘three times’).

| No. | Name or Title  | Number of Occurrences | References                |
|-----|--|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 1.  | Jesus Christ   | 6                     | 1.1f(2X); 5; 9(2X), 12.17 |
| 2.  | The Faithful Witness   | 1                     | 1.5                       |
| 3.  | The Firstbegotten from the dead  | 1                     | 1.5                       |
| 4.  | The Prince of the kings of the earth   | 1                     | 1.5                       |
| 5.  | I AM   | 4                     | 1.11,17; 22.13,16         |
| 6.  | Alpha and Omega  | 2                     | 1.11; 22.13               |
| 7.  | The First and the Last   | 3                     | 1.11,17; 22.13            |
| 8.  | The Voice  | 2                     | 1.12(cp, v. 10); 4.1      |
| 9.  | The Son of Man   | 2                     | 1.13; 14.14               |
| 10. | The Living One (RV)  | 1                     | 1.18                      |
| 11. | He that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, Who walketh in the midst of the seven golden lampstands (RV, mgn) | 1                     | 2.1                       |
| 12. | The First and the Last, which was dead and is alive  | 1                     | 2.8                       |

| <b>No.</b> | <b>Name or Title</b>  | <b>Number of Occurrences</b> | <b>References</b>   |
|------------|---|------------------------------|---|
| 13.        | He which hath the sharp sword with two edges  | 1                            | 2.12  |
| 14.        | The Son of God, Who hath His eyes like unto a flame of fire, and His feet are like fine brass         | 1                            | 2.18  |
| 15.        | He that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars  | 1                            | 3.1   |
| 16.        | He that is holy   | 1                            | 3.7   |
| 17.        | He that is true   | 1                            | 3.7   |
| 18.        | He that hath the key of David, He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth | 1                            | 3.7   |
| 19.        | The Amen  | 1                            | 3.14  |
| 20.        | The Faithful and True Witness   | 1                            | 3.14  |
| 21.        | The Beginning of the creation of God  | 1                            | 3.14  |
| 22.        | The Lion of the tribe of Judah  | 1                            | 5.5   |
| 23.        | The Root of David   | 1                            | 5.5   |
| 24.        | Lamb (including both 'a Lamb' and 'the Lamb')   | 28                           | 5.6,8,12,13; 6.1,16; 7.9f(2X),14,17; 12.11; 13.8; 14.1; 4(2X); 14.10; 15.3 17.14(2X); 19.7,9; 21.9,14,22f(2X),27; 22.1,3. |
| 25.        | The Angel (including 'Another Angel,' a 'Mighty Angel')   | 8                            | 8.3-5(3X); 10.1, 9f(4X); 18.1.  |
| 26.        | Our Lord  | 1                            | 11.8  |
| 27.        | Christ (including 'His Christ')   | 3                            | 11.15; 12.10 20.4.  |
| 28.        | Jesus   | 6                            | 14.12; 17.6; 19.10(2X); 20.4; 22.16.  |
| 29.        | Lord of lords   | 2                            | 17.14; 19.16.   |
| 30.        | King of kings   | 2                            | 17.14; 19.16.   |
| 31.        | Faithful and True   | 2                            | 19.11   |
| 32.        | The Word of God   | 1                            | 19.13   |
| 33.        | The Tabernacle of God   | 1                            | 21.3  |
| 34.        | Light (Luminary, RV, mgn.)  | 1                            | 21.11   |
| 35.        | The Beginning and the End   | 1                            | 22.13   |
| 36.        | The Root and Offspring of David   | 1                            | 22.16   |
| 37.        | The Bright and Morning Star   | 1                            | 22.16   |
| 38.        | Lord Jesus  | 1                            | 22.20   |
| 39.        | Lord Jesus Christ   | 1                            | 22.21   |

From this list, which is not claimed to be final, it will be seen that there are 95 names and titles, of which 39 are different, used of Christ in this book. They present an art gallery, as it were, of Him in His diverse glories.

Of those repeated, "Lamb," occurring 28 times, is the highest. No less than 26 names and titles occur only once, and so 13 are used more than once.

## THE PLEA OF THE CAPTIVE . . .

by H. M. M.

(ESTHER — THE QUEEN)

Her name - a star <sup>1</sup>  
whose light beams from afar  
from Gentile kingdom's vast domain <sup>2</sup>  
from Holy text, her sacred fame  
is shining still,  
reflecting God's blest character  
and perfect will.

The signature was true,  
and as celestial orbs in skies of blue  
would influence events on earth,  
affecting mighty potentates,  
or those of humble birth,  
such was this one, whose story now we trace  
reminding us of Heaven's own matchless grace.

Her life began with seeming disadvantages, <sup>1</sup>  
her introduction tells us what she lacked,  
in human terms - a dreadful shame,  
her state was such, she could no parents claim.

Yet there was one, a little man, 'tis said <sup>3</sup>  
who, Boaz like, took over from the dead <sup>4</sup>  
as loving kindness from his heart was shown  
and, like The Saviour, took her for his own. <sup>5</sup>

Soon days and months, and years all fly apace,  
and Esther now is found in such a place <sup>6</sup>  
at the appointed time, <sup>7</sup>  
appointment made by Diety,-  
your place, and mine.

Subjected to commandment, see <sup>8</sup>  
how she obeys submissively  
her 'hour had not yet come'  
then bye and bye the one who'd meekly listened  
adopts the role of one who's in command, <sup>9</sup>  
her guileless heart is unafraid,  
for Mighty God is in her heart,  
her choice forever made. <sup>10</sup>

Perhaps to perish, to the king she went, <sup>10</sup>  
that special third day - climax of event, <sup>11</sup>  
and there she stood in beauty, not her own, <sup>12</sup>  
her place of conquest - at the royal throne. <sup>13</sup>

The king saw Esther - (oh what words of comfort! <sup>13</sup>  
like Hagar - by the well of Him that seeth, <sup>14</sup>  
or Isaac, just before he met Rebecca.) <sup>15</sup>  
and she found favour. <sup>13</sup>

The king saw Esther - standing - oh how sweet! <sup>13</sup>  
as royal robes for service round her meet <sup>12</sup>  
like priestly ones before her, now she'll wait <sup>16</sup>  
reaction from the throne to silence break. <sup>17</sup>

The one with power to wield the mighty sceptre  
now holds its golden shaft in grace towards her <sup>13</sup>  
and typifies - at last the gap now bridged  
'twixt Heaven's Golden Throne and earthlings weak  
who in response will touch - with touch of faith  
the One whom finite mortals gladly hold,  
God's mighty One - the Sceptre all of Gold. <sup>18</sup>

What wilt thou? - precious moment at the throne <sup>19</sup>  
as lovingly, He claims afresh His own,  
What wilt thou? - answer wait - !—  
the soul must surely hesitate—and pause—  
for this is Heaven's gate,  
a Holy place, where humans plead -  
to countervail the damage to the King,  
and save the royal seed, <sup>20</sup>

But then afresh, continued aspiration  
for all that God would now establish through her,  
she speaks again, and with what courage meet  
implores with tears, while falling at his feet <sup>21</sup>  
to spare and bless God's people in that land  
and so fulfill all that His heart had planned.

Such lessons true are here for us today,  
 just to be where the Lord appoints our way,  
 'neath blue or cloudy skies, we need not fear,  
 directed by His eye His presence near,<sup>22</sup>  
 though times our feet are led in paths obscure,  
 yet faith can know His purposes are sure,<sup>23</sup>

A star - 'tis true,  
 and so it is with you  
 who in time past in sin and death<sup>24</sup>  
 by nature far from Heaven's birth  
 but now brought nigh through Jesus' Blood,<sup>25</sup>  
 raised up together (blessed word)  
 and seated high above  
 both principalities and powers,<sup>26</sup>  
 His Name, His might forever ours.<sup>27</sup>

O let us go at once to claim  
 this Birthright honour, in His Name,  
 enabled now to stand complete  
 before The Throne—we are 'His Own.'<sup>28</sup>  
 creation of His Hand - His Heart,<sup>29</sup>  
 for evermore of Him a part,<sup>30</sup>  
 This union sealed through precious Blood  
 our souls eternally are one with GOD.<sup>31</sup>

—H. M. M.

\* \* \*

#### REFERENCES

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Esther 2.7 (Newb. Marg.)                               | 17. Num. 3.10; 1 Chron. 23.28;<br>Lev. 9.23,24. |
| 2. Esther 1.1.  | 18. Song of Solomon 5,11-16;<br>Luke 8, 45,46.  |
| 3. Esther 2.5 (Newb. Marg.)                               | 19. Esther 5.3.                                 |
| 4. Ruth 4.10.   | 20. Esther 7.4.                                 |
| 5. Ezekiel 16.1-8; Esther 2.7.                            | 21. Esther 8.3-6.                               |
| 6. Esther 2.16.   | 22. Psalm 32.8.                                 |
| 7. Esther 4.14.   | 23. Ephesians 1.11; 3.11.                       |
| 8. Esther 2.20.   | 24. Ephesians 2.1-3.                            |
| 9. Esther 4.5, 10 & 17.                                   | 26. Ephesians 1.21-23.                          |
| 10. Esther 4.16.  | 25. Ephesians 2. 4-7.                           |
| 11. Esther 5.1; Luke 13.32;<br>Genesis 22.4; 1 Cor. 15.4. | 27. Acts 15.14-17.                              |
| 12. Esther 5.1.   | 28. John 13.1; 17. 6-12 & 24.                   |
| 13. Esther 5.2.   | 29. Ephesians 2.10.                             |
| 14. Genesis 16.13 & 14.                                   | 30. Ephesians 5.30.                             |
| 15. Genesis 24.62,63. (J.N.D.)                            | 31. John 17.22,23.                              |
| 16. Exodus 28.2.  |   |



## **“AMIDST US OUR BELOVED STANDS”**

**CHARLES HADDON SPURGEON (1834—1892)**

Charles Haddon Spurgeon was born at Kelvedon in Essex on January 19th, 1834. When he was ten months old, the family moved to Colchester. A large part of Charles' childhood was spent at Stambourne with his grandparents, and it was while there that Richard Knill of the London Missionary Society made a remarkable prediction concerning him. Greatly taken to the ten-year-old boy and taking him upon his knee he said, "I feel a solemn presentiment that this child will preach the gospel to thousands and God will bless him to their souls." Charles Haddon Spurgeon was converted when he was 15 and died at 57 and in the course of the intervening years, he preached to multitudes the simple gospel that he himself had received and thousands of souls were saved under his ministry. Christ was ever central in his message. No matter what part of the bible gave him his text, sooner or later he found his way to Christ. We listen to him during those years, "Sinner, it is not thy hold of Christ that saves thee—it is Christ; . . . it is not prayer, it is not faith, it is not our doings, it is not our feelings upon which we must trust, but upon Christ, and on Christ alone . . . Let me beseech thee, look only to Christ." "Look only to Christ," that was the central message of the prince of preachers.

"Look only to Christ"—that was the message that brought salvation to his own dark and burdened heart on that never-to-be forgotten snowy Sunday morning, January 6th, 1850. As a boy he had read much of the Puritans. Sin had become a reality, an intolerable burden. God's majesty and his own sinfulness had become such that he confessed, "I could not have gone to heaven with my sin unpardoned, even if I had the offer to do it." In recounting salvation's experience he said, "I resolved that in the town where I lived, I would visit every place of worship in order to find out the way of salvation . . . At last one snowy day, I could not go to the place I determined to go to . . . I turned down a court and there was a Primitive Methodist chapel. I wanted to know how I might be saved . . . Settling down, the service went on but no minister came. At last a very thin-looking man came into the pulpit and opened his bible and read the words, "Look unto Me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth" (Isaiah 45.22). Just setting his eyes upon me as if he knew all my heart, he said, "Young man, you are in trouble . . . You will never get out of it unless you look to Christ." And then, lifting up his hands, he cried out . . . "Look, look, look!" "It is only, look" said he. I saw at once the way of salvation . . . "Look," what a

charming word it seemed to me! Oh, I looked until I could almost have looked my eyes away; and in heaven I will still look in joy unutterable." A simple tablet marks the spot in that little Methodist chapel in Artillery Street, Colchester where Charles Haddon Spurgeon looked to Christ and passed from death unto life.

In the same year, 1850, young Spurgeon, though only a few months saved, became greatly exercised regarding preaching the gospel to others. He wrote to his father, "How I long for the time when it may please God to make me, like you my father, a successful preacher of the gospel. Oh, that I might see one sinner constrained to come to Jesus." He started to preach when he was 16. A deep joy filled his heart when during his short pastorate at Waterbeach, a woman trusted the Saviour, "I felt like a diver" he said, "who had been down to the depths of the sea and brought up a rare pearl." That was only the beginning. God was to use him mightily. At the age of 19, London called and young Spurgeon moved to wider service. London was now his new mission field and there the need was great. With deep humility of spirit he moved to New Park Street Baptist chapel and starting with a small congregation of about 200, he preached Christ to them. God was with him and ere long the chapel was filled to its full capacity of 1,200. The building was enlarged but proved inadequate. The Metropolitan Tabernacle to seat 5,000 was planned and opened in 1861, and there Spurgeon ministered faithfully and fruitfully for the next 31 years, and over all that period, there was scarcely a meeting when God did not bless in salvation. E. W. Bacon's testimony is this, "Never has London, or anywhere else, seen such a God-honouring, Christ-exalting, Spirit-filled, bible-based, soul winning ministry—a ministry consecrated to the dual task of bringing together the sinner and his Saviour, the saint and his Lord." And of Spurgeon himself he adds, "He came from the audience chamber of the Most High and stepped into that large human auditorium—the mouth-piece of God." Each week those messages were printed and widely circulated. They were translated and published in French, German, Dutch, Spanish and Italian and dispersed as widely as America and Australia. They were read in public and in private. They were read in hospitals, taken inside prisons and pondered over by sailors at sea and were mighty unto the salvation of many.

The closing years of Spurgeon's fruitful life were weighed down by the sorrows of controversy. Through it all, he stood faithful to his Lord, but by the age of 57 he was a worn-out man and on the 31st January, 1892, he passed into the presence of his Lord Whom he loved so dearly. As his body was laid to rest in West Norwood Cemetery, Archibald Brown pronounced a eulogy, beautiful and touching, yet so fitting to the memory of his dear departed friend.

"Beloved President, Faithful Pastor, Prince of Preachers, Brother Beloved, Dear Spurgeon—we bid thee not "Farewell" but only for a little while "Goodnight." Thou shalt rise soon at the first dawn of the Resurrection-day of the redeemed. Yet is the goodnight not ours to bid but thine; it is we who linger in the darkness; thou art in God's holy light. Our night shall soon be passed and with it all our weeping. Then with thine, our songs shall greet the morning of a day that knows no cloud nor close; for there is not night there.

"Hard worker in the field! thy toil is ended. Straight has been the furrow thou has ploughed. No looking back has marked thy course. Harvests have followed thy patient sowing, and heaven is already rich with thine in-gathered sheaves, and shall still be enriched through the years yet lying in eternity.

"Champion of God! thy battle, long and nobly fought is over; thy sword, which clave to thy hand, has dropped at last; a palm branch takes its place. No longer does the helmet press thy brow, oft weary with its surging thoughts of battle; a victor's wreath from the great Commander's hand has already proved thy full reward.

"Here for a little while, shall rest thy precious dust. Then shall thy Well-Beloved come; and at His voice thou shalt spring from the couch of earth, fashioned like unto His body, into glory. Then spirit, soul, and body shall magnify the Lord's redemption. Until then, beloved, sleep. We praise God for thee, and by the blood of the everlasting covenant, hope and expect to praise God with thee. Amen."

Spurgeon, like John the Baptist, had but one passion, one mission in life—to entreat others to look to Christ. As a boy of 15, he himself had looked, "I could almost have looked my eyes away; and in heaven I will still look in joy unutterable." As a youth of 18, he wrote a poem and concluded with the lines, "One joy all joys shall far excel—To see Thy face, Immanuel." As the prince of preachers, he untiringly entreated men and women to look to Christ. As his body lay in state in the Metropolitan Tabernacle and over 60,000 people filed past to pay their last tribute, there upon his coffin lay the bible, open at the text of Isaiah 45.22, "Look unto Me, and be ye saved." And today, as each time around the Lord's table we sing the words of Spurgeon's dearly-loved hymn, "Amidst us our Beloved stands," it seems as if he is still saying to us, "Look only to Christ."

"Amidst us our Beloved stands,  
And bids us view His pierced hands ;  
Points to His wounded feet and side,  
Blest emblems of the Crucified.

If now with eyes defiled and dim,  
We see the signs but see not Him,  
Oh, may His love the scales displace,  
And bid us see Him face to face!

Our former transports we recount,  
When with Him in the holy mount  
These cause our souls to thirst anew,  
His marred but lovely face to view."

"We would see Jesus," the quest of each longing heart down here will one day be fully realized, for there "they shall see His face" — His face — yes, His face — 'marred but lovely'!

---

## ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY

Editor : A. M. S. Gooding.

Correspondence relative to Editorial matters should be addressed to the Editor : 7 Sparrow Gardens, off London Road, Kilmarnock, Scotland. (Telephone 24245).

Assistant Editor : B. Currie  
49 Glenburn Road, Dunmurry, BT17 9AN, N. Ireland.  
(Telephone Belfast 621343).

### Committee :

Tom Armstrong, Thomas Beggs, Ronnie Johnston,  
James McKeown, James Moore.

Secretary : William Neill.

This magazine is supported solely by the freewill offerings of the Lord's people.

Friends residing in England, Scotland and Wales may kindly forward their donations to :

John Glenville, Nestor, Hillhead, Colyton, Devon, EX13 6HH.

Friends residing elsewhere should please forward gifts to :  
William Neill, "Beth-Asher," 109 Lurgan Road, Banbridge,  
Northern Ireland, BT32 4NG.

Please address correspondence, including all new orders, orders for back numbers and extra copies, cancellations and changes of address to William Neill at above address.

You can HELP US by stating the NUMBER of copies required, and submitting NAME and ADDRESS, including POSTAL CODE, IN BLOCK LETTERS, please.



# **ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY**



## **CONTENTS**

### **THE HUMANITY OF THE LORD JESUS**

by E. W. Rogers

### **ZECHARIAH**

by E. R. Bower

### **CHRIST IN THE APOCALYPSE**

by J. B. D. Page

### **MARK, Chapter 6**

by J. Pender

### **THE LORD'S FLESH IN HEBREWS**

by B. Currie

### **A SHORT HISTORY OF THE TESTIMONY**

by E. Robinson

### **FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTALS**

by J. B. Hewitt

### **THE CHURCH**

by J. Campbell

### **HYMNS AND THEIR WRITERS**

by J. Strahan

# 'I' GO A FISHING

John 21.3

Simon Peter brave and true,  
While others waited he would do,  
In the forefront of the action,  
Only he could be a bastion

Yet Peter when faced with truth,  
Afraid and troubled he stood aloof,  
His pride was hurt, his conscience wounded  
A little maid bold Peter confounded.

O how foolish can we be  
Acting in haste apart from Thee  
'Toiling all night,' fruitless labour  
A sure result of man-made fervour

'Lovest Thou Me,' rings through the ages  
This great theme our hearts engages  
'Feed My sheep, My lambs,' saith He  
This will show your love for Me

The choice is simple and plain  
For each and everyone the same  
Forgetting others, 'Follow thou Me'  
'I will comfort, and satisfy thee'

Theory must be put to the test  
For Peter himself, apart from the rest  
'Tis easy to say, far harder to do  
Lord give us grace to be faithful and true.

—*J. G. Good.*

# THE HUMANITY OF THE LORD JESUS

by E. W. ROGERS

The Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, God manifest in flesh, will ever remain inscrutable to us. No man knoweth the Son but the Father. While the Father may be known by those to whom the Son will reveal Him, because He is deity alone, the Son is only knowable by the Father, because in Him are united eternally full and perfect deity and sinless humanity. This implies the co-existence in the one Person of all the attributes of deity and all the sinless corollaries of humanity. How this can be is beyond our understanding. They superficially appear to be mutually contradictory and mutually exclusive each of the other. But the Scriptures reveal these truths, and faith will accept them though reason cannot explain.

In conversation with a believer he raised a difficulty as to whether the Lord Jesus possessed a human spirit. He frankly said he could not understand how He could have two spirits. 'God is Spirit,' he reminded me, and enquired how then could the Lord Jesus, Who is God, have in addition a human spirit?

We must be careful against arguing in circles or according to human logic. It was this that led to the invention of the unscriptural phrase 'mother of God.' In speaking of the person of the Lord Jesus we should adhere to what is written: not go beyond it: 'hold fast the form of sound words.'

The reader has but to consult a concordance to see the large number of references to the human spirit of the Lord Jesus. See, for example, Mark 2.8; 8.12; John 11.33; and Luke 23.46.

But, perhaps the most cogent of all is one from John's Gospel, i.e., ch. 19.30, 'He bowed His head and gave up His spirit'. One may ask, what spirit was it that He gave up? Was it His human spirit or was it His deity? This Gospel was written particularly to establish the truth of the deity of the man called Jesus, yet throughout there are clear, indisputable evidences of His true humanity, and this verse suffices, apart from any other, to show indubitably that the One Who hung on the cross was not only Son of God (i.e. deity) but was also Man in every respect, possessor of spirit, soul and body. To say that 'He dismissed His spirit' means

He yielded up deity takes us very far from the truth, but to say that He yielded up His human spirit into the care of God is surely what is intended.

The Lord Jesus was 'in all things . . . made like unto His brethren.' Note, 'in all things.' We are tripartite: we have 'spirit soul and body' (1 Thess. 5.23). However difficult it might be for us to distinguish between soul and spirit, the word of God can do it (Heb. 4.12). It is erroneous to say that the body and spirit make up the soul. The spirit links man with God; the soul with things around, and has to do with his inner feelings in relation thereto. It follows, therefore, that the Lord Jesus possessed all three.' Certainly He had a human body. Clearly He committed His human spirit to the Father. And His human soul was not left in Hades. He spoke of all three.

Suppose the suggestion made to the writer were true: ponder what would be involved. We should have no Saviour for He would not be real man. And only Man could die for man. The flesh of the Lord Jesus was not the encasement of deity. In John 1.14 it denotes 'full, perfect and complete humanity.' If it were otherwise it would make the Gospels meaningless, seeing they refer to His human soul and human spirit. Did the writers use phrases which had no substance in fact? Were they mere empty words? Or, did they mean what they said? They were indubitably not left to their own ideas: they were the Spirit's penmen.

The epistle to the Hebrews speaks much of the humanity of the Lord Jesus. We may pertinently ask, seeing He was tempted in all points like as we are, what part of Him was tempted? His deity? That is unthinkable. Then was it merely His body? But matter is not evil, nor has it will or emotions. From whence sprang His prayers and supplications? If we admit that His crying and tears were actions of the body, from whence sprang His petitions to the Father? Are feelings only things that have to do with the body? Seeing that He is able to 'sympathise,' or 'be touched with the feeling of our infirmities,' with what part of His being are such 'feelings' associated? We had always supposed that there was a Risen MAN in heaven, but how can this be if He had no sentient part of His humanity?

This teaching undermines the Gospel. Paul tells Timothy that God wishes all men to be saved. In accordance with



that wish the Lord Jesus gave Himself a ransom for all. And now the message is that there is One Mediator between God and men, Himself MAN, Christ Jesus. This was just that for which Job yearned—A Daysman—Who was so perfect that He could meet God's claims, and who was also Man that He could become the 'go-between' between himself and God. If the Lord Jesus here on earth were spiritless. He would not have been MAN, and we have lost our Mediator and our Redeemer!

After the Lord Jesus died He went to paradise, and the dying robber was with Him there. If the contention that His 'spirit' is His deity were correct, then it would empty the promise of the Lord Jesus of all value? He would but have receded back into unveiled deity, and the dying robber would have been in paradise without the company of the Man who was also dying by his side!

This is an old heresy and was long ago dismissed as subversive of the faith. Why should it be thought incredible that God who is Spirit should become incarnate and have a human spirit? Is it any more difficult to understand than that One Person of the Godhead should contemporaneously be the possessor of two perfect nature? The one is as understandable to us as the other, though a full apprehension of all that is involved is utterly beyond us. When it is said the child 'grew and waxed strong in spirit' we have no doubt what is meant, but when the same expression is used of the Lord Jesus, why give the word 'spirit' another sense? (cf. Luke 1.80 and 2.40).

We must be careful to distinguish clearly between the fact that God, in His nature, is spirit: and that the Lord Jesus had a human spirit: and that also in the Godhead is the Holy Spirit, sent after the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, Who is the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8.9).

## **ZECHARIAH**

by **E. R. BOWER**, Worcester (continued)

THE FOURTH VISION. Joshua the high priest. (3.1-10). vv. 1-2. "He"—the angel interpreter (?); "Satan"—the adversary; "to resist"—to be his adversary; "His"—Joshua;

The story of Joshua, high priest to the restored remnant of Israel is to be found in the books of Ezra and Haggai. What we have here is not so much his hidden or secret history

as an individual, but rather the history of the nation as seen in their representative before God; he is, in effect, standing before the Angel on behalf of Israel. Cf. Lev. 16. 30, etc., and John 14.30. The fire was the captivity from which they had recently returned. If indeed it is Joshua himself who is accused we note that the accusation is not stated, neither are we told when this scene was enacted, but what we do see is a parallel to the story of Job. Both Job and Joshua were accused "before the Lord," Zechariah certainly paints a picture full of drama—the sinbearing high priest standing before the Angel of Jehovah and Satan the "accuser of our brethren" (Rev. 12.10) standing at his right hand. cf. Ps. 109.6,29; Jude 19). As we read this story may we imagine ourselves in Joshua's place, and ask ourselves, "How would I fare?" "for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ (or God)" (Rom. 14.1-12). What encouragement we find in the words of the Apostle, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again. Who is at the right hand of God, Who also maketh intercession for us." (Rom. 8. 33-34). Brands from the fire! Hallelujah! Note the third mention of the choosing of Jerusalem, thus connecting the first, third and fourth visions (1.7; 2.12; 3.2;) It also confirms that it is the sin of the nation is in view here rather than that of Joshua himself. The brand from the burning may also have in view a future remnant. It must be remembered that the prophet is seeing a vision, and the vision may not necessarily be related to actual events; if otherwise then Joshua might later be accused of neglecting his charge for, sixty years on, we find his sons married to 'strange wives' (Ezra 10.19). How often do the sons of men of God fail!

vv. 3-4. It is generally accepted that the Angel of Jehovah is the second person of the triunity of the Godhead, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (See Gen. 16.7-13; 22.11-22; 31.11-13; Ex. 3.2-18 etc.) Jewish thought sees the Angel as the Divine Word (John 1.1), thus this vision is of absorbing interest for it is the Angel of the Lord who stands in opposition to Satan, and who commands the removal of the filthy garments of Joshua; it is He who causes the iniquity to pass. Isaiah wrote, (64.6), "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our

righteousnesses are as filthy rags.” (or, polluted garments). This, too, of the “holy cities . . . and Jerusalem.” There appears to be an interval between vv. 4 and 5, Joshua stands naked before “Him with whom we have to do” (Heb. 4.13—but go on to v.14!) Cf. 2 Cor. 5.3 and Rev. 3.14-19. Other refs. Gen. 48.16; Is. 61.10; Rom. 14.10-12; 1 Cor. 3.10-15 4.1-5; 2 Cor. 5.9-10.

v.5 “I”—Zechariah; ‘fair’—clean; “stood by” — kept standing. The prophet speaks up—perhaps in his capacity as a priest—and his request or intercession, is granted and, as some point out, this was before the putting on of the clean garments. Was the prophet’s intercession an involuntary reaction arising from pity? Notice how particular his request was—a ‘clean’ mitre. See Ex. 28.4; 28.36-39; 39.28-32; Lev. 8.9. Notice that the mitre and the holy crown were worn by Aaron that he “may bear (away) the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts, and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before Jehovah” (Ex. 28.38). Note the “always”!

“For us He wears the mitre,  
Where holiness shines bright.  
For us His robes are whiter  
Than Heaven’s unclouded light.”

Satan, rebuked, is no longer at Joshua’s right hand, and the Angel stands by.

vv. 6-7. “Protested”—solemnly affirmed; “My house”—Israel (Num. 12.7 etc.); “places”—ways, or paths. The scene is still in heaven. Joshua’s responsibility on earth, if fulfilled, is the measure for his responsibility in heaven.

Walk in His ways      and      Keep His ordinances.  
Keep His courts      and      walk in His paths.

Joshua’s place and responsibility was among those that stood courts (cf. Dan. 4.13,17). Impossible? Let us recall our Lord’s words to His disciples, “Verily, I say unto you, That ye which have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit upon the throne of His glory, ye shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” (Matt. 19.38; Cf. Zech. 6.13; Matt. 25.31). On the other hand, if Joshua (subsequent to this vision) was given this message by the prophet, then the ‘house’ might refer to the Temple, and the ‘courts’ those of the Temple. A place among

the heavenly assessors is the third reward for walking in the way and keeping the charge of Jehovah.

v.8. "Men wondered at"—men of wonder, or of a sign; "will bring"—are bringing. The vision gives place for a personal message to Joshua; no longer the spiritual, but 'down to earth'! The 'fellows that sat before' Joshua are not the ministrants of vv. 4-7, but colleagues. Ezra 3.1-6 records that upon the return from captivity the people gathered to Jerusalem and "Joshua . . . and his brethren the priests . . . builded an altar . . ." The seventh month (Tisri) mentioned by Ezra was the time of the Feast of Trumpets (the 1st); the Day of Atonement (10th); Tabernacles (15th) and Firstfruits of Wine and Oil. Each one prophetic of Israel's progress toward the last days. Is this why Joshua's colleagues were especially mentioned as men of a sign? Israel was back in the Land. Note Ezra 3.6, "The foundation of the Temple was not yet laid." The tense of v. 8 is indefinite, but the reference to the Coming One, the Messiah, the Servant, the Branch is certain. Isaiah, contemplating that day (chap 4) wrote, "In that day shall the Branch of Jehovah be beauty and glory" reminding us of the priestly garment of Glory and Beauty (Ex. 28-40) and with which Joshua had (in vision) been clothed. Cf. Is. 11, where a different word for 'Branch' is used—'nezer,' a graft or scion (Jer. 23. 5-6; 33.15). Jeremiah here speaks of Israel's restoration. The Companion Bible sets out the promise of the Branch.

Jeremiah speaks of the King raised up.

Matthew's gospel. Zech. 9.9; Jer. 23.5-6.

Isaiah speaks of the Servant brought forth.

Mark's gospel. Zech. 3.8; Is. 42.1.

Zechariah speaks of the Man growing up.

Luke's gospel. Zech. 6.12.

Isaiah speaks of the Beauty and Glory of the Branch.

John's gospel. Is. 4.2; 40.9,10.

This is He who will build the Temple of the Lord. (6.12).

v. 9. "stone"—stones; a singular for a plural. It has been suggested that the stone(s) refers to the stones used for the rebuilding of the, as yet future, Temple. The stone with seven eyes or facets is, perhaps, the head stone or gable stone, and it has been asserted that the words, "I will remove . . . in one day" constitute the engraving which will appear

on each of the seven facets. This, of course, may be disputed, but cannot the seven eyes of 4.10 refer back to this verse, and not (as some say) to the seven lamps of the lampstand? We may look at this verse in another way. When the Law was given, it was God Himself who cut the stones and engraved the Decalogue. Those tables of the Law were broken by Moses when he saw the golden calf (Ex. 32)—truly a symbolic action. Here, it is God who lays the stone(s) before Joshua and makes the engraving. If, indeed, the engraving is as suggested, "I will remove the iniquity of the Land in one day" it would be very appropriate to the times. Cf. 2 Chron. 16.9; Jer. 50.20; and see Deut. 11.12; 13.18; 1 Kings 93; Ps. 33.18; 34.5; Amos 9.8; Hab. 1.3;

v. 10. Joshua and his fellows were the signs for the latter days; for the coming of Messiah the Branch. All that was happening in those post-exilic days—the return from the 70 year captivity; the Temple rebuilding; the prophets Haggai and Zechariah saw as the fore shadowing of yet future events. Cf. Mic. 4.1-4. This was the "day of small things"—a day not to be despised (4.10); the "exceeding magnificent" (1 Chron. 22.5) is yet to come. Individual and national insularity will cease. The question, "Who is my neighbour?" (Luke 10.29) will no longer be heard. A commentator has expressed it of this proverb (v. 10), that it "represents the acme of contentment for which Israel longed." See 1 Kings 4.25; 2 Kings 18.31; Mic. 4.4. Before leaving this vision we might take in the lesson of the "strange wives" (Ezra 9 and 10) among whom were the daughters in law of Joshua. Then and now, the unequal yoke is an obstacle, whether it be in a marriage, or business, or even in the work of God. (2 Cor. 6.14).

## **CHRIST IN THE APOCALYPSE (2)**

by JOHN B. D. PAGE (continued)

**Reading :** Revelation 1.4f.

### **Jesus Christ, the Witness, the First-begotten, the Ruler**

The salutation to the seven Asian churches is from the Triune Godhead, but neither the usual names of the three Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit nor their normal order has been used.

The first Person of the Trinity is presented as "Which is, and Which was, and Which is to come." This, of course, is

an amplification of the ineffable Name, "I AM THAT I AM" (Ex. 3.14). Here, "Which is" comes first (cf. 4.8) for emphasis, relating Him to the present. Then "Which was" and "Which is to come" follow and connect Him to the past and future respectively. The whole of this compound title indicates that Jehovah is timeless in Being and existence—He is eternal. To adopt this title with its Old Testament and Jehovistic background for the Father is in keeping with the general tenor of the book.

Immediately after the first Person of the Trinity, the third Person with a symbolic title, "the seven Spirits which are before the throne" follows. The phrase does not mean that the Person of the Holy Spirit consists of seven spirits but it conveys the thought of the plenitude of His power, which is in no way deficient but perfect as signified by the numeral used. This is the first mention of the word "throne," occurring many times in the book, and its Biblical background will be considered later in another paper on chapter 4 (D.V.).

The placing of the second Person of the Trinity third is not common, although Peter does in the greetings of his first epistle (1 Pet. 1.2). The purpose of this order may indicate that everything which follows concerns, this wonderful Person, Who is set forth as "Jesus Christ, the Faithful Witness, the First-begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth." By omitting the italicised words in the text, the unity of this grand compound title is brought out. This is the first of such complex titles.

For considering this composite description of Christ, we shall look at the parts in turn and singly.

### **Jesus Christ**

Of the six times that this appellation, "Jesus Christ," occurs in the book, five are found in chapter 1, of which three are related to the writer's personal experiences. After incorporating this divine title in the opening words of the book (1.1), John personally claims to bear record of, and suffer for, "the testimony of Jesus Christ" (1.2.9). The title then occurs in the salutation (1.5), which is the subject of consideration.

By analysing this designation, we note first that "Jesus" is His personal name, being the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew name Joshua, meaning 'Jehovah is salvation,' and

it was in common use among the Jews. The Divine purpose was for the Son of God in His incarnation to be given this name, as the angel commanded Joseph (Matt. 1.21). His own people, to whom He came, received Him not, and He was despised and rejected of men. Therefore, the name "Jesus" is associated with shame and humiliation even unto the death of the cross which He endured to "save His people from their sins" (Matt. 1.21).

For the gospel narrative of His life, the Holy Spirit guided the writers to use the single name "Jesus," and it occurs about 566 times in the four gospels.

"Christ," which follows, is, of course, not a name but a title, and it occurs only 36 times in the four gospels. This considerably lower number of occurrences compared with those of the name "Jesus" is not surprising when its significance is understood. The meaning of this title is 'Anointed One,' or more fully 'one who has been ceremonially anointed,' referring to the anointing for an office under the Jewish economy. With the Lord Jesus, He was not anointed by man but by God, and not in time but in eternity (Psa. 2.6, mgn.). It was at His resurrection, the first step in exaltation, when God made Him not only "Lord" but also "Christ" (Acts 2.36). It was then that His anointing became effective in time in respect of His Lordship and Messiahship.

The full significance of the other title, "Lord," which is not included in that of the salutation, also rests solely upon His resurrection, before which it was used as a courtesy title during His earthly ministry. We mention this in passing, because the full title "Lord Jesus Christ," occurring only once in the Apocalypse, is found in the benediction (22.21).

In the combination of the name and title, "Jesus Christ," there is the thought of One called Jesus, Whom men despised and rejected, and whom God has glorified and exalted as Christ (cp. Phil. 2.5-11). This appellation testifies to His resurrection and glorification.

With the significance of "Jesus Christ" now in mind, it is not surprising to find that it occurs only 5 times in the gospels, and even not at all in Luke. Turning to Acts, it is found 10 times. In the Epistles, there are about 85 occurrences, because they set forth the doctrines founded upon His vicarious death and victorious resurrection besides His present exaltation.

In the Revelation, a mere 6 occurrences of the combined name and title, "Jesus Christ," may seem minimal. Of course, this is not unexpected when it is remembered that the book is not doctrinal treatise of Him but an unveiling of His manifested glory, irrespective of whether the book is studied objectively or subjectively. The manifested glory of Jesus Christ is not the glory of unoriginated Deity and uncreated Being which He has possessed from eternity (John 17.5), but it is the glory of the risen, ascended and exalted Man which God presented to Him at His resurrection (John 17.24, 1 Pet. 1.21). This acquired glory, as distinct from His inherent glory, is set forth in the Apocalypse.

"Jesus Christ" is the introductory description of the Person Who is central in, and the theme of, the book, and His manifold glories are then set forth by way of other names and titles, of which some are symbolical and others metaphorical. In this manner, many cameos of Christ in His various glories are presented, and so the reader's appreciation of Christ should be enriched by them.

More than once, the Father spoke from heaven and said that He was "well pleased" with His Son during the days of His flesh, and so it must give pleasure to the Father to see His people occupied with the unveiled glories of His Son as set forth in the Apocalypse.

Following the appellation, "Jesus Christ" in the salutation, applied to this glorified Man now in the glory, three others follow to make up the full composite title, and they all relate in different ways to His Manhood.

### **The Faithful Witness**

Realising how the Old Testament is interwoven into the Apocalypse, we need not be surprised to find that this title is apparently taken from the Psalter. The psalmist said the sun is "a faithful witness in heaven" (Psa. 89.36f), and John, looking back at the past and reflecting upon the Lord's life on earth, said that Christ was then "the Faithful Witness." When writing his gospel earlier, John had quoted from verse 36 (LXX) of this Psalm, "Christ abideth for ever" (John 12.34) which reads "His Seed shall endure for ever" (Hebrew), and so a Messianic significance is given to these two verses in this Psalm.

Pondering upon the laws of nature, the Preacher in Ecclesiastes (1.5) observed that "the sun ariseth, and the



sun goeth down, and hasteth to the place where he arose." The daily rising and setting of the sun illustrates the law of continuity and regularity in its sphere of the heavens, and so it is "a faithful witness" not only to such natural laws but also to its Creator.

We now turn to the One, by Whom the sun was made, and Whom John designates as "the Faithful Witness." In His defence before Pilate, the Lord Jesus said, "To this end was I born," which incidentally was the only occasion when He referred to His birth, "and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth" (John 18.37). By implication in the verbs used, the Lord Jesus gave expression to His pre-existence and incarnation, which, of course, was not understood by Pilate, and then He declared His mission to "bear witness unto the truth." His use of the preposition 'unto' is significant. He did not come merely to 'witness the truth,' that is, 'give a testimony that is true' as a person may in a court of law, or to bear witness *of*, that is, 'respecting the truth' as John the Baptist did of Him (John 1.15), but to "bear witness *unto*," that is, to 'bear witness to the objective reality of the Truth in support and defence of it.' As such a "Witness," He was "faithful" to God, although often offensive to men.

### **The First Begotten of the dead**

To western ears, this may sound strange for a title, but it needs to be understood that the firstborn son in a Jewish family enjoyed position and privileges in his family, known as his birthright, which Esau despised and sold for a morsel of food and Reuben lost through yielding to immorality.

Within the family of nations, Israel is the Lord's firstborn (Ex. 4.22), and its birthright will be realised nationally during the millennium.

Believers are said to be the "church of the firstborn ones" (Heb. 12.23, lit.), and it behoves each of us to enjoy and exercise the privileges of our spiritual birthright.

Concerning Christ, He is described as "the Firstborn" in five different spheres. The term is used as a metaphorical title of Him to bring out His various positional glories. Without commenting upon them, Christ is named as "the Firstborn" in relation to (a) creation (Col. 1.15), (b) resurrection (Col. 1.18; Rev. 1.5), (c) the church (Rom. 8.29), (d) the millennium (Heb. 1.6), and (e) dominion (Psa. 89.27).

Turning now to the title under consideration, ascribed to Christ first by Paul and later by John, the phrase, "the Firstborn *of* the dead," does not denote an honoured place for Christ among the dead, implying that He is still dead. The alternative rendering, "the Firstborn *from among* the dead," clarifies its meaning. The thought is of resurrection 'from among' or 'out of' the dead, which was a truth first introduced by the Lord Jesus Himself after His transfiguration when He told the three disciples, including John, to "tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of Man were risen *from* (or, *from among*) the dead." Noting the preposition used by the Lord Jesus in relation to His resurrection, they were perplexed and questioned amongst themselves its significance (Mark 9.9f). The Lord Jesus introduced the principle of selection to the doctrine of resurrection, that is, one or more would be raised in advance of others, which was new to the disciples. It indicated that Christ Himself, in resurrection, would have the precedence. To say, that He is "the Firstborn from among the dead" means that He has *priority* in time, having been raised from the dead before either the just who will be at the rapture of the saints or the unjust after the millennium. It also indicates that He has *superiority* in position in relation to believers to be raised from the dead, as brought out by Paul, "now is Christ risen from (or, from among) the dead, and become the Firstfruits of them that slept" (1 Cor. 15.20), signifying that the risen Christ is the Anti-type of the sheaf of ripened barley presented to the Lord by the high priest for the feast of firstfruits, being the day on which He rose from the dead. Furthermore, the title signifies the *dignity* of His Person, for this Man alone has been raised from the dead and He will be alive for evermore.

### **The Ruler of the kings of the earth**

As an artist conveys his impression of his subject upon a canvas, so John provides a comprehensive portrayal of the glorified Man by ascribing this compound title to Him. The Divine Subject is presented as "Jesus Christ," a designation signifying His manifested glories. Looking back to the *past*, He is seen as "the Faithful Witness" on earth. Beholding Him at the *present*, He is "the First Begotten from among the dead." Peering into the *future*, He appears as "the Ruler of the kings of the earth" (RV). The word

“Ruler,” as adopted by the Revisers, indicates more clearly than the word “Prince” (AV) that Christ will not merely reign as a sovereign does in a democracy but He will rule in a theocratic age.

Yet again in this divine title, John’s mind has turned to the Old Testament, for the phrase “the kings of the earth” is quoted from Psalm 2.2, where the psalmist describes them in tumultuous conditions internationally, taking a hostile stand not against another confederacy of nations but “against the Lord and against His anointed.” This is undoubtedly unfulfilled prophecy concerning the troublous times after the rapture of the saints, when “the kings of the earth,” whom Daniel (7.24) foresaw as a ten-nation confederacy, will challenge with blasphemous audacity both Jehovah and His Messiah, but the Lord, seated in the heavens, will laugh and have them in derision. With their armed forces locked in battle and in the hour of apparent defeat for Israel, Christ will come again and shatter these rebellious kings and their opposing forces as a potter dashes a defective vessel to the ground in pieces (Psa. 2.9). Then these defeated kings will be commanded to “kiss the Son” (Psa. 2.12), which is an allusion to an eastern custom as an act of allegiance and submission (cp. 1 Sam. 10.1).

With these insubordinate potentates having surrendered, Christ will reign in undisputed supremacy as “the Ruler of the kings of the earth,” which is foreseen by John, for one thousand years.

## **MARK**

by **JAMES PENDER**

### **CHAPTER 6**

The effect of spiritual feeding is seen. The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit. When the law of the Spirit of life (THE GIRL) makes you free from the law of sin and death (Rom.) and you walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. This draws forth the displeasure of your relatives and friends. They are astonished and acknowledge a change, but are offended—Ch. 5—What is in us—Ch. 6—What is in others. They stumbled at the stumbling stone that was laid in Zion. HE was that rock of offence. They were ignorant of God’s righteousness and no submission.

He sends forth the twelve (v. 7). This is being susceptible to the former teaching and thus fits us for service. Service is rendered in the power of Sonship and involves suffering. The disciples are sent out in the face of rejection and active opposition. The unity of opposition from the Lowest to the Highest—from the people to the King. PRIDE and LUST uniting their energies against the ministry of the truth with the unity of opposition.

**THE SUPREMACY OF DIVINE GRACE IS SEEN** for you cannot thwart divine purpose to bless, for divine fulness will be found even in the wilderness. Though the winds are contrary and the waves stormy.

**STILLS THE WIND AND WALKS UPON THE SEA** and when they realise **HIS PRESENCE**, the opposing elements cease and on the other shore, all evil yields to **HIM** and passes away (v. 1-6). Pride, resisting convictions—Stubbornness and pride of the natural heart (v. 7-16). The ministry by which **HIS** personal testimony is extended two by two, competent witness—mutual help. When testimony accredited by divine power is rejected, then judgement follows, (v. 16-29). When truth opposes men's lusts, it awakens hatred toward the one who teaches it. The valuation of John's head showed the intense hatred of that woman. Hatred may plan and scheme to get rid of a witness of the truth **BUT THE TRUTH ITSELF REMAINS** (Heaven and earth shall pass away, etc.). What is seen here is **LUST AND HATE** joined together in unholy union with **THE PRIDE OF LIFE**. It binds together the **WORLD AND ITS RULERS** in opposition to the throne of Heaven (a picture of the world's opposition to Christ). The spirit of the Edomite coming out of **HEROD** (v. 30-45). The Lord returns to the wilderness. The world. The world in the condition to which sin has reduced it **DESERT**—nothing to sustain divine life. We see divine fulness manifested for the satisfaction of need. The servants ministering to the needs of the multitude out of their own provision and multiplied through **HIS** blessings. We are dependent for the ministry of spiritual food from the Lord through **HIS** servants. He teaches, heals and feeds the company through **HIS** servants, using them and theirs as channels of blessing to others. They had more left than they had to begin with. This is the way of **Spiritual** increase. Scattering, yet increasing.

Multiplying by dividing. The responsibility of possessing whatever ministers to the need of the company and the gain that results from the same. Every spiritual enrichment brings with it corresponding responsibility. Privilege and opportunity of greater gain. To him that hath shall be given (Luke 19, Matt. 25.46-52). The experiences by the way during the time HE is on high—tossed on the sea of the world, the wind contrary. The course of this world is directed by Satan. He is the prince of the power of the air in Eph. 2.2.

53-54. THE END OF THE WAY. When the sea is crossed, like the men of Gennesaret, we will know HIM as the one on whom all blessings depend and all sickness and distresses banished by HIS presence.

## THE LORD'S FLESH IN HEBREWS

by B. CURRIE

### 1. IDENTIFICATION

In the epistle to the Hebrews there are three references to the flesh of the Lord Jesus. These are 2.14; 5.7; 10.20. For the purpose of these papers the references may be considered as follows :

1. 2.14—Identification
2. 5.7—Intercession
3. 10.20—Invitation

### 1. IDENTIFICATION.

In Hebrews chapter one the Lord Jesus is presented in all the dignity of His Deity and as such He is far superior to angels. In chapter two He is presented in the perfection of His Humanity and as such He is far superior to :

- (a) Adam in His Sovereignty, vv. 5-9,
- (b) Moses in His Shepherding, v. 10a,
- (c) Joshua in His Soldering, v. 10b,
- (d) Joseph in His Suffering, vv. 11-13,
- (e) David in His Salvation, vv. 14-16,
- (f) Aaron in His Sympathy, vv. 17-18.

The reference we are presently considering lies within (e) above, i.e. the section which can be contrasted with David when he saved the nation from bondage by slaying the giant Goliath (1 Sam. 17). In order to effect their deliverance, David had to leave his father's house, come to his brethren,

enter the conflict and annul the enemy. This is the clear parallel in Heb. 2.14-16.

Thus it was necessary for the Lord, the Father's Only Begotten, to leave the heavenly glory which had been His abode from all eternity, and to be identified with those He came to deliver. It is important to note how guarded is the Spirit of God as He refers to the humanity of our Saviour. When He refers to 'the children' v.14, they are 'partakers' (the word is that for fellowship or commonly share). This is the common lot of mankind—we all share in blood and flesh, and have no option but so to do. However when speaking of the Lord two expressions must be observed viz. 'likewise' and 'took part.'

The latter 'took part' is quite different from the word 'partakers' used of the children. The meaning here is that the Lord took part of blood and flesh voluntarily. This proves that He was no mere man. The word 'likewise' similarly proves the uniqueness of His Manhood. It is a cognate word with that used in Phil. 2.27 where of Epaphroditus it is recorded 'he was sick nigh unto death.' The meaning is clearly that Epaphroditus was nearly beside, as close as possible to, death without being dead. Similarly the Lord Jesus was nearly beside, as close as possible to the children. Wherein was the difference? The answer is simple and yet most precious—He never took part of their sinful nature. There was nothing in Him to respond to sin. He had no fallen nature and consequently with regard to Him it is never a question of did He sin? or could He have sinned? rather the tremendous and glorious truth is this—He could not sin!

A similar thought illustrating the precision of the language employed by the Spirit to guard the truth with regard to God's Son is seen in Rom. 8.3. There we read 'God sending His Own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh.' Note it does not read 'He was sent in the likeness of flesh'—that would have denied His Humanity—His Flesh was real flesh. Nor does it read 'He was sent in sinful flesh'—that would have denied His Deity—His Flesh was not sinful flesh. The expression is exact and preserves both His True Sinless Humanity and His Deity.

The reasons for Him becoming human in every respect apart from sin are also made clear in Heb. 2:—

- (a) to annul the power of the devil in death (v.14),
- (b) to deliver the captives (v. 15).

How was this to be accomplished? The answer calls forth wonder and worship from our hearts (v. 14) 'through the death'

'Amazing love ! how can it be,  
That Thou, my Lord, shouldst die for me ?'

Thus for the believer of to-day the devil no longer has the power of death, not even as under the control of God. When a Christian is called home, the devil has no part in it; rather the Christian is 'put to sleep through or by means of Jesus' (1 Thess. 4.14). Thus the believer can accept death with a calm assurance. It is a 'departure' i.e. an unloosing (2 Tim. 4.6), 'gain' (Phil. 1.21), 'very far better' (Phil. 1.23, R.V.), 'at home with the Lord' (2 Cor. 5.8, R.V.). In typical language He, as the Ark of the Covenant, went into the waters of Jordan in order that we could pass over on dry ground. (Josh. 3.17).

Thus just as David slew Goliath using the giant's own sword, and Haman was hanged on the gallows he had had prepared for Mordecia, the Lord Jesus annulled him who has the power of death by entering into death itself.

'He subdued the powers of hell;  
In the fight He stood alone;  
All His foes before Him fell,  
By His single arm o'erthrown.  
They have fall'n to rise no more;  
Final is the foe's defeat;  
Jesus triumphed by His power,  
And His triumph is complete.'

## **A SHORT HISTORY OF THE TESTIMONY**

by **EDWARD ROBINSON, Exmouth**

The divine system has not just evolved: it has been ordered in every detail and as it expresses the will of God cannot but be carried through intact. The dispensations (i.e. God's relationship with men) are as orderly as, for instance, the wonderful solar system, (about which men in our day are seeking to acquire greater knowledge), guided and controlled by the hand of God. It is a system in which the principles do not change, in character with the divine Author.

We belong to it and it is eternal. In its practical working out, it is in essence the history of two men, Adam and Christ.

'The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second Man is the Lord from heaven' (1 Cor. 15.47). The first man to be born (Cain) was a murderer—the second his victim (Abel). How this vindicates Paul's teaching in Romans of the utter depravity of the human heart and of the necessity (not only the desirability) on our part of a change of man. The complete contrast is shown by Paul, 'As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.' (1 Cor. 15.22). For our spiritual education God sets before us one Man Who is Himself *the* truth. As two disciples were leaving Jerusalem (Luke 24), He joins them interpreting to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. The likelihood is, of course, that He spoke of certain O.T. characters as types, a most instructive medium, despite sometimes disparaging references to 'typology.'

The study of the O.T. characters and that which they represent is very rewarding. We have noted Cain and Abel and shall see that the representation is usually in pairs. Sometimes it is by way of contrast; sometimes in the introduction in leadership of a change. At the outset Lot accompanied Abram, but later with eyes on the well watered plain of Jordan and without spiritual appreciation disastrously separated from Abram, 'For he dwelt in Sodom' (Gen. 14.12). Again, Abraham had two sons, Ishmael and later Isaac, of whom God had said, 'I will establish My covenant with him, for an everlasting covenant for his seed after him' (Gen. 17. 19). The principle remains, He takes away the first that He may establish the second, (first Adam then Christ). We come to Esau and Jacob; we can never set aside the sovereignty of God in His choice 'Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.' (Rom. 9.13). Esau despised the inheritance, but the lesson for us is that Jacob had set his heart on obtaining it, though his methods by Christian standards were questionable. How much do we appreciate and lay hold of (in heart) that which is in fulness future, as Peter says 'an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.' (1 Pet. 1.4).

In general, we have so far been concerned with the conflicting ideas of good and evil, mirrored in such characters as Cain and Abel, Abram and Lot, Isaac and Ishmael, Esau



and Jacob. We have noted that these occur in pairs, in juxtaposition with each other for Spiritual education. But in the ways of God (which always subserve His purpose) there are instances, as we shall see, not necessarily connected with moral questions or our suitability. God would have us to be intelligent as to His purpose and to travel with Him in our understanding. To this end, Moses is brought before us, first as a babe, precious, and the object of divine care. He is God's honoured servant, and the scriptures afford a full scale portrait of the one whom He designates 'My servant,' as though the only one: indeed he is typical to us of the lordship of Christ and of His authority.

But Moses is not allowed to lead Israel into the promised land. The suggestion to us, of course, is that the old system is not equal to all that this portends. This required a young man of energy, Joshua. He is not personally greater than Moses, but (for our learning) supersedes Moses, suggesting to us a realm in which the service of the Holy Spirit is paramount. So is another dispensation (the New Covenant) pre-figured before its actual introduction and several times is repeated 'Moses, My servant, is dead' and a key word in the Hebrews Epistle is 'better things.' To many in Christendom (including indeed some true believers) Moses is *not* dead. Their lives are still lived under the Mosaic law (well-intentioned), but, in practice, little aware of the liberty of the Spirit. So Paul, speaking personally, says 'All things are lawful for me, but all are not expedient (profitable), but I will not be brought under the power of any.' (1 Cor. 6.12). And he further adds 'Now the Lord is the Spirit, but where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, looking on the glory of the Lord with unveiled face, are transformed according to the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit.' (2 Cor. 3.17,18).

—To be concluded.

## **FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTALS**

by J. B. HEWITT, Chesterfield

### **(26) THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST**

"Jesus Christ is Lord" was the simplest creed of the early Church. The first time that Lord (Kurios) occurs in the N.T. is Matt. 1.20 "the angel of the Lord appeared." In the

Acts and the Epistles the testimonies to the Godhead of Jesus Christ are clear and unmistakable. In the Acts He is always "the Lord." There are three prominent thoughts found in all references to Christ as Lord, and these are "Ownership," especially where the title is used in the possessive case as the "Lord's Table" (1 Cor. 10.21); "Authority" as in Acts 9.5,6; and "Power" as the "hand of the Lord was with them" (Acts 11.21). The practical aspect is "that He might be Lord" (Rom. 14.9) of our lives, Master of our entire existence. We must settle it once for all and then realize it continuously, "we are the Lord's" (Rom. 14.8).

The Greek word "Lord" is the N.T. equivalent of the Hebrew "Jehovah" (Rom. 1.4; 14.9; Phil. 2.9-11). Christ's exaltation to the Father's right hand and His being given a name - "Lord" is that of "Yahweh" (Isa. 45.23). The title Lord, is rank and honour beyond all others. His supreme exaltation, his enthronement in and over the universe (Eph. 1.19-23). In the N.T. the Greek word Kurios occurs over 700 times, rendered "Lord"; "Master"; "Owner"; and "Sir." Study the expressions in the Acts, "the name:" "the word" and the "way of the Lord." The quotation from Psa. 110.1 "Sovereign Lord" and its ten references in the N.T. affirm the Deity of Christ. Study the references to "Lord in the Corinthian Epistles, around 60 times, and in Ephesians 25 times, in its practical application. His Lordship in our lives brings fulfilment and freedom NOT oppression and frustration. We shall look at two portions in the N.T. namely John 21 and Acts 9 for its message for us today.

**"IT IS THE LORD"** John 21, verses 7, 15, 16, 17, 20, 21.

**THE REVELATION OF HIS LORDSHIP** (v. 1-6). Here is the Lord remembering His Own and visiting them, and caring for them. In these disciples we see unity, variety, and activity, yet "that night they caught nothing" (v. 3). Over much of our service the Lord writes night and nothing. In spite of their failure the Lord had in store something better than their best (v. 3).

**LORD OF MY SERVICE WHICH HE DIRECTS.** (v. 6,7). They own their failure and He prepares them for success. To lose ourselves in submission to Him, is to find ourselves. This develops our personality and leads to maturity. He is "over" us as Lord, and we are "under" Him as servants. Obedience to His authority always brings suc-

cess (v.6). "If Christ is not Lord of all He is not Lord at all."

**THE RECOGNITION OF HIS LORDSHIP** (v. 7-14). Peter and his companions know that this Mysterious Person is the Lord (v. 12).

**LORD OF MY NEED WHICH HE SUPPLIES.** Now they are His guests, and He their Host, serves them (v.12,13). They found a Friend they never expected; a fire they never kindled and food they never prepared. In Luke 24.43 they fed Him, now He feeds them. What amazing love and care, He still ministers to us (Phil. 4.19).

**THE REQUIREMENTS OF HIS LORDSHIP.** (v. 15-17) Here is the Lord as Love Appealing. **LORD OF MY LOVE WHICH HE DESIRES.** The play upon two words translated "love" agapeo, and phileo. The former speaks of love as "principle"; and the latter of love as a "feeling." The former is God's love to us, the latter of our love to one another. When the Lord used Peter's word (v. 17) it was that which grieved the Apostle. May we answer the challenge "Do you really love me?" **LORD OF MY WILL WHICH HE CONTROLS** (v. 18-19). The Lord Jesus expects us not only to believe his teaching but also to obey his commands (John 14.15,21). True freedom is to obey the Lord, not to disobey him. Here Peter's past is described—"young;" his future is disclosed—"shalt be old," and his present declared—"follow Me." His will was surrendered to His Lord. We need to recover the neglected aspect of our discipleship, obedience to the Lord.

**THE RESPONSE TO HIS LORDSHIP.** (v. 20-25). The believer and the Church as a whole are largely ineffective as spiritual forces in the world for the lack of loyalty to the Lord. He is worthy of our Trust (v. 1-14); our Love which should be sacrificed, (v. 15-17); To live and witness for our Lord calls for courage (v.18,19) and patience (v.20-23). "He is thy Lord" (Ps. 45.11b).

**ACTS 9. "PAUL AND HIS LORD"** "The term "Lord" has become one of the most lifeless words in the Christian vocabulary. To enter into its meaning and give it practical effect would be to re-create the atmosphere of the Apostolic age." H. A. Kennedy. Acts 9 opens with opposition to the Lord (v. 1) and closes with "many believed in the Lord" (v. 42) Saul's Christian life began with *Submission to the*

*Lord* (v. 5). He learned of the Humanity of the Lord, "Jesus," His Sympathy—"persecute Me," and His Sovereignty over all things (v. 5, 6).

*Salvation in the Lord*, (v. 35,42). The miracle of healing the sick (v. 32-35), and the raising of one from the dead (v.37, 42), led some to believe in the Lord, (Acts 16.31; Rom. 10.9). There follows *Service for the Lord* (v.6). Shall we say with Paul, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" With my thoughts? (2 Cor. 10.5c); with my talents? (Matt. 25.20,24); with my time? (Eph. 5.16); and with my goods? (Acts 4.34,35). Have we lost our sense of duty and direction? May we hear the call to arise and to action—"Go into the city," and to allegiance (v.8). *Service begins with vision* (v.17). He was shut up to God for three days (v.9). This sobered his thinking and stimulated his service (v.28). *Service sustained by direction* (v.10-21). A readiness to hear the Lord (v.10), a willingness to obey the Lord (v.18), and faithfulness to the Word of God (v. 11,17,18).

Governed by commission (v.15). His sphere of service was the "Gentiles," "Kings" was a special sphere of testimony when in bondage before Agrippa and later in Rome. His character would be moulded by suffering (v.16).

*Sustained by the Lord* (v.19-27). He was strengthened by good food and a genuine friend in Barnabas (v.27). Fellowship is always the proper thing to seek if you want to grow in grace. The local Church received Saul on the commendation of Barnabas, he possessed special knowledge regarding Saul and his testimony for the Lord in Damascus (v.27). Saul had friends in times of trial and of testing (v.25,27).

**SANCTIFIED BY THE LORD.** (v.31). This Church had a breathing spell when Saul was converted. They made progress spiritually and materially, intensively and extensively. They had peace from external difficulties, we need peace from internal dissensions (Phil. 2.3,4; 4.2,3). They made progress—they were edified and multiplied; gathering in of souls for Christ. Marked by power—walking in the fear of the Lord, and they received daily encouragement. Like healthy plants they were growing in the sunshine of God's love. Some saints want entertainment and wonder at their stunted growth. Edification produces character, spirituality and growth in grace. Make Jesus Lord of your life. There are eighteen references to "Lord" in this chapter.

# THE CHURCH

by JOHN CAMPBELL, Larkhall (continued)

## INSTRUCTION IN THE COMPANY.

In the early church, God set certain prophets and teachers, Acts 13.1, men gifted of God to lead the believers into the truth of God. Two features marked a prophet. He was given knowledge of divine secrets, and ability to communicate them to others. He did it in a threefold way, which we will examine. 1 Cor. 14.3 states he spoke by way of *edification, exhortation* and *comfort*. The word for *Edification* is OIKODOMEO, meaning to build, and is used in the Sept. for Gen 4.17. Cain builded a city; and in Gen. 8.20, it is said of Noah, he builded an altar. The thought is *Building Up*. *Exhortation* is a ministry of encouragement. PARAKLESIS, a calling near. It is used by Paul in 2 Cor. 8.4. "Praying for us with much entreaty-earnest solicitation. Again in Rom. 12.8, where the meaning is *admonition*, while in Acts 9.31, the same word translated "comfort," carries the idea of aid. The thought is *STIR UP*. Finally, *COMFORT*. The word here is PARAMUTHION, and means to soothe or pacify, or persuade. The thought here is *CHEER UP*.

## DISCIPLINE IN THE COMPANY.

Let us now examine an aspect of Local Assembly government which requires great care and wisdom. We will look at it under two headings: The need for discipline and the nature of discipline.

### THE NEED FOR DISCIPLINE

No community can claim immunity from disturbance, be it the ever so well regulated. The Local Church is no exception. Indeed, the Lord indicated in Luke 17.1, "It is impossible but that offences will come;" also in Matt. 18.7, the same warning is given. Verses 15 to 20 of this chapter provides an instance. Trespass here and in Luke 17.3 means to miss the mark, HAMARTANO, the only occasions of its use. Difficulties arise, and differences in personality alone account for much of Assembly unrest, strain and disagreement, and care is required, lest a "little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" 1 Cor. 5.6. Discipline is essential, for "Holiness becometh Thy House, O Lord, forever. Psalms 93.5" This alone would establish the need for discipline.

## THE NATURE OF DISCIPLINE

The subject of discipline in the New Testament is set forth in at least three distinct and separate manners, which we will attempt to explain. Three headings suggest themselves: Private Discipline, Public Discipline and Pastoral Discipline. There are disciplines which only the individual concerned is asked to exercise, and the Assembly takes no part in; while there are disciplines only the Local Church can and must handle. And I judge there are disciplines neither the individual or the Church may handle. Look first at *Private discipline* (Luke 17.3). "If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him." Two brethren are involved, an alleged trespass is raised. The offended brother makes the first move, and rebukes the offender. If the latter repents, the former forgives the latter. So seemingly simple, yet experience over the past 50 years with the Saints proves that it works! Only two moves by the offended brother, and he gains his brother, and only two people know anything about the dispute! But some one will say, "what about Matthew 18.15?" Let us look at the verse. "Moreover, if thy brother trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault, between thee and him alone. If he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother." Similar ground to Luke 7.3. And again only two persons know anything about the matter! Now the difficulty broadens. V. 16 raises a problem, "But if he will not hear thee, take with thee one or two more," that every word may be established, i.e. to cause to stand (Matt. 18.2) "Set him in the midst." (John 8.3) "set her in the midst." Someone or something that will stand scrutiny. Three of four persons are now involved. A further problem presents itself, "If he shall neglect to hear them," This is a possibility, and could arise from a mistaken sense of right on the part of the offender, or fleshly stubbornness; and finally the church is involved. If the offender still will not hear, the offended brother behaves toward the offending brother as he would a heathen and a publican; that is, he withdraws his fellowship. Note, this is still a private matter. "Let him be to thee." Five times the pronoun "thee" is mentioned in the passage, once in italics, indicating the word is not in the original manuscripts, but inserted to complete the sense, and ought not to be interpreted as excommunication from the Local Church.

This would set out a survey of Private Discipline.

### PUBLIC DISCIPLINE

In the matter of Public Discipline, the Local Church must act when any of the sins mentioned in 1 Cor. 5.11 are committed. Assembly discipline is here limited to these sins alone, and it would appear that a meeting is specially called by the Church for this purpose, see 1 Cor. 5.4. The Corinthian believers were lax in disciplining the wicked person; and they appear to be just as lax in receiving him again, after giving proof of his repentance by overmuch sorrow. (2 Cor. 2.7).

### PASTORAL DISCIPLINE

It is the task of the overseers, set among the flock of God, not only to shepherd the Assembly (Acts 20.28); but to warn the unruly, (1 Thess. 5.14), mark and avoid the divisionists, (Rom. 16.17) and stop the mouths of empty talkers (Titus 1.11). These duties devolve on the heads of the overseers, as the immediate context shows. Paul in Romans and Thessalonians, after addressing the brethren in these assemblies, has a word of council for other brethren, who can only be overseers. Note the "you, brethren" of Romans 16.17, coming after the "you, brethren" of 15.30; also the "you, brethren" of 1 Thess. 5.14, coming after the "you, brethren, of v. 12 of the same chapter. Add to this, his direction to Titus in 1.11 of the epistle which bears his name, in the context of the qualifications of elders. Much admonition is exercised by overseers, of which the Assembly knows little; until that position is arrived at, where the Church is informed, fully, in the matter of discipline, when excommunication is the only way in which certain matters can be finalised, for the Glory of God and His Assembly.

Another discipline which is not excommunication, is, withdrawing from the disorderly brother of 2 Thess. 3.6, here a collective drawing away, and have no company with him (v. 14), that he may be put to shame by his conduct.

### EXCOMMUNICATION FROM THE LOCAL CHURCH

It is a solemn occasion when circumstances demand that one of the number in the fellowship is put away. EXARIO—The word is used in 1 Cor. 5.13, of one put away by the Church, excommunicated. It is also used in v. 2 of the

same chapter, to illustrate the possibility of the wicked person being taken away in death in the government of God. These are the only occurrences of the word, the stem of which is used in Eph. 4.31. Let all bitterness, etc. be put away from you—God’s blessing is withheld until evil is put away. The instances are too numerous to quote at length; but see 1 Sam. 7.3. God’s blessing was conditional on Israel putting away the strange gods, and a desire of heart to serve Him fully. In every instance of putting away, recovery is anticipated, and joyously welcomed, after repentance is evidenced.

**THE LOCAL CHURCH RESOLVES SPIRITUAL  
DISPUTES. Matt. 18.15.  
DIFFERENCES BETWEEN BRETHREN**

The Lord’s guidance in all matters of trespass *between brethren* is clear and precise, and has been dealt with under the paragraph on Private Discipline.

Paul gives guidance in Philippians 4.2, when *sisters differ*. He makes his appeal in a sevenfold way:—

- |                   |                            |       |
|-------------------|----------------------------|-------|
| 1. Discreetly     | Eeseech, not command       | v. 2. |
| 2. Personally     | Euodias—Syntyche           | v. 2. |
| 3. Alphabetically | Gives no preeminence       | v. 2. |
| 4. Doctrinally    | In the Lord                | v. 2. |
| 5. Reflectively   | Laboured with me in Gospel | v. 3. |
| 6. Unbiasedly     | Recovery in view           | v. 3. |
| 7. Helpfully      | Assist them.               | v. 3. |

**THE LOCAL CHURCH RESOLVES LEGAL DISPUTES  
1 Cor. Ch. 6.**

**DIFFERENCES BETWEEN BRETHREN**

Christians forbidden to go to Law against each other, because:—

- |                                     |       |
|-------------------------------------|-------|
| 1. Going before the unjust.         | v. 1. |
| 2. Ignoring the Saints              | v. 1. |
| 3. Ignoring a court competent.      | v. 2. |
| 4. We shall judge the world.        | v. 2. |
| 5. We shall judge angels.           | v. 3. |
| 6. Ignoring wise men in the Church. | v. 5. |
| 7. A shameful thing to go to court. | v. 5. |

Christians not forbidden to go to Law with the world.  
Paul claimed the benefits of Roman Citizenship. Acts 16.37.



**THE LOCAL CHURCH IS EXPECTED TO  
EVANGELISE THE WORLD. Matt. 28.19.**

The Power v. 18. The People—Nations v. 19.  
The Purpose—Disciple v. 19 The Place—World v. 19.  
The Preaching—Gospel v. 15. Mk. 16 The Pattern—Make,  
Mark, Mould. v. 19 The Presence. v. 20. With you.

**HYMNS AND THEIR WRITERS (22), by Jack Strahan, Enniskillen**

**“WITH JESUS IN OUR MIDST”**

**ROBERT CLEAVER CHAPMAN (1803—1902)**

Towards the close of the last century, a letter posted in a foreign country and addressed, “R. C. Chapman, University of Love, England” was duly delivered correctly to a narrow cul-de-sac among the slums of Barnstaple, Devon, for it was there at No. 6 New Buildings that Robert Cleaver Chapman had made his home. A press reporter wrote on the occasion of Chapman’s 99th birthday, “No-one can estimate the influence that has been created by the saintly life and beautiful faith and glorious example of Robert Chapman.” The record of a friend who had once stayed with Chapman in that humble Devonshire home was this—“I learned that he was pre-eminently holy; a man who rose early, and prayed much, and always walked with God.” But who was this Robert Cleaver Chapman, this spiritual giant, this patriarch of faith, this apostle of love, who lived in such simplicity and walked with God?

Robert Cleaver Chapman was born into a family of nobility and wealth—his was a childhood of luxury. His father, Thomas Chapman, was a well-to-do merchant from Whitby in Yorkshire, England, and had moved to reside at Elsinore, Denmark and it was while there that Robert was born in 1803. After early private education under a Roman Catholic French Abbé and later schooling in Yorkshire, England, Robert at the age of 15 went to London to study law. He applied himself arduously and after five years was admitted an Attorney of the Court of Common Pleas and an Attorney of the Court of Kings Bench. Professional opportunities then opened out before him; the social round of London’s West End made its appeal; Chapman was only 20 years of age and life held great promise. In himself he was a young man of high moral standards, blameless in character, devout and seeking to attain the salvation of God by self-righteousness. But one night while sitting under the ministry of James Harrington Evans in John Street Chapel, Chapman appreciated that his garment of self-righteousness was in reality before God only a filthy rag. He discarded it and embraced the Lord Jesus as his personal Saviour. Writing later of that event he said, “In the good and set time Thou

spakest to me saying, 'This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing' (Isaiah 28, v. 12). And how sweet Thy words, 'Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee' (Matthew 9.2). How precious the sight of the Lamb of God! And how glorious the robe of righteousness hiding from the holy eyes of my Judge all my sin and pollution."

From the moment of conversion, Chapman sought to be true to his Saviour and Lord. Confessing Christ proved costly both in his own family circle and among his professional colleagues. He sought to obey his Lord in baptism and approached James Harrington Evans on the matter. "You will wait a while, and consider the matter" advised the pastor. "No, I will make haste and delay not to keep His commandments" replied Chapman and was forthwith baptized. He devoted himself to the service of Christ and to the service of others, working among the poor and needy of the slums of London. Besides a big heart for needy souls, Chapman had a tender conscience and desired to be well-pleasing to his Lord. So, after deep exercise of heart and prayerful consideration, he relinquished his profession, gave away his personal fortune, dedicated himself to full-time service for Christ and at the age of 29, left London for Barnstaple in the West Country, to be pastor of Ebenezer Street Baptist Chapel there, accepting that charge on one condition, "That I should be free to teach all I found written in the scriptures."

God showed to such an open, honest and enquiring heart, precious truths from His Word, and Chapman longed that they should be made known—that the unity of God's children was not dependant on any rite or ceremony—that ministry was a matter of Divine gift and not human or ecclesiastical ordination—that priestly service was the spiritual birthright of all believers and when the Lord's supper was observed in simplicity that there should be liberty for all brethren to take part as led by the Spirit of God. These truths Chapman proclaimed in love and waited patiently and prayerfully for the Spirit of God to write them upon the hearts of the saints, for the unity of the people of God was something very precious to him. Chapman was noted for his grace and yieldingness, but always dealt in firmness and faithfulness to his Lord when there was error, while at the same time always showing kindness to the erring ones. Such loving conduct was God-glorifying and was Chapman's strength—truly a brother beloved. In all matters, he exhibited the spirit of his Lord and honoured the injunction of Phil. 2.3, "Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves" and was often heard to say, "Humility is the secret of fellowship and pride the secret of division." His ministry among the saints was a ministry of love and of reconciliation. (Blessed are the peacemakers, for they

shall be called the children of God"—Matthew 5.9). To a brother with whom he differed in certain things he wrote, "We judged it a cause for self-humiliation that we could not fully agree, but not a reason for strife and separation. God would soon make all His children one, did they always set their faces like the cherubim towards the mercy-seat."

Chapman's ministry among the unconverted in Barnstaple was greatly blessed of God. The people there listened to the "man of God" whom they knew and who lived Christ daily in their midst, and souls were saved in that Devonshire town which, at that time, was marked by misery and drunkenness. He loved to preach in the open-air and in cottage meetings. His own home was open always and there many a needy soul found help and blessing. There the Lord's people came without invitation and stayed as long as they pleased and never once in 70 years were any turned away.

The 19th century in England was a period of spiritual giants—men whose lives and testimonies still affect us today. Associated with assembly testimony, there were three of outstanding fame—George Muller, whose faith in the living God was demonstrated daily in the orphan homes of Bristol—John Nelson Darby, whose hope "set on things above" found expression in rich spiritual ministry—Robert C. Chapman, whose genuine love for saints and sinners was told out daily in lowly service; these three—a man of faith, a man of hope and a man of love. But let us all again ponder the verdict of the Spirit of God in 1 Cor. 13.13, "Faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

There was nothing ostentatious about the life of Robert C. Chapman. In life, and particularly in later life, he would not consent to having his ministry published. When friends asked him, "Why don't you write your life story?" he replied, "It is written already and will be published in the Morning." Chapman wrote many hymns and poems particularly during his early years at Barnstaple. In all about 165 of these have been preserved for us and from this large collection, the hymn, "With Jesus in our midst" has been chosen because it expresses in simple form some of those things that were most precious to the heart of Robert C. Chapman.

'With Jesus in our midst,  
We gather round the board;  
Though many, we are one in Christ,  
One body in the Lord.  
Our sins were laid on Him  
When bruised on Calvary;  
With Christ we died and rose again,  
And sit with Him on high.

Faith eats the bread of life,  
And drinks the living wine ;  
Thus we, in love together knit,  
On Jesus' breast recline.

Soon shall the night be gone,  
And we with Jesus reign ;  
The marriage supper of the Lamb  
Shall banish all our pain.

This short hymn befits the Lord's supper, that high and holy privilege afforded to the Lord's people upon the first day of the week. We gather around simple symbols upon a table—faith embraces the more sublime realities. Faith recognises the living Christ as present, looks back to the cross and anticipates the glory. Christ is ever central. What indissoluble bonds unite us to Him and in turn to one another! How blessed the communion and how precious the unity—truly a foretaste of things to come!

---

## ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY

Editor : A. M. S. Gooding.

Correspondence relative to Editorial matters should be addressed to the Editor : 7 Sparrow Gardens, off London Road, Kilmarnock, Scotland. (Telephone 24245).

Assistant Editor : B. Currie  
49 Glenburn Road, Dunmurry, BT17 9AN, N. Ireland.  
(Telephone Belfast 621343).

### Committee :

Tom Armstrong, Thomas Beggs, Ronnie Johnston,  
James McKeown, James Moore.

Secretary : William Neill.

This magazine is supported solely by the freewill offerings of the Lord's people.

Friends residing in England, Scotland and Wales may kindly forward their donations to :

John Glenville, Nestor, Hillhead, Colyton, Devon, EX13 6HH.

Friends residing elsewhere should please forward gifts to :  
William Neill, "Beth-Asher," 109 Lurgan Road, Banbridge, Northern Ireland, BT32 4NG.

Please address correspondence, including all new orders, orders for back numbers and extra copies, cancellations and changes of address to William Neill at above address.

You can HELP US by stating the NUMBER of copies required, and submitting NAME and ADDRESS, including POSTAL CODE, IN BLOCK LETTERS, please.



# **ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY**



**Contents :**

**SANCTIFICATION**

by A. Leckie

**A SHORT HISTORY OF THE TESTIMONY**

by E. Robinson

**THE LORD'S FLESH IN HEBREWS**

by B. Currie

**FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTALS**

by J. B. Hewitt

**EPHESIAN EXERCISES**

by J. G. Good

**WHERE I AM**

by P. Squires

**ZECHARIAH**

by E. R. Bower

**THE CHURCH**

by J. Campbell

**HYMNS AND THEIR WRITERS**

by J. Strahan

# THE INCARNATION

To earth Thou camest, Son of Man, to dwell,  
'Midst sinful men, incarnate Son of God,  
Thou, Lord of glory, come His heart to tell,  
In wondrous grace, the streets of earth hast trod.

God has Himself come here, within our range,  
In Thee, His own, His well belovèd Son,  
Ever The Same, in Thee is found no change,  
The incomparable, self-existing One.

The Father's bosom here Thy dwelling place,  
Disclosing to our raptured hearts from thence,  
Our God's eternal thoughts of love and grace,  
Which only Thou, blest Saviour, could dispense.

Lord Jesus, grace and truth have come by Thee,  
Long they waited Thy descent as Man,  
Perfect in balance and sweet harmony,  
The Word, declaring God's eternal plan.

—by *Edward Robinson, Exmouth.*

# SANCTIFICATION

by ALBERT LECKIE, Airdrie

The word "sanctification" means "separation" or "being set apart."

The doctrine of sanctification is brought before the reader of God's Word in four different ways.

There is a **Sanctification that is Absolute and Complete** and is true of every individual who has put their trust unreservedly in Christ Jesus for Salvation. This sanctification is not progressive and is equally as true of the believer as his Justification (1 Cor. 6.11), it is therefore unrelated to any moral or practical change in the life. The believer is sanctified by faith in Christ Jesus (Acts 26.18), Christ Jesus is made to him sanctification (1 Cor. 1.30) and he has this sanctification in Christ Jesus (1 Cor. 1.2). Without this sanctification there could be no vital relationship with a Holy God. This sanctification is connected in the first instance with the will of God (Heb. 10.10) and is procured for man in the Death of Christ (Heb. 10.10) commencing in man's experience with the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit of God (1 Pet. 1.2).

There is also in God's Word what might be termed **Relative Sanctification**. This is brought about without any act of the will or of faith and is not vital in its character. The ground around the bush that burned with fire was said by God to be "holy ground" (Exodus 3. 1-6). The Mountain of Transfiguration is called by the Apostle Peter "the Holy Mount" (2 Pet. 1.18). The gift when placed on the altar became sanctified (Matt. 23.19). Our food is sanctified by the word of God and prayer (1 Tim. 4.4-5). The unbelieving marriage partner is sanctified by the believing marriage partner and children of believing parents are holy (1 Cor. 7.14). All of this relates to sanctification by association. The ground in Exodus 3 did not change materially nor did the Mount of Transfiguration—they were "Holy" because the Lord was there. The gift of Matthew 23.19 was sanctified by reason of its association with a sanctified vessel; food is sanctified by God's word and His people's prayers. Neither the gift nor the food undergo any material change. Thus it is with the unbelieving marriage partner and children of believers, they are relatively sanctified without a vital

work of grace in the heart. An appreciation of this teaching helps in an understanding of Hebrews 10.29 where the apostate is under consideration.

There is also in God's word what might be termed **Ecclesiastical Sanctification** (2 Timothy 2.21). Few things can be more displeasing to God than the propagation of error under the name of Christ. Where this is irreversibly accepted, the plain duty of the child of God who desires to be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use is to purge himself out from or away from those vessels to dishonour.\* The honour of the Lord and one's usefulness to Him demands this at all times and more especially in a day when unity at all costs is the cry of Christendom.

There is also throughout the word of God a clear call to **Practical Sanctification**. The experience of the New Birth and the possession of a New Nature must create within the child of God a deep desire for Pure, Holy, Sanctified living. The Apostle Peter has this to say "But as He which hath called you is Holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation" (1 Pet. 1.15). Space forbids a lengthy dissertation and I therefore confine my remarks to two utterances of God's Son in His Prayer in John 17. In v. 17 of that chapter we hear the Son of God say "Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy word is truth" and in v. 19 "And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth"—R.V. "Sanctified in truth" i.e. "sanctified truly." Thus we have (1) santification by the word of Truth and (2) by the sanctifying of the Son of God.

(1) As one's life is regulated by the Word of Truth one becomes set apart to God. This sounds simple as doctrine but is tremendously difficult in practice. A holy life comes not by knowing or preaching the Word of Truth but by allowing it to judge, cleanse, direct, wound, heal every thought, motive and deed. In Hebrews 4.12 we learn there are three things the Word of God is and three things it does, viz:—

It is Living, Powerful and Sharp  
It Pierces, Divides asunder and Discerns.

\* Some will not agree with this interpretation of this passage but we print it as our esteemed brother has written it. (Editor).



By it the whole man is laid bare, soul, spirit and body (joints and marrow). This searching experience comes not by reading the Word of God for material to preach nor analysing it for purely Theological purposes but by permitting it to search and judge. Said the Son of God to his disciples in John 13.14, "If I then your Lord and Master (Teacher) have washed your feet." He thus altered the order of the disciples' confession in verse 13 and with significance. Assuredly if there is to be any practical result from His teaching there must first of all be complete subjection to His Lordship. One must approach God's word with an obedient and submissive will, "Lord what wilt Thou have me to do?"

(2) The Son of God has sanctified Himself in heaven that His people might be truly sanctified on earth. He has set Himself apart in Heaven for us that we might find in Him an object to fill and thrill the mind and heart and when this is so we become truly sanctified, set apart to God here on the earth. Many of us fail in the matter of practical sanctification because we approach it the wrong way. The order in Practical Sanctification is SPIRIT, SOUL and BODY (1 Thess. 5.23). You will remember that sin entered BODY ("good for food") SOUL ("pleasant to the eyes") SPIRIT ("desired to make one wise") (Gen. 3.6). A lesson difficult to learn is that practical sanctification commences in the inner life, the thought life and reaches out to the workings of the body. Men and women might shut themselves in from the world behind large walls but this does not guarantee holy living; walls may shut in the body but cannot shut out the thoughts. Said the Son of God "For from within, out of the heart of man proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders," etc., "all these evil things come from within and defile the man" (Mark 7.21,23). What then must be the exercise of the child of God? "If thine eye be single thy whole body shall be full of light" (Matt. 6.22). He must have a single eye for what is good and not evil.

Turn your eyes upon Jesus,  
Look full on his wonderful face  
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim  
In the light of His glory and grace.

The Apostle Paul surely gives us the correct order in

Colossians 3; in verses 1 and 2 "Seek those things which are above" and "set your affection (mind) on things above" then in correct sequence he says in verse 5 "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, etc."

Brethren, what an object we have in Heaven for our hearts and minds! A man in Heaven sitting in a place where no angel ever sat, "But to which of the angels said He at any time, Sit on my right hand?" (Heb. 1.13). Occupying a position that belongs exclusively to Deity and sharing with the Father all the glory of Deity, John 17, yet still bearing in His blessed body the marks that tell me "I am His and He is mine."

The heart is satisfied, can ask no more;  
All thought of self is now for ever o'er;  
Christ, its unmingled object, fills the heart  
In blest adoring love—its endless part.

## **A SHORT HISTORY OF THE TESTIMONY**

(continued)

by **EDWARD ROBINSON, Exmouth**

In the preceding paper we considered an important change in the instruction contained in the life and death of Moses, the servant of God. His death is the termination of an era of teaching under the Mosaic law, and the introduction under Joshua of a departure in the ways of God. In effect we learn that the law was our schoolmaster unto Christ. Also we remember that, as Paul says, "All these things happened to them as types, and have been written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come." (1 Cor. 10.11. JND.). Afterwards, in the times of the Judges, Gideon comes to light and the chequered history of the people later when we read, 'And there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes.' (Judges 17.6). (Is there not in our day a lack of discipline and amongst the people of God failure to recognize the authority of the word of God?).

Saul, David and Solomon each reigned for a period of forty years—the time of testing in Scripture, Israel in the wilderness wandering; our Lord tempted of the devil forty

days. In the testimony, David, a man after God's own heart, is the central figure. (1 Sam. 13.14). But even Samuel is deceived by the natural comeliness of Saul, standing head and shoulders above his fellow men, a man after the flesh making much show, utterly untrustworthy, but anointed king whom Israel wickedly chose, in order to be in line with the nations around them. In mercy, God over-ruled, Saul is discredited and David anointed king. Saul has spared Agag, king of the Amalekites, a nation which is representative of what is of the flesh, a feature so subtle which in our day is the great enemy of all that is of Christ. Posing as love and grace, sentimentality refuses to judge error and evil. Samuel, however, shows God's abhorance of the flesh and its activities and hews Agag in pieces before the Lord.

This same principle, not according to nature, is in evidence as the seven sons of Jesse pass before Samuel, each one rejected until the youngest is last to be presented before the prophet. And Jehovah said 'Arise. Anoint him, for THIS IS HE.' (1 Sam. 16.12) (incidentally, oh, that the Holy Spirit might present our true David before each of our hearts for enthronement to the exclusion of everything and everyone else). It may well be that with us that which is only of nature predominates rather than the spiritual, and often remains undetected. 'For the mind of the flesh is death; but the mind of the Spirit life and peace.' (Rom. 8.6.J.N.D.). There will always be enmity between the two, necessitating continual watchfulness often referred to in scripture, e.g. Rebecca, wife of Isaac relates how the twins struggled within her.

We have seen (again in pairs) the contrast between Saul and David; the latter such a beautiful figure of Christ, he is the shepherd king. With sensitive spirituality he is able with the harp to subdue and mollify the restless spirit of a Saul. And he still speaks to us in the fruit of his own experiences, the psalms. How rich a legacy we have in them, the breathings of the Holy Spirit to be enjoyed already before we enter upon our future glorious inheritance. Surely this book is intended in the testimony of the word of God that there should be with us increase in the knowledge of God (Col. 1.10). And David writes 'For this God is our God for ever and ever' (Ps. 48.14). Then sat Solomon on the throne of David his father and his was a throne of magni-

ficence and great power. Whereas David's reign was one of moral glory, Solomon's was marked by official and manifest greatness. The suggestion for us is that Christ is to reign as the One to Whom every knee is to bow and to be seen in all His millennial glory.

We come to another pair whom the scriptures present together for our edification, Elijah and Elisha. Here, somewhat akin to what we have seen in the case of Moses and Joshua, there is a change of emphasis, not so much of degree of importance, but a moving forward in the ways of God as is seen, for instance, at Pentecost in greater measure. Both are men of God, Elijah marked by much power, strong in character. And as Joshua, the younger, learned much from serving alongside of Moses, so does Elisha learn from Elijah and requests and is granted a double portion of his (Elijah's) spirit. Thus we are to learn that spiritual power on our side is gained largely on the strength of earnest desire, which God will answer. In the New Testament, amongst others, we have three outstanding characters, Peter, John and Paul (our apostle). Peter's ministry is in the main 'kingdom' truth (i.e. moral) John's (he is generally himself in the background) taking us into eternity as we read the Revelation, and Paul bringing us into the present enjoyment of what is future, in the purpose of God 'made to sit down **together** (already) in the heavens in Christ Jesus' (Eph. 2.6). So may we again say 'This God is our God for ever and ever.'

**PLEASE NOTE — CHANGE OF ADDRESS**

**JOHN GLENVILLE now resides at :**

**KINGDON COTTAGE,  
KING STREET,  
COLYTON,  
DEVON, EX13 6LA.**

# THE LORD'S FLESH IN HEBREWS

by B. CURRIE

## 2. INTERCESSION

In the previous paper we noted that the second reference to the flesh of the Lord Jesus in the epistle to the Hebrews is found in 5.7. Here it would appear to be in connection with the experience of the Lord in the garden of Gethsemane. Thus the fact that He shed tears is recorded three times in the New Testament—at the grave of Lazarus (John 11.35), over the city (Luke 19.41), and here.

At first sight it may not appear obvious why the Gethsemane experience of the Lord is introduced into Heb. 5. The writer is seeking to establish the tremendous superiority of Christianity over Judaism. The latter had its law given with angelic attendance, mighty men such as Moses, Joshua and the prophets, high priests like Aaron and his successors, the tabernacle and then the temple with their ritual, ceremony, pomp and ostentation. All that Christianity could show with respect to earth was a Man crucified as a felon and an imposter. The Hebrew epistle establishes firstly that the Man of Calvary was Himself Divine and in virtue of the inestimable worth of His cross work has taken His Manhood to the 'right hand of the Majesty on high' (1.3). We are then instructed that in this Heavenly Man we as Christians have things 'better' than the best that Judaism could offer, including its priesthood.

The Priesthood of Christ, which had been introduced in 2.17-18, is developed from 4.14 — 8.5 to show the vast superiority of His to that of Aaron. Heb. 5.1-10 seeks to establish that Christ fulfills the necessary qualifications for priesthood. These are:

(a) chosen from among men, (v.1),

(b) called of God (v.4).

In v. 5—10 the writer shows that the Lord met these requirements fully. The first was fulfilled in His incarnation and the second in His resurrection. Two Psalms are quoted to emphasise these two facts. His incarnation is underlined by the quotation from Ps. 2.7, while His resurrection is underlined by the quotation from Ps. 110.4. A pattern of alternation is seen in these verses:—

- v. 5 — Humanity (Incarnation)
- v. 6 — Resurrection
- v. 7a — Humanity (Life)
- v. 7b — Resurrection
- v. 8 — Humanity (Life)
- v. 9 — Resurrection

We shall briefly consider these truths.

There are three somewhat similar expressions which need to be distinguished. These are 'begotten,' 'only begotten,' and 'first-begotten.' The term 'begotten' is the usual word for birth as for example Matt. 2.1,4; Luke 1.35; John 18.37, etc., and there seems no reason why the quotation from Ps. 2.7 does not refer to the Lord's incarnation in each of its three occurrences in the New Testament, i.e. Acts 13.33; Heb. 1.5, 5.5. However the expression 'only begotten' refers to the fact that the Lord Jesus was the Eternal Son of the Father. It's use in Heb. 11.17 of Isaac (who was not the only son of Abraham) shows that it is a term indicating pre-eminence, acceptability and uniqueness. It is used to show the eternal relationship existing between the Father and the Son in John 1.14,18; 3.16,18; 1 John 4.9. The last expression 'first-begotten' is a term of dignity rather than time and is used to indicate the dignity and pre-eminence of the Lord in His Manhood (Rom. 8.29; Col. 1.15,18; Rev. 1.5).

The fact of Him becoming Man did not mean however, that He was qualified for priesthood. He came from the wrong tribe (7.14), and during His life there were priests in the nation. As long as He was on earth He could not be a priest (8.4), thus it was essential for His Priesthood to be of a different order. This had its beginning in heaven when He was 'saluted of God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek' (v.10,6). The order of Melchizedek differs from that of Aaron in that it is not marked by succession. He will never die (7.16,24,25), and thus will never need to be succeeded. His Priesthood is to-day, however, marked by the pattern of Aaron and not by the pattern of Melchizedek. The latter refers to the King—Priest Who will minister and strengthen, especially Israel, after the battle of the great tribulation (see Gen. 14.18; Zech. 6.13). As the priest ministering after the pattern of Aaron, He is marked by a capacity to sympathise, not with our sins, but with our weaknesses;

not after but during the trial.

How can He have such sympathy or fellow feeling? The answer is because He Himself has known the depths of trial and this was no more vividly displayed than in Gethsemane. There with supplications and entreaties with strong crying and tears He sought His Father God as He contemplated in Spirit what would be His cup actually when on the cross. He prayed to Him Who was able to save Him 'out of death'—not from dying—and He was heard because of His Piety i.e. He was the Only Man Who ever had a moral right to be heard. Thus He, and He alone, could say 'I know that Thou hearest Me always' (John 11.42). When was His prayer 'to be saved from death' answered? Obviously in resurrection when He came forth 'out of death.'

He returns in v. 8 to the 'days of His flesh' and emphasises His ability to have compassion because of His life of submission and obedience. The converse of the verse cannot be taken as if to imply that there was ever any tendency in Him to disobey. In His Deity He never knew what it was to obey — He was always obeyed. However in His Manhood He went through this experience, 'Son though He was.' The outcome of this was that He became perfect. Not, it must be stressed, with respect to His Person—He always was perfect—but with respect to His office as Priest. Thus in resurrection and ascension He was 'consecrated (perfected) for evermore' (7.28). The fact that His heavenly position is in view is further proved by Him being the Author (cause) of eternal salvation. This could not be true apart from His resurrection (1 Cor. 15.17). Also it was on resurrection ground that He was 'called (saluted) of God' (v. 10).

Thus the Man in heaven is perfectly qualified to be a Priest, and that of an order far superior to Aaron's. Note the following contrasts :—

1. The office of priest brought dignity to Aaron but the Person of Christ brought dignity to the office.

2. The office was an 'honour' for Aaron (v. 4), but it was a 'glory' for Christ (v. 5).

3. Aaron sympathised because of his infirmity (v. 2,3), but Christ because of His Perfection (v. 9).

4. Aaron had to offer for himself (v. 3), but Christ was heard because of His Piety.

5. Aaron was 'called' of God (v.4), but Christ was 'saluted' of God (v.10).

No temple made with hands  
His place of service is;  
In heaven itself He stands,  
A heavenly priesthood His:  
In Him the shadows of the law  
Are all fulfilled, and now withdraw.

—(Thomas Kelly)

## **FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTALS**

by J. B. HEWITT, Chesterfield

### **(27) THE HEADSHIP OF CHRIST**

Read : 1 Cor. 11.3-16; Eph. 1.22,23; Col. 1.18; 2.10.

Headship is a matter of Divine appointment for the maintenance of harmony in relationships established by God. Connected with headship are relationship, representation, responsibility and rule. Headship is associated with the entrance of sin into the world. Headship is an ordinance of God and must be acknowledged and accepted by both parties who should be in agreement. Because of Eve's disobedience, a new order of relationship is seen, "He shall rule over thee"—this is Headship. The Lordship of Christ affects us individually but Headship is concerned with the collective position, especially in relation to the Church. The Headship of Christ over Creation, Man and the Church is absolute.

#### **Headship — Christ and Man**

In 1 Cor. 11.3 is the principle of headship. Three great principles are enunciated here and applied to local conditions in Corinth. It is applied to the relation between Christ and every man in the Church. This is a divine decree and unalterable, all must acknowledge His supremacy. The conduct of these saints (1.12,13) was a denial of headship and a grief and a burden to the Apostle.

The Lord Jesus has a threefold claim to headship over man:—Creatorially (Gen. 2.7), Redemptively (1 Tim. 2.6); and Judicially (Acts 17.31; Phil. 2.11,12). This principle is inflexible for Christ has authority, supremacy and direction over the individual.

Quite independent of the marriage bond, man is the head



of the woman and is to bear rule (v.3). This is the second principle and does not mean husband and wife relationship as in Eph. 5.22,23. Man was designed to be the representative of the Creator. He is not only a visible representation of God, but is also in himself a manifestation of God's greatness and majesty (v.7). For this reason the man's head should not be covered, for thereby he would dishonour his head, that is Christ. His headship is all embracing from man's birth and into eternity.

### **Headship — Christ and God**

The third principle of verse 3 is mentioned to add authority to the first two headships. This does not imply any unequal partnership in the Godhead but is indicative of the subjection of the Lord in His humanity. He is viewed as a man in subjection to His Father as God. He took the place of the Servant (Isa. 42.1), in a path of obedience, and delighted to do the will of God (John 5.30; Heb. 10.9; Rom. 15.3; Matt. 26.39). The implication is that if Christ accepted the Headship of God, it is expected that men will accept Christ's and the woman the man's (v. 8,9). In life and in death the Lord exhibited His subjection in unquestioning obedience to God (John 10.17; 13.31; 17.4).

### **Headship — Christ and the Church**

In Eph. 1.22,23 His place of authority in relationship to the Church, is the Body aspect. He is the "Supreme Head," literally Head over all things "to" or "for" the Church. His universal Lordship is exercised for the benefit of the Church (5.23). He is the sole source of its life and strength, so that it receives from Him the nourishment which promotes the growth of the whole body (4.15,16). Through His sovereign Person and exalted position the Church takes her orders.

This is the inward union of the Church, as an organism which owes its life to Christ, derives its sustenance from Him. He governs, He directs, He administers and is above all other authorities (v.21).

The Church is the body of Christ and the fulness of Christ. God intends the Church should be the full expression of Jesus Christ. Colossians sets forth the same truth with certain differences in viewpoint. Ephesians stresses the Church as the fulness of Christ, who Himself, is Head. Colossians speaks of Christ's own fulness (1.19). In Ephesians

the Body is seen as the complement of the Head; in Colossians the Body is seen to be complete in the Head (2.10). Applied locally He is Head over every member and servant, in every exercise and at every meeting.

### **Headship — Husband and Wife**

In Eph. 5.22-24 dealing with marriage Paul enjoins the kind of submission that is required in certain relationships. The teaching is practical and if obeyed will prove profitable. Christian standards of marriage must not be lowered. As partners we are "joint heirs of the grace of life" (1 Pet. 3.7). Headship makes man the ruling partner in the marriage relation, it is established by creation and now endorsed in redemption. Both partners are reminded of their duties and not their rights. The subjection of the wife to her own husband is personal and practical, and the ideal is "as unto the Lord" (v.22). The responsibility of leadership is that of the husband and father, and his authority must be accepted (v.24; 6.1-2). The analogy likens a husband's headship over his wife to Christ's headship over the Church (1.22; 5.24).

The husband is given to the wife to be a saviour to her, in maintaining, protecting and defending her. This makes the obedience of the wife a matter of devotion. She must never be treated as a servant. The husband's love must be completely unselfish, sacrificial and self-giving like Christ (v.25). My love like Christ's should give and give and give. The word love here is not "phileo," affection for a person, but "agapao," love that is totally unselfish, that seeks the highest good of the one loved.

### **The Head of Principality and Power**

Col. 2.10 is the headship of Christ in relation to angelic beings, (Eph. 1.20,21). This is the vindication of His rights as their Creator (Col. 1.16), but as a reward in virtue of His work by which He glorified the Father (Heb. 2.9). There are two kinds of angels, good and evil. Both are subject to the supreme Lordship of Christ. How vast and comprehensive is His Headship. Christ's death on the Cross was a decisive triumph over all the demonic powers of evil. He disarmed Satan's host of their power to retain the spoils (Luke 11.22). In defeating the Devil by death He overcame all our malicious foes (Eph. 6.12; Col. 2.15). The paradox of the crucifixion is—triumph in helplessness, and glory in shame.

The victory is ours, hostile angels cannot separate us from God (Rom. 8.38,39). The angelic host are subject to Him as their Creator, the evil ones subject to Him as their Conqueror (Col. 2.15). Because of His victory the Colossian saints are not to capitulate to false teachers (2.18).

The purpose of God for Christ is given in Eph. 1.10, "to head up all things in Christ." He will carry out His perfect plan — the whole universe will be one. All divisions and disorders caused by sin will be removed. Man brought back to God through Christ (Col. 1.20), into unity and fellowship among themselves. What God planned in Christ will attain its full fruition when the time is ripe. The Lord Jesus was ever conscious that the Father's love for Him, "gave ALL THINGS into His hand" (John 3.35; 13.3). He alone is worthy (Heb. 3.3; Rev. 5.12).

He hell in hell laid low;  
Made sin, He sin o'erthrew:  
Bowed to the grave, destroyed it so,  
And death by dying slew.

## **EPHESIAN EXERCISES**

by J. G. GOOD

The division of the Ephesian letter, is obvious even to the casual reader. The first three chapters are Positional relating to our Standing, the second three chapters are Practical dealing with our State. It is true that our Standing is un-impeachable, we are viewed in all the acceptability of our Lord Jesus Christ but what God desires is that through the ministry of Paul, the truths relating to our Standing will be reflected in our State for His glory.

Every strand of truth emphasised by the apostle in the doctrinal part of the epistle has a co-relative link in the practical part of the epistle, as we see in the following references;

### *Positional*

Eph. Ch. 2.1-2. 'And you hath He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins.'

Ch. 2.4. 'But God who is rich in mercy for His great love wherewith He loved us.'

Ch. 1.19. 'And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe.'

### *Practical*

Eph. Ch. 5.6-8. 'For ye were sometimes darkness but now ye are light.'

Ch. 5.1-2. 'Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children.'

Ch. 6.10. 'Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.'

The fore-mentioned verses are indicative of the tremendous responsibility placed upon us to let the truths connected with our Position be displayed in a Practical way in our daily living. This is where we have failed, and the reason for the lack of power in our individual and assembly lives. Brethren-ism has taken these same living, vital truths, and with them, have created a dogma, demanding a mechanical obedience, instead of the same truths being a dynamic in the lives of God's people.

We learn in this letter that the Church is not an organisation but a living organism, dependent on the Head for its very existence. Thus we have Paul's emphasis on the Headship of Christ, mentioned three times, Ch. 1.22 where it is linked to Authority, Ch. 4.15, we see it Affectionately, and in Ch. 5.23 the context would tell us of Accountability.

Again, the letter is one of;

- (a) Fulness, mentioned four times, Ch. 1.10, 1.23, 3.19, and 4.13.
- (b) Fellowship, Ch. 2. 5,6, 'together,' 2.19, 'Fellow-citizens with the saints.'
- (c) Fruitfulness, Ch. 2.21, 'groweth,' 3.17, 'rooted and grounded,' 4.16, 'maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.'

There are definite indications outlined as to our appreciation of the teaching of this letter, a spiritual barometer relating to our progress and state of spiritual health. In order that this might be the case, Paul under the guidance of the Spirit of God states emphatically, 'Be filled with the Spirit' Eph. 5.18. This without doubt is the power for Christian living, only with the help of the Holy Spirit will precept become practice, and the living truths find expression and be re-produced in our lives. Notice, 'Being filled with the Spirit,' is not with a view to accomplishing miracles of healing, or being the means of the conversions of thousands, but rather the opposite, these Christian graces have to be exhibited in the common round of life. What a challenge!

The operative word in this exhortation is the verb, 'be filled.' We note, first of all, that this verb is in the Imperative Mood, this is a definite command, which must be treated with urgency. We have the negative truth in the previous clause in the verse, 'be not drunk with wine,' while here we have the positive truth stressed, 'be filled with the Spirit.' Secondly, this verb is in the Passive Voice, this filling of the Holy Spirit can ever be realised in our own strength, we need to confess our weakness, and call upon His help. How beautifully the hymnwriter has expressed this truth in the words;

'But though I cannot sing, or tell, or know,  
The fulness of Thy love while here below,  
My empty vessel I may freely bring;  
O Thou who art of love the living spring,  
My vessel fill'

Thirdly, we note the Continuous Tense, 'be filled NOW and continue to be filled.' Spirituality can be attained but it must be maintained, here we have the remedy for every ill, 'be filled with the Spirit.'

How will a Spirit-filled life be discerned. The answer is in v. 19, 'speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.' This is real, vital fellowship which should be expressed in the local assembly gatherings. We should not limit this expression of Christian fellowship and encouragement to the assembly gatherings only, but that these characteristics should pervade every department of life. Notice how this happy state of affairs can be diagnosed;

(a) *Collective as to its Sphere.* We cannot over emphasise the importance of Christian fellowship. The New Testament does not visualise a Christian in isolation, although God can support those deprived of fellowship in a special way. 'Speaking to yourselves,' we are inter-dependent upon each other for comfort and counsel. The remnant in Malachi's day (Ch. 4.16), 'Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another,' they were fully aware of the best way to preserve this fellowship of those who thought upon His name. Are we functioning in this respect?

(b) *Contagious as to its Spread.* The example of others can be infectious, in a good or bad sense. 'I go a fishing' (Luke 21.3). How often our subject matter is anything but spiritual. Sometimes those who have the most to sing about,

utter only sighs, and yet we receive encouragement from the sick-bed and the prison cell.

(c) *Conscious as to its Subject.* 'Making melody in your hearts to the Lord.' The cause of all this joy is apparent 'the Lord.' The presence of the Lord with us is a reality, or should be! The Christian in the good of spiritual blessings is happy and others know and share in the happiness. 'For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.' (Rom. 14.17). The blessings of God are not material but spiritual, not expressed outwardly, but experienced inwardly, 'making melody in your heart'!

Further expression of this Spirit-filled life is found in verse 20, 'Giving thanks always for all things' no shortage or lack of variety of subjects for thanksgiving, 'ALL THINGS.'

(a) *Appreciation for All Things.* We are rather selective as to the themes of our thanksgiving. There are many things which have happened to us in life about which we would be hesitant in giving thanks, the disappointments, bereavements, the ever increasing opposition we meet from day to day. Of course it is different when it comes to the success stories, promotion at our place of business, our children have done well for themselves and so on. Were we promised success? Is there not a reason for the failures of life? When we see all in the light of the permissive will of God, we will give thanks for 'ALL THINGS'!

(b) *Appreciation for the Attributes of God.* The thanksgiving has to be rendered 'unto God and the Father.' The great God of creation, of power and majesty, surely this would impress upon us the need for reverence when approaching God with the voice of thanksgiving. Then follows that wonderful New Testament revelation, and 'the Father.' The Fatherhood of God relates only to those who have been born into the family of God through the new birth. We have been left in no doubt as to our way of approach and to the method of address, 'unto God and the Father.'

(c) *Appreciation of our Association with Christ* 'in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.' The One Who is the source of all our blessings, in Him alone are we accepted, before

the face of God in all the perfections of His Son. Read chapter one of this epistle and see the repetition of 'in Whom.' Let us be careful to ascribe to our Lord His God given titles, and not be guilty of speaking in a derogatory manner of our glorious Lord.

Finally, the filling of the Spirit, is exemplified in verse 21, 'submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.' This does not concern either inferiority or superiority. It is a military term and carries the thought of orderly submission, 'in the fear of Christ' (R.V.). Here in the closing verses of this chapter we have;

(a) *Lordship—Asserted*, verse 22, see the repeated mention of 'Lord' brought into every sphere the touchstone of conduct. Remove the 'Lord' from Christian experience and the whole becomes a sham.

(b) *Headship—Acknowledged*, verse 23, The revised version renders 'and He is being Himself the saviour of the body' the comparison lies in the fact of headship alone. The husband's love and devotion cannot be called salvation, in which respect Christ's headship is peculiar to Himself. (Vincent's N.T. Word Studies) A recognition of headship induced by love, transferred into the marriage bond how lofty and dignified this should be!

(c) *Ownership—Accomplished*, verse 25. 'Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for her.' The pearl of great price, 'selleseth all that He hath' (Matt. 13.44) 'Love seeketh not her own,' (1 Cor. 13.5.) This divine love is, seeking, selfless and sacrificing. What a price! How precious the purchased possession must be to our Lord Jesus Christ.

'We never would forget,  
Thy rich, Thy precious Love,  
Our theme of joy and wonder here,  
Our endless song above.

**PLEASE INFORM US PROMPTLY OF ANY  
CHANGES OF ADDRESSES AND/OR THE  
QUANTITIES OF MAGAZINES REQUIRED.  
WASTAGE IS NOT GOOD STEWARDSHIP!**

## WHERE I AM

by PAUL SQUIRES (Ford Park, Plymouth)

Let us together muse upon this wonderful phrase which is peculiar to the Gospel according to John and which was uttered by our blessed Lord. I consider it of import that this phrase appears solely in the Fourth Gospel and not in the Synoptics. We need to realise that each Gospel has its own distinctiveness and does not the apostle John open up to us something of the heart of the precious Lord? Is there not a sense of 'closeness' in the Gospel?

In chapter 7, officers are sent by the Pharisees and the chief priests to take the Lord Jesus. Jesus said, "Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto Him that sent Me. Ye shall seek Me, and shall not find Me: and WHERE I AM, thither ye cannot come" (see verses 33-34). These words were not understood by the Jews as verses 35-36 show. Note "ye cannot come" in 8.21-22 and 13.33.

The language of 12.26 is "If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and WHERE I AM, there shall also My servant be: if any man serve Me, him will My Father honour." We, who are Christians, serve the Person to Whom we are attached, the Lord Christ, and His promise which cannot be broken is "WHERE I AM, there shall also My servant be." Our being WHERE HE IS does not depend on the quality of our service for Him but on our being His servants. The quality of service will be dealt with at the Judgment Seat of Christ (1 Cor. 3.13).

We know that our Lord Jesus Christ is to descend to the atmospheric heaven to receive His blood-bought people unto Himself. Chapter 14.3 reads, "if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that WHERE I AM, there ye may be also." The place has been prepared by His entering heaven itself; it is not in the process of being prepared as some think. We rejoice in that He has entered heaven, and the fact that He is there has wondrously prepared the place for us to be there (see Heb. 6.19-20). He said "if I go and prepare . . . I come again" ("will" is not to be construed with "come again" but with "receive" — "if I go and shall prepare you a place, I am coming again and shall receive you to Myself" J.N.D.).



In chapter 17, in the prayer so full of content, content of a depth unfathomable, the Lord Jesus says, "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me **WHERE I AM**; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world." We requeently think of our longing to be with Him, and how grand this is, but think of this! Not only do we have a longing; He has one, "that they also . . . be with Me **WHERE I AM**; that they may behold My glory." Soon, beloved, His desire shall be fulfilled, and with deep joy we shall behold the excelling glory of this exquisite Person.

We shall be with Him where He is,  
For such is His desire;  
We shall behold His glory bright—  
The sight shall bliss inspire!  
The Father's everlasting love  
Shall shine before our gaze  
In Him, transcending all above,  
Throughout eternal days.

—*J. Pellatt.*

## **"ZECHARIAH"**

by **E. R. BOWER** (continued)

### **THE FIFTH VISION. The Golden Candlestick. (4.1-14)**

vv. 1-3. This candlestick or lampstand does not appear to be of the same pattern as seen in Tabernacle and Temple, but this does not detract from this vision which speaks of witness, primarily perhaps, the witness of Israel. Indeed, in our own day we may see the candlestick as the symbol of Israel, but as v. 4 indicates it is the **SOURCE** of the light which claims attention.

Refs: Ex. 25.31-40; 37.17-24; Lev. 24.1-4; Matt. 5.15-16; Phil. 2.15; Rev. 1.20; 4.5; Is. 60. 1-3; 62.1,2.

vv. 4-6. The vision is the **WORD**. Joshua has had the message. It is now the turn of Zerubbabel. Joshua and Zerubbabel—priest and prince—types individually and together of our Lord—heralds and symbols of the coming Branch. (Cf. Hag. 2.23). Read Zech 3.10; Mic. 4. 1-5; Is. 2.1-5 together, and we find the "mountains of the Lord's house," the "house of the God of Jacob," and the "light of the Lord."

v.7. This “great mountain” has been referred to the difficulties experienced in the rebuilding of the Temple; or as the Gentile powers. The plain is seen as the smoothing away of the difficulties or the nations. However, it is more than likely that the “mountain of the Lord’s house” is seen here. Cf. Pss. 48 and 87 etc. Is not the “headstone” reminiscent of Ps. 118. 22? The latter psalm is Messianic—see our Lord’s quotation (Matt. 21.42; Mark 12.10).

Other refs: Ephes. 2.20; 1 Pet. 2. 4-6; Is. 28.16; Mic. 4.1; Ezek. 40.2, etc.

The words “thou shalt become” are in italics in the A.V. and Young’s concordance shows ‘plain’ in the Hebrew as being elsewhere rendered in the A.V. as “equity” (Is. 11.4; Mal. 2.6); “even place” (Ps. 26.12); “make straight” (Is. 40.4; 42.16); “right” (pss. 45.6; 67.4); and “uprightness” (Ps. 143.10). Does the A.V. ‘plain’ (in contrast to ‘mountain’) miss the meaning of both? or rather, do we miss the meanings? Cf. Jer. 33. 14-18. “Who art thou?” — what art thou? The Temple will be finished and the stone that was before Joshua will be set in its place by Zerubbabel. Truly, grace will be the charming sound in that day.

vv. 8-9. Here is the confirmation that the subject is “this House,” Zerubbabel began the work; he would also finish it. “He which began a good work in you will finish it until the day of Jesus Christ.” (Phil. 1.6).

Refs: 1 Cor. 3.16-17; 6.19; 2 Cor. 6.16; John 2.18-22; Rev. 21.10,11,22.

v.10. See marginal reading which links the engraving with the seven eyes of the Lord. The headstone of 4.7 is connected with the plummet here. The ‘eyes’ light up with joy when the plummet is seen setting the stone in its place. Isaiah (28.16-17) also links the stone and the plummet, “Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation . . . judgment also will I lay to the line and righteousness to the plummet . . .” (See Rom. 9.33; Ephes. 2.20-22). Here we see our Lord as the Chief Corner Stone, “in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God in the Spirit.”

Refs: Rev. 5.6; Ps. 118.22-23; Matt. 21.42; Mark 12.10-11; Luke 20.17-18 and note contexts.

vv. 11-14. “Anointed ones” — sons of oil. Consensus of

opinion seems to favour Joshua and Zerubbabel, the two representatives of Israel as the anointed ones. Cf. v. 14 with v. 31 — “standing before.” If this is so, then they are ‘double’ types for we have previously seen that they are jointly a type of our Lord. Rev. 11.4 would appear to shew that these two witnesses are ‘special,’ but it may be that there are difficulties to be found with this interpretation. The early church saw the witness of Rev. 11. as Enoch and Elijah, but again there are differing opinions. The cross-questioning of the angel-interpreter is noticeable—“What are these?” is countered with, “do you not know?” It appears that the angel has assumed that the prophet would, or should, know.

Was the knowledge of the prophet being sounded out? Interpretations belong to God. Cf. Dan. 2.27-28; Gen. 41.16, 25, 28. The phrase “sons of oil” occurs only here, and ‘oil’ here and elsewhere seems to apply to the natural rather than the manufactured products, hence the source. Oil in Scripture often speaks of the Holy Spirit. cf. v. 6; Hag. 1.14; 2.25; In 1 Kings 6.23-31 the cherubim of the Sanctuary of Solomon’s Temple were of olive wood (margin, “trees of oil”) and the same Hebrew word is used here. Cf. Ex. 25.20; 2 Chron. 3.10,11,12; 5.8. Zechariah is possibly thinking in terms of the Temple for was he not hastening forward its rebuilding? A Temple built “according to the pattern” given to David by the Spirit and “in writing by His hand upon me” (1 Chron. 28. 11-21). Cf. Ex. 25 to 40; Heb. 8.5.

## **THE SIXTH VISION**

### **The Roll, the Ephah, the two women. (5.1-11)**

#### **(a) THE ROLL**

vv.1-4. “Earth”—the Land, Israel, for it is the Law and the curse of the Law which is in view here; “It”—the curse; “Flying”—an unrolled scroll, 20 cubits x 10 cubits. This measurement coincides with the measurement of the Holy Place of the Tabernacle, and with that of the porch of the Temple. Those who sin against the covenant associated with the Law as seen in the Decalogue (Ex. 32. 15-16 and cf. v. 4. Man engraves an idol; God engraves a Law) will be cut off or purged out (RV) from the community and thus exempted from their obligations imposed by the covenant oath. The two tables of the Law are represented by the sins specified

in the roll—stealing, or sins against a neighbour, and false swearing, or sin against God. The eighth and third commandments (the middle commandment from each table) standing for the two tables. The curse is seen in Lev. 26. 14-26 and Deut. 27 and 28. Malachi 3.5-15 gives an answer to those who speak of the obscurity of these verses. “Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed Me, even this whole nation.” A broken Law; a broken House. “The measure of the Sanctuary is that by which men’s actions are weighed.” See Ezek. 2. 6-10; Deut. 27.26.

### (b) THE EPHAH.

vv. 5-8. “Ephah”—a measure; “Resemblance”—iniquity or ‘eye.’ i.e. a semblance or likeness; “talent”—cover; “wickedness”—THE wickedness or lawlessness; “cast it”—cast her; “weight of lead”—cover of lead. Notice the ‘going forth’ of the roll and of the ephah and the ‘came out’ of the women (v. 9)—perhaps ‘came into view’—phraseology which reminds us of the visions of the Apocalypse. The visions build up in a number of scenes, one fading from view as another appears. The ‘their’ of v. 6 must refer to the thieves and false swearers of vv. 1-4, and it is possible that there is a passing reference here to Ez. 8.8-18. The ephah and the talent have suggested to some writers the godless commercial interests that had taken precedence over the natural agricultural role of the nation. V. 7—“This is one woman”—i.e. a particular woman, and v. 8, “This is THE wickedness.” A covered vessel full of wickedness in female form. Can we identify this woman with the “mother of harlots” (Rev. 17)? Cf. Shinar (v. 11) with ‘Babylon’ Rev. 17). Cf. Matt. 23. 13-33, “Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.” (See Gen. 11. 1-9).

### (c) THE TWO WOMEN.

vv. 9-11. We are not told who these women are, and the prophet did not ask as he had hitherto asked, so it must be supposed that he was aware of their identity. Some see this scene as fulfilling the promise of 3.9. “I will remove the iniquity of the Land in one day” and also as a parallel to the removal of Joshua’s filthy garments. Upon the other hand, the prophet Jeremiah (chap. 3) and Ezekiel (chaps. 16 and 23) speak of two women and would not Zechariah have known this?

There are those who read the Hebrew word for 'stork' as meaning 'faithful one,' and for 'wind,' 'spirit.' With these renderings we see two faithful ones, driven by the Spirit removing the wickedness of the Land—a parallel with the two 'sons of oil.' It has been observed by another writer that "when the time comes, it will be marked by commerce (the ephah), false religion (the woman), speedy accomplishment (the wings of the stork), and a spirit in their wings." "Shinar" takes us back to Gen. 11 and Babel. Shinar was "the beginning of his Nimrod's kingdom." Nimrod, the upstart or rebel. Daniel 11 refers to the carrying into "the land of Shinar to the house of his god . . . part of the vessels of the House of God." Shinar the place of man's first organized rebellion against God, is now to be the home of the aggregate of all evil, the woman. Cf. Jer. 5.1-7. Does the establishing of a house for the ephah "upon its own base" (as an idol?) envisage the new Babylon (as seen in the Book of the Revelation) and the "mother of harlots?" "These are" and "this is" are definite.

## THE CHURCH

by JOHN CAMPBELL, Larkhall (continued)

### ITS FUTURE : BEFORE AND AFTER THE RAPTURE

#### Before the Rapture.                      Seven Aspects of its Ministry.

|                        |                                 |                  |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|
| <b>Occupation.</b>     | Bear testimony for Christ.      | Luke 19.13       |
| <b>Sanctification.</b> | Lives Godly lives.              | Matt. 5.16       |
| <b>Education.</b>      | Heavenly intelligences taught.  | Ephes. 3.10      |
| <b>Mobilisation.</b>   | Fighting a spiritual War.       | Ephes. 6.12      |
| <b>Progression.</b>    | We walk by Faith, not by Sight. | 2 Cor. 5. 7      |
| <b>Intercession.</b>   | Pray for all men.               | 1 Tim. 2. 2      |
| <b>Anticipation.</b>   | Look for the Saviour.           | Philippians 3.20 |

|                    |                                    |            |
|--------------------|------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Occupation.</b> | <b>Bear Testimony for Christ.</b>  | Luke 19.13 |
|                    | The Diligence      He Commands     | v. 13      |
|                    | The Absence        He Maintains    | v. 12      |
|                    | The Virulence      Of His Citizens | v. 14      |
|                    | The Balance        He Expects      | v. 15      |
|                    | The Benificence    He Displays     | v. 16-17   |
|                    | The Complacence    He Manifests    | v. 20-21   |
|                    | The Recompence    He Makes         | v. 24      |

**Sanctification. Live Godly Lives.** Matthew 5.16

|                 |              |       |
|-----------------|--------------|-------|
| The Radiance    | of the Light | v. 16 |
| The Evidence    | of the Life  | v. 16 |
| The Furtherance | of the Glory | v. 16 |

**Education. God's Wisdom through the Church.** Ephes. 3.10

|          |                        |       |
|----------|------------------------|-------|
| Purpose  | To the intent.         | v. 10 |
| Period   | That now.              | v. 10 |
| Powers   | Principalities.        | v. 10 |
| Place    | Heavenlies.            | v. 10 |
| Plan     | May be made known.     | v. 10 |
| Persons  | The Church.            | v. 10 |
| Prudence | Manifold wisdom of God | v. 10 |

**Mobilisation. Wrestle not with Flesh and Blood.** Ephes. 6.12

|                 |                |       |
|-----------------|----------------|-------|
| The Armour      | God Provides   | v. 11 |
| The Ability     | we Receive     | v. 11 |
| The Attack      | we engage      | v. 12 |
| The Adversaries | we Meet        | v. 12 |
| The Girding     | of our Loins   | v. 14 |
| The Garment     | for our Breast | v. 14 |
| The Gospel      | for our Feet   | v. 15 |
| The Guarding    | of our Person  | v. 16 |
| The Grasping    | of our Sword   | v. 17 |
| The Gear        | for our Head   | v. 17 |

**Progression. We Walk by Faith.** 2 Corinthians 5.7

From 2 Cor.4.1 to 2 Cor. 5.10, there are presented for our consideration, at least seven explanations, preceded by the words:- "For we," verse 7 of ch. 5 being the sixth, which we will examine. Development is expected of us in the Christian life, as much as in the physical and mental. Retarded growth is to be deplored, when we have every aid to progress. New life within, new desires begotten, should find expression in daily growth, through the constant reading of the Scriptures and daily communion with the Father. Faith is the great principle by which our spiritual life is now governed. It is not a condition of the mind; but the heart. Faith is unquestioning belief, and can become as real as any of our senses. It superceeds reason, yet is not unreasonable. It is believing God when reason says otherwise.

## Walk in Ephesians

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| The Past of our Lives. Prince, Power of the air. | Ch. 2.2  |
| The Present of our Lives. Walking in good works. | Ch. 2.10 |
| Our Pride in our Calling. Walk Worthily.         | Ch. 4.1  |
| Pre-Conversion. As other Gentiles.               | Ch. 4.17 |
| Patterned by Christ. Walk in Love.               | Ch. 5.2  |
| Purity of Conduct. Children of Light.            | Ch. 5.8  |
| Picking our steps Circumspectly.                 | Ch. 5.15 |

**Intercession. Pray for Governments.** 1 Timothy 2.2.

A further Ministry of the Local Church is that of prayer for others. Such is intercession. It is our constant desire to have that form of government which will secure and maintain the privilege to assemble and to engage in prayer.

**The Pattern of our Prayer Life.** 1 Tim. 2.2.

|                     |                               |      |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|------|
| <b>Intercession</b> | Prayers on behalf of others.  | v. 2 |
| <b>Prayers</b>      | What is general and constant. | v. 2 |
| <b>Supplication</b> | Earnest prayer.               | v. 2 |
| <b>Thanksgiving</b> | Self-explanatory.             | v. 2 |

**Exercise : Extent : Expectation : In Prayer.**

|   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| <b>Anticipation. We Look for the Saviour.</b> | Philippians 3.20 |
| In the Past : For Redemption in Israel        | Luke 2.38        |
| For Another                                   | Luke 7.19        |
| In the Present: For The Saviour               | Philippians 3.20 |
| For The Blessed Hope                          | Titus 2.13       |
| For Him                                       | Hebrews 9.28     |
| For The Mercy of the Lord                     | Jude 21          |
| In the Future: For The Day of God             | 2 Peter 3.12     |

**Its Future : Before the Rapture. Its Function.**

**To evangelise the world.** For this work :—

**1. God Planned Eternal Life Before the Ages of Time.**

Titus 1.2

This remarkable verse takes us into the remotest past, before times eternal. Dwelling in space, untenanted and void, the Triune Deity in eternal council, made adequate provision for the incoming of sin, and the disruption it would inevitably cause in the fair universe of His Creation. Scripture never speaks of God having PURPOSES. He has only one, and everything else is built into it. Foreknowledge, election,

predestination, alike have their birth here. We say with Paul, "Oh the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God" (Romans 11.33). As to the **Period**, or time when He purposed, we have seen it is linked with eternal times.

As to the **Person**, all is centered in Christ, the Great Adjuster of the Creation, by His death on Calvary.

As to the **Purpose**, it is singular and eternal. Ephes. 3.11.

## **2. Christ Ratified it at Calvary.**

In time, the Son of God took flesh, but not the fleshly nature, that He might have the capacity to die, and as a sinless sacrifice, satisfied every claim of God's outraged Throne. Here God rests forever.

## **3. We Preach Christ Crucified.**

It has pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching to save them who believe. The Gospel goes forth in simplicity, yet in all its latent power, to the "whosoever" of a lost world.

## **4. The Holy Spirit Convicts of sin.**

We know not how He works, we only see the effects of His work. He acts in a sovereign way, and souls are saved. (John 3.7).

## **5. God Imparts Faith.**

Faith is not the exercise of a fleshly heart, but a fleshly heart can exercise faith (2 Thess. 3.2), "all men have not faith." God gives the sinner enough conviction to convince him of his sins, and enough faith to accept what is impossible to reason. Faith comes through hearing; that is why it is so necessary to preach Christ Crucified.

Thus, in the matter of evangelising the world, all these agencies are at work; the planning, the ratifying, the preaching, the convicting and the imparting. The sovereignty of God and the free choice of men, though distinct and to the limited intellect of unregenerate men so irreconcilable, meet, when a soul trusts Christ as Saviour.

God has two orders of created intelligences, angelic and human. In the matter of salvation, he has by-passed the former, and chose the latter, although both orders are fallen creatures. Herein is His Grace magnified, in that He set them aside and selected us.



## 6. **We Baptise Believers**

In the Commission of Matthew 28.19, the Lord commands us to make disciples of all nations, baptising them in “the Name (not the Names) of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;” here a clear statement of Unity in the Trinity. The subject of Believer’s Baptism has been touched briefly in a former paragraph. No further elaboration is necessary here.

## 7. **We Teach Believers**

It is as needful to teach believers as it was to baptise them. The divine order is, hearing, believing, confessing, baptism and teaching, followed by receiving. Accepting Christ as Saviour and being baptised, is a once for all experience. Teaching is continuous; we forget so soon, we become dull of hearing. It becomes necessary to keep repeating the doctrines of Scripture. Note what Paul says in Philippians 3.1. “To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but to you it is safe.”

Thus we are occupied with preaching the Gospel, baptising believers, teaching the Saints, reading the Scriptures, praying to our God, and meeting to remember our Lord, in the Remembrance Feast. With such exercises we should be content, until He comes. (To be continued)

### **HYMNS AND THEIR WRITERS (23), by Jack Strahan, Enniskillen**

## **“COME, LET US SING THE MATCHLESS WORTH”**

**SAMUEL MEDLEY (1738—1799)**

One Lord’s day in October, 1975, a company of believers gathered in a small room in Jerusalem to remember the Lord Jesus. For most it was a first experience in that city—only a few had previously met in that room. Yet for all it was an unforgettable meeting, when for a time the conditions of earth seemed to pass away and the presence of the risen Lord filled and stilled every heart. With tear-dimmed eye and broken voice, they sang the words of a lovely hymn,

“Come, let us sing the matchless worth,  
And sweetly sound the glories forth  
Which in the Saviour shine:  
To God and Christ our praises bring;  
The song, with which the heavens ring,  
Now let us gladly join.

How rich the precious blood He spilt,  
Our ransom from the dreadful guilt  
Of sin against our God.

How perfect is His righteousness,  
In which unspotted beauteous dress  
His saints have always stood!

Great are the offices He bears,  
And bright His character appears,  
Exalted on the throne ;

In songs of sweet untiring praise,  
We would, to everlasting days,  
Make all His glories known."

Their hearts were full for their occupation was with their Saviour—His matchless worth!, His precious blood!, His perfect righteousness!, His manifold ministries! . . . .

Samuel Medley was the author of this hymn. He had been born of godly parents in Cheshunt, Herts., England, on June 23rd, 1738, and as a lad received education from his grandfather, William Tonge. When he was 14, he was apprenticed to an oilman in the city of London but after three years in that trade, he entered the British Navy. At that time, England was at war and during an engagement with the French enemy off Cape Lagos, Medley received a serious leg injury. Over the succeeding days his leg condition deteriorated and life was endangered. "I am afraid that amputation is the only thing that will save your life" advised the ship's surgeon. "I can tell tomorrow morning." Those words troubled Medley greatly. He appreciated the seriousness of the hour. He had led a profligate life and was not prepared to die. That night he gave himself to prayer that God would restore his leg and preserve his life. Remembering that he had a bible, he sent his servant to fetch it and throughout the night read it with avidity. God answered his prayer and by the following morning (to the great surprise of the surgeon), his leg had improved dramatically. With the immediate crisis now past, Medley turned again to his old ways and tried to forget about God. His injury, however, had necessitated that he retire from active service; so he returned home and came once again under the influence of his godly grandfather. He was then 21 years of age.

Grandfather Tonge spoke to him of his ways and of his need of salvation, and on an unforgettable Sunday evening read to him a sermon of Dr. Isaac Watts, based on Isaiah 42.6-7. That message brought deep conviction of sin and of guilt to Medley's heart, for those words, the words of Dr. Watts' text, "to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison" seemed so

accurately to describe his own heart's condition and need. He sought salvation and found it in Christ, or to use his own words, "I soon received the comforts of the gospel, by a believing view of the fullness and sufficiency of the atonement of the Lord Jesus."

Seven years after conversion, Medley was called to the work as a minister of the gospel. The first five years were spent at Watford and then in 1772, he moved to Byrom Street in the city of Liverpool. There, until God called him "home" 27 years later, he faithfully and fruitfully preached the glorious gospel to an ever-increasing congregation. There the burden of his ministry was "to humble the pride of man, exalt the grace of God in his salvation and promote real holiness in heart and life." There many a profligate sea-man of that city port turned into his meetings and many were blessed eternally. Medley loved those men for he, himself, had been one of them and at heart ever remained such, right to the close of life. As his hour of death approached, he was heard to say, "I am now a poor shattered bark, just about to gain the blissful harbour; and O how sweet will be the port after the storm!" . . . "But a point or two more, and I shall be in my heavenly Father's house!" Peacefully and triumphantly, on July 17th, 1799 he gained that blissful harbour.

Medley was possessed of an eccentric personality and a poetic turn of mind making him original in his way. Once when asked to complete a circular about his church work in Liverpool, he worded his reply as follows :

Ques. In what town is your church?

Ans. "In one where sin makes many a fool  
known by the name of Liverpool."

Ques. Have you an assistant?

Ans. "O yes! I've One of whom I boast  
His name is called the Holy Ghost."

Ques. What number of people attend?

Ans. "A many come, my worthy friend,  
I dare not say they all attend;  
But though so many, great and small,  
I never number them at all,  
for that was once poor David's fall."

As hymnwriter, Medley wrote over 200 hymns. Many of these were originally written on broadsheets for distribution and after his death were published collectively in book form. In writing verse, Medley's deep desire was the glory of Christ and the comfort of the people of God. A sense of deep gratitude to God for personal salvation ever filled his heart and found expression

in verse in such of his hymns as, "Awake my soul in joyful lays" ("His Loving-Kindness") and "Now in a song of grateful praise" ("My Jesus has done all things well").

The subject hymn of this article, "Come, let us sing the matchless worth" was originally written by Medley in another form—in a form giving insight into the pathos with which he wrote.

"O could I speak the matchless worth,  
O could I sound the glories forth,  
Which in my Saviour shine.  
I'd soar and touch the heavenly strings,  
And vie with Gabriel while he sings,  
In notes almost divine."

Truly, Samuel Medley shared in the rich experience of the Psalmist. "My heart is welling forth with a good matter: I say what I have composed touching the king . . . fairer than the sons of men." (Psalm 45.1,2, J.N.D.).

---

## ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY

Editor : A. M. S. Gooding.

Correspondence relative to Editorial matters should be addressed to the Editor : 7 Sparrow Gardens, off London Road, Kilmarnock, Scotland. (Telephone 24245).

Assistant Editor : B. Currie  
49 Glenburn Road, Dunmurry, BT17 9AN, N. Ireland.  
(Telephone Belfast 621343).

### Committee :

Tom Armstrong, Thomas Beggs, Ronnie Johnston,  
James McKeown, James Moore.

Secretary : William Neill.

This magazine is supported solely by the freewill offerings of the Lord's people.

Friends residing in England, Scotland and Wales may kindly forward their donations to: John Glenville, Kingdon Cottage, King Street, Colyton, Devon, EX13 6LA.

Friends residing elsewhere should please forward gifts to: William Neill, "Beth-Asher," 109 Lurgan Road, Banbridge, Northern Ireland, BT32 4NG. Phone (08206) 24238.

Please address correspondence, including all new orders, orders for back numbers and extra copies, cancellations and changes of address to William Neill at above address.

You can HELP US by stating the NUMBER of copies required, and submitting NAME and ADDRESS, including POSTAL CODE, IN BLOCK LETTERS, please.



# **ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY**



## **Contents**

### **ZECHARIAH**

by E. R. Bower

### **THE LORD'S FLESH IN HEBREWS**

by B. Currie

### **CHRIST IN THE APOCALYPSE**

by J. B. D. Page

### **FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTALS**

by J. B. Hewitt

### **THE CHURCH**

by J. Campbell

### **WHO WAS TIMOTHY ?**

by E. Stock

### **ASSEMBLY MEETINGS**

by J. Heading

### **THEY THINK IT STRANGE**

by P. Squires

### **HYMNS AND THEIR WRITERS**

by J. Strahan

# ALL THE SAINTS

(Ephesians 1:15)

Can I call Him Lord and Master,  
Yet in this heart of mine do harbour,  
Thoughts of malice, spite, and guile,  
For those on whom my Saviour smiles.

Surely if I am in touch with heaven  
I will not allow such leaven,  
To permeate and with evil smear,  
His saints, my brethren and sisters dear

If Thy love the power of sin can break,  
Can it not from my bosom take,  
Every unkind, unholy thought, which taints,  
Sowing discord, mar the fellowship of saints

Solemn thought 'unto Him' we gather,  
His Precious Name, and Worth we proffer,  
Stupendous truth, that He doth us own  
He bids our love to ALL, His saints, be shown

O Lord Thy love knows no Partiality,  
Embracing all in its totality,  
Loving All Thine own with tender care,  
Until All, above, its Fulness share.

—J. G. Good.

## “ZECHARIAH”

by E. R. BOWER (continued)

### THE SEVENTH VISION.    **The four chariots.**    (6.1-9)

v. 1. Are these mountains, as some suggest, Olivet and Zion? The mountains between which was the ‘hollow’ or low valley of 1.8 and 4.7? Or the mountains of 14.4-5 where the Amplified Version reads, “And you shall flee by the valley of My mountains, for the valley of the mountains shall reach to Azal . . .”? Azal is not mentioned elsewhere in Scripture. Is it inappropriate to think of Ebal and Gerizim (Deut. 27.11; 30.20; note 30.1-8) as applicable to the ‘captivity’ situation?

vv. 2-5. “and bay”—and strong (margin); “spirits” — or winds. The explanations are unequivocal; the chariots, horses (and horsemen or charioteers) are “four spirits of the heavens, which go forth” and Ps. 68.17 tells us that “the chariots of God are 20,000 and many thousands of angels.” (See 2 Kings 6.15-18; 13.4). Whether these chariots correspond to the horsemen of 1.10, or perhaps with Rev. 6.1-8 is not, it may be, relevant. They are all “ministering spirits” (Ps. 104.4; Heb. 1.7). Various meanings have been given for the chariots, the most favoured being false christs, war, pestilence and famine. (Matt. 24.1-8; Rev. 6.1-8 — “the beginning of sorrows”). The “going forth” certainly seems to compare with the “Go” (rather than ‘Come’) of Rev. 6. 1,3,5,7. Some see the spirits or winds here as those of Rev. 7. 1-3; Dan. 7. 1-3 and others see the four kingdoms of Daniel’s visions (that is as ruled by spiritual powers).

v. 6. Many see in the white horse, our Lord as conqueror; in the red horse, war; in the black, famine; and in the grizzled and strong, various judgments. The going forth is not necessarily concurrent but consecutive. The black and the white go to the north—Assyria, Babylon, Media, Persia—the nations which comprise the two great empires of Asshur-Babylon and Medo-Persia. The grizzled go to the south—Egypt. O.T. prophecy is much concerned with these countries not only as to their then present history, but more importantly, the still future of the latter days. See for example, Jer. 23.5-8; Zeph. 2.12-13. It may be that these chariots in their going forth provide a retrospective picture of judgment which, as Zechariah writes, were those that

had already fallen upon the northern and southern nations, but on the other hand it is difficult to get away from the prospective future. The northern and southern spheres of influence relative to Israel are still very much in evidence as the end time comes ever nearer. There is, however, a new northern power. (See Ez. 38 and 39; cf. Zech. 6.8). The general picture given by commentators is that of famine and false christs (or, antichrist) going to the north; various judgments (reminiscent of the plagues which fell upon Egypt) to the south; the missions of the horsemen as signs of the coming of our Lord. Matt. 24.3).

vv. 7-8. "Cried upon me"—appealed to me; "quieted MY Spirit" — quietened My wrath. Cf. Jud. 8.3; Ez. 5.12. Some see the red horses as defensive and not offensive. As already noted the margin renders 'bay' (vv. 3,7) as 'strong' or 'powerful ones,' but if we see these horses as symbolizing war, then we may see here the "wars and rumours of wars: nation against nation: kingdom against kingdom" of Matt. 24.6-7. Was it the fall of Babylon that appeased the Spirit (v. 8)? The tenses would imply that the missions of the black and the white horses have a future connotation.

## **THE CROWNING OF JOSHUA**

### **The Temple Builders. (6.9-15).**

vv. 9-15. "Take" — take an offering; "are come" — have arrived; "crowns" — a complete, or more excellent crown; "Even He" — this is emphatic; "the glory" — royal honour.

These verses give a delightful picture of the Temple builders, not perhaps working with bricks and mortar, but builders nevertheless. First of all, there is God Himself; He who gave the word; He whose desire it is to dwell among men; He who desired His people to be His sanctuary and holy nation, a kingdom of priests (Ex. 19.6; Is. 61.6). Then Zechariah himself; the 'go-between'; urging forward the work and taking part in the work himself. He goes to the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah (Jah hides) who had the appellation of 'Hen' (v. 14) which means 'grace' or 'favour.' The RV margin reads v. 14, ". . . and for the kindness of the son of Zephaniah." The kindness of Josiah would remind us of Heb. 13.2, "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers . . ." To the house of Josiah had come three men from the Captivity at Babylon—Heldai or Helem



(v. 14), Tobijah and Jedaiah—bringing gifts of gold and silver for the Temple. From their gifts a crown is made for the high priest Joshua. This scene of the crowning of Joshua is, in effect, a follow-up to chap. 3, where at the behest of the prophet Joshua was given a clean mitre and we read that “the Angel of Jehovah stood by.” There, too, God said, “Behold, I will bring forth My servant the Branch.” Here, as Joshua is crowned, God says, “Behold the Man, whose Name is the Branch.” (John 19.5). It is as if God is introducing, not Joshua, but the Angel of Jehovah for who but the blessed second Person of the Trinity could say (v. 15) “. . . and ye shall know that the Lord of hosts hath sent ME unto you.”?

In 4.9 it is said of Zerubbabel that he laid the foundation of the House and “his hands shall finish it,” thus it appears that the Temple of the Lord here (v. 13) refers to something beyond that day and greater than bricks and mortar. The wearing of this crown by Joshua is a symbol of the Branch who will wear the two crowns of King and Priest with a “counsel of peace” between the two offices, and it is He, the Crowned Priest, Who will build the Temple of the Lord. (Ephes. 2.21). Some see the counsel of peace as being between Jehovah and His Christ as seen in Ps. 110. Cf. Gen. 49.10; Ezek. 21. 25-27.

It may be safely assumed that the ‘giving’ by these three men was in their hearts before ever it was ‘taken’ and the crown of gold and silver was laid up in the as yet unfinished Temple as their ‘credit.’ Their giving was matched by the hospitality of Josiah and he, too, was given credit and included in the memorial. Said Paul (2 Tim. 4.6-8), “. . . henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing.” (See Gal. 6.10; Heb. 6.10). The circumstances of this prophecy indicate that the “building of the Temple” by “they that are far off” is yet future and has a spiritual application. The Saviour “came and preached peace to you which were afar of . . . ye . . . are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the Chief Corner Stone . . . an holy Temple in the Lord.” Refs: 3.8; Is. 9.6-7; 53.2; Hag. 2.7; Matt. 23.37; Luke 19.41-46; John 2.19; Acts 2.39; Ephes. 2.11-22;

Of the woman who brought the alabaster box of very precious ointment, our Lord said, "Whosoever this gospel shall be preached . . . there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her." (Matt. 26.6-13).

Notice the condition attached to this promise—"this shall come to pass if . . ." (See Deut. 28.1).

## **THE LORD'S FLESH IN HEBREWS**

by **B. CURRIE**

### **3. INVITATION**

The last of the three references to the flesh of our Lord Jesus in the epistle to the Hebrews is found in 10.20. The major doctrinal section of the epistle ends at v.18 and on the basis of the vast superiority of Christianity over Judaism, deductions are made which have a very practical import on our lives. This order, of a doctrinal section followed by a 'therefore' which introduces a practical section, is a common feature of Paul's writings e.g. Rom. 12.1; Eph. 4.1; Col. 3.1 (J.N.D.).

In Heb. 10 the 'therefore' of v.19 introduces us to the great privilege which we as Christians have of entering the holiest (v. 19) and drawing near to God (v. 22). This the Israelite could never do. Only the high priest on one day of the year, the day of atonement (Lev. 16), could enter through the veil and that under threat of death, (Lev. 16.2,13). How different is our position to-day! It is not a special class of men who have the right of entry, it is all who have been born into God's family and are thus in relationship with Him and each other i.e. the 'brethren' of v. 19. Also we have 'boldness' to enter. Such a word does not give license for casual language or irreverence. The word means frank speaking, confidence or liberty. In the context it is boldness with respect to the guilt of our sins which will be 'remembered no more' (v. 17). Thus we are not inhibited by the guilt of sins as we enter. We must always remember the Holiness and Power of God as we approach Him, and not adopt the language of the world nor of modern day paraphrases as we speak to God. The use of such language is indicative of a spirit which knows little of the fear of God.

Our entrance is called, in v. 20, the way which He consecrated or dedicated for us. This way is described as (a) new, (b) living, (c) through the veil, (d) His Flesh.

(a) New—This means newly or freshly slain and indicates the lasting, eternal freshness of the work of Christ to God.

(b) Living—The high priest of Israel, we have already noted, entered under threat of death, but to us there is no such threat—it is a living way and it is linked with a Living Saviour.

(c) Through the veil—This expression is often mis-quoted as ‘through the rent veil.’ However in the Hebrew epistle the veil never said to be rent. The veil that is spoken of in the gospels as being rent (Matt. 27.51; Mk. 15.38; Lk. 23.45), firstly was not that of the tabernacle but of the temple; secondly was not rent to let people enter but to show that the Lord was not there, that He had left Judaism; and thirdly was rent from the top to the bottom to indicate something God did and that He was coming out to men.

It is less than logical to speak of a way being required through a rent veil—such is open to all, but to enter through the covering veil of the tabernacle was to be in the Holiest of all and to such a place the Christian is invited. In this epistle the people of God are seen as in the wilderness, thus the tabernacle and not the temple, is the background. Also the tabernacle is seen in all its pristine glory in order that the writer can show that we as Christians have a portion better than the best of Judaism. Paramount among our privileges is free, unlimited access to the presence of God through the veil.

(d) His Flesh—This is the final description of the way, not of the veil. In fact the veil of the tabernacle is a type, not so much of the work of Christ, but of His Person. Thus in order that we may enter the Holiest it took both His Blood (v. 19) And His Flesh (v. 20). How precious and costly an access!

If in v. 19 we have ‘boldness,’ in v. 21 we have ‘a high (better—great) priest over the house of God.’ Why is He called a Great Priest? The answer is simple—He is Great because He can bring us to where no other priest could ever have brought us—through the veil and into the immediate presence of God.

Based on this tremendous privilege we have three imperatives :

v. 22. Let us draw near

v. 23. Let us hold fast

v. 24. Let us consider one another

The first is linked with faith, the second with hope (R.V.) and the third with love.

Drawing near is based on an inward condition as suggested by the references to 'faith,' 'hearts,' and 'conscience.' The one who draws near to the true sanctuary has a true heart and is not as the apostate of vv. 26—39. This correct attitude to God is based on the full assurance of our right to draw nigh and our acceptability Godward which are grasped by faith. Faith understands that we have been cleansed both judicially (hearts sprinkled) and morally (bodies washed) and can therefore draw near. At the end of the chapter the apostate is seen to 'cast away' (v. 35) and to 'draw back' (v. 38,39), but the believer is to 'hold fast' (v. 23). That which is to be held continuously is the confession of our hope which hope is based on the promises of God. Such a hope is linked with the eternal inheritance (9.15), and is to be held 'without wavering'—the opposite of 11.34 'turned to flight' i.e. in the grasp of our hope we must not be beaten by the enemy and turned to flight.

Finally in v. 24, we are to 'consider one another.' Not with a view to criticism but to produce a holy paroxysm of love and good works. This is done as we gather collectively (v. 25), and as we exhort or encourage each other in light of the approaching day of the Lord's return when we shall be gathered unto Him Personally (2 Thess. 2.1). Thus we have the importance of continuing in the collective gatherings of the saints, since the passage implies that the habit of forsaking the assembling of ourselves is the first step on the road to the apostacy of v. 26—39.

Even in our day there are many leaving the simple assembly gatherings and being attracted to the modern day equivalent of Judaism which is denominationalism with its priesthood separate from the laity, ornamented buildings, singers, choirs, musical instruments, visible incense, etc., etc. A grasp of the heavenly calling and tremendous privileges of simple scriptural Christianity as found in a New Testa-

ment Assembly would be a preservative against such drift and departure.

Realising, then, that great privileges have been procured at infinite cost, and help to provide protection from departure, we have the responsibility laid upon us to utilize what has been provided for us by God—Brethren ‘Let us draw near.’

## CHRIST IN THE APOCALYPSE (3)

by JOHN B. D. PAGE

### HIGH PRIESTLY GLORIES (i)

*Reading* : Revelation 1, 9-12.

This is the first of John’s visions and it is truly an ‘unveiling of Jesus Christ’ in His glorified humanity. It is the third of three visions of the ascended Christ recorded in the New Testament.

Stephen, in the hour of his death by way of martyrdom, saw the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God ready to set up His kingdom on earth, which was deferred owing to the Jews’ rejection of the glorified Christ as displayed by the stoning of Stephen (Acts 7.56). By this Christian martyr, Christ was seen as *King*.

On the road to Damascus, Saul of Tarsus encountered the glorified Lord, from Whom a bright light emanated, and twice Saul addressed Him as “Lord” (Acts 9.3-6). By Saul, who later became known as Paul, Christ was seen as *Lord*.

Exiled on the isle of Patmos, the seer saw One like unto the Son of Man standing in the centre of seven golden lampstands, and He was arrayed in an ankle length garment with a golden girdle about the paps (1.13). By John, Christ was seen as *High Priest*.

Never before had the eye of mortal man beheld such a vision of the glorified Christ. For the occasion, John was “in the Spirit” (1.10; Cp. 4.2), which is a reminder that Ezekiel said “the Spirit entered into me” when the Lord communicated with him (Ezek. 2.2; 3.24, etc).

Such a spiritual condition is required of believers for fellowship with Christ and an appreciation of Him.

In the prelude to the vision, beheld by John, several titles are used of Christ, which should not be overlooked.

The first of these titles, which may sound strange, is

## the Voice

The Patmos prisoner "heard behind" him "a great voice" and then he "turned to see the Voice" (1. 10,12). There is nothing unusual to *hear* a voice, but it is unusual to turn to *see* a voice, as John did. Obviously, the Voice is here a personification of Christ. This "great Voice" was "as of a trumpet" like "the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud" on the summit of Sinai which struck terror to the hearts of the Israelites who heard it (Ex. 19.16), but not to John who soon recognised the Voice.

Loud like a trumpet, the Voice said to John, "I am Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last" (1.11), which were words not of fear but identification. Although it is not apparent in the Authorised Version, this is a three-fold compound title used by the Divine Speaker, and the first is

### I AM

As the words "I am" in this verse are emphatic in the Greek text, they may be taken as a name of Deity and capitalized thus: "I AM." Immediately, our minds go back to the occasion when the Lord Jesus said to unbelieving Jews "Before Abraham was, I AM" (John 8.58), by which He claimed for Himself eternal pre-existence. In the Apocalypse, this Divine Name has already been used as part of a five-fold compound title in verse 8, but the Speaker is apparently "the Lord God" (RV & J.N.D.), a title connected with man in Eden (Gen. 2.7), and so He is not Christ. In like manner this trumpet-like Voice ascribed to Himself this Divine Name "I AM," making "an unqualified claim to completest and supremest Deity" as one writer says. In thought, John undoubtedly went back to the first occurrence of this Divine Name when Moses asked God for an answer to a question that the people were likely to ask concerning God, "What is His Name?" or literally, "What sort of Person is He?" In reply, God said to Moses, "I AM THAT I AM" (Ex. 3.13f). By this Name, God revealed Himself as the sort of Person He is, not in terms of nature or humanity, but by the revealing of Himself then and through the succeeding centuries, which was gradual and progressive, until the climax was attained in the Incarnation.

When the Apocalyptic Voice declared Himself to be I AM, as the Lord Jesus did several times during His earthly ministry (not often apparent in the Authorised Version), He

indicated the sort of Person He is, for the Name means that He knows no past or future, but He lives in a continuous present. He is, as Liddon says, "the Eternal Now." The Name signifies not only that He is eternal, but also He is the Self-existent One. As such He is independent of all external forces, both material and spiritual, whilst, in contrast, man is dependent upon that which is outside himself for his existence and continuance of life. Man's life is *derived* from an external source, and his life depends upon regular supplies of food and drink from external sources. Only Jesus Christ possesses *underived* life, having "life in Himself" (John 5.26).

These two Divine attributes, eternal pre-existence and self-existence, will suffice, but truly "in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." (Col. 2.9).

### **Alpha and Omega**

This designation, already applied to the Lord God in verse 8 (RV), is never used of Christ by another person but, like the last one, it is always Self-applied by the glorified Christ, occurring twice (see 22.13). (The other two occurrences of the title apply to God). By this title, which is not found outside the Apocalypse, other facets of the glories of Christ are brought out.

To the superficial reader, this designation may seem meaningless if not foolish. It is common knowledge that 'alpha' and 'omega' are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, and so they may be looked upon as emblematic of the two extremities of human knowledge and understanding. By assuming these two letters, "Alpha and Omega," as a title for Himself, the Lord Jesus signifies graphically that all truth, all wisdom, and all knowledge, which can be expressed by these two and intervening letters of the alphabet, are possessed by, and comprehended in, Him. No mere human could make such a claim.

In the ancient world, man sought truth, wisdom and knowledge, as he does today, but "the wisdom of man" is derived from his own investigation and experience (1 Cor. 1.22; 2.5). This cannot be said of Christ, for "in (Him) are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2.3), where Paul may be alluding to an eastern custom of hiding valuables and money in the ground as a treasure was hid in a field according to one parable and a talent was buried in the

earth as stated in another (Matt. 13.44; 25.18), but the Divine treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid, and to be found, in Christ Who is "Alpha and Omega." Surely, this name denotes the Divine attribute of Omniscience belonging to this Apocalyptic Personage.

### **The First and the Last**

This is the third and last title in this compound appellation, which is an Old Testament expression used of Jehovah three times in Isaiah (41.4; 44.4; 48.12). In the New Testament, it is not found outside the Apocalypse where it occurs four times, of which Christ applies it to Himself on three occasions.

Of the Jehovistic use of the title in Isaiah 41.4, W. E. Vine says, "That He is 'the first' means that He is pre-existent to all history and that all things are under His control; . . . that He is 'the last' means that He rings all things to their appointed end . . ." Hence, the use of the title by the Lord Jesus is not only a claim to identification with Jehovah and a re-affirmation of His eternal pre-existence, but the consummation of all things will be in Him.

(To be continued)

## **FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTALS**

by J. B. HEWITT, Chesterfield

### **(28) THE DEITY AND PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (Part 1)**

The basis of the mediatorial work of the Lord Jesus is His proper and essential Deity. This is equally true of the Holy Spirit. All the dignity, efficacy and glory of His office and various operations spring from His Divine Personality. It is sad to think that today we must emphasize that the Holy Spirit is a Person, not just an influence or a thing or an idea, but a Person—as much a Person as God the Father; as much a Person as God the Son. Never 'IT,' a Person please 'HE.' He speaks, He prays, He teaches, He guides. He is God, just as much as the Father and the Son are God, for our God is a Triune God—three Persons in one God. The teachings of the Bible on this vital subject are all too little understood and too little studied. When last did your Assembly have a series on the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit is the ultimate fact of Revelation and the unique force in Redemption.



We are living under the dispensation of the Spirit; in that character God now reveals Himself to His people. The Holy Spirit is the Revealer of all truth and the Active Agent in the Church and in the Christian.

### **His Personality**

Because of His union with the Godhead, we ascribe to Him DEITY; and because of His personal properties and acts, we ascribe to Him PERSONALITY. There are three passages in which the Spirit is spoken of as a PERSON, and distinguished from an ATTRIBUTE. (Acts 10.38; Rom. 15.13; 1 Cor. 2.4). From these passages we understand that the Spirit is a distinct and intelligent Agent and is never to be confounded with the Divine attributes. (See Matt. 12. 31,32). The inference here is that blasphemy is committed against God Himself. John's Gospel stresses the Personality of the Spirit, but Paul in his writings is concerned with His work.

In speaking of the Holy Spirit the Lord Jesus uses the masculine not the neuter pronoun. (John 14.16,17,26; 15.26; 16.7-8,13,14,15). Note the Personal pronoun used twelve times in four verses in John 16. "I will send Him" (v. 7): "He is come," "He will reprove" (v. 8); "He, the Spirit of Truth" (v. 13). "He will guide," "He shall not speak," "of Himself," "He shall hear," "shall He speak," "He will shew you" (v. 13). "He shall glorify me," "He shall receive" (v. 14). These are all acts of a Person, not merely an influence.

The Spirit is not the Father or the Son, but is distinct from both. He is an Agent possessed of intelligence and will, power and wisdom. The masculine pronoun applied to Him, and the nature of the mission on which He is sent attest a Person.

### **The Essential Attributes of Personality.**

"SPEAKING" (See Mark 13.11). "Separate me Barnabas and Paul" (Acts 13.2; concerning Paul (Acts 21.11; apostacy (1 Tim. 4.1); speaking to the Churches (Rev. 2.7,11,17,29; 3.6,13,22).

REVEALING (Luke 2.26; John 16.14b). WILL (1 Cor. 12.11). A WITNESS (Acts 5.32, Rom. 8.16). KNOWLEDGE (1 Cor. 2.10,11,13). SPIRITUAL LIFE (John 6.63; 1 Pet. 3.18). SENDING forth Apostles (Acts 13.4). GOODNESS (Neh. 9.20). APPOINTMENT to a work (Acts 20.28). INTERCEDING (Rom. 8.26). EXERCISING His own

pleasure (Acts 15.28; 1 Cor. 12.11). He can be GRIEVED (Eph. 4.30). LIED TO (Acts 5.4). RESISTED (Acts 7.51). HE LOVES (Rom. 15.30).

These are all acts of a living Person; and evidences in favour of the distinct personality of the Spirit. Does He speak? then I must listen. Does He teach? then I must be willing to learn. He sends, are we willing to go? (Isa. 6.8-10). He is a personal Helper (John 14.16); Friend (John 14.17); Ambassador (John 15.26); Guide (John 16.13); Revealer (John 16.13) and the Glorifier of Christ (John 16.14).

### **His Deity**

Divine Titles are ascribed to Him. My Spirit (Gen. 6.3); The Spirit of God (2 Chron. 15.1; 1 Cor. 3.16; 1 Pet. 4.14). The Spirit of the Lord (Isa. 11.2; Acts 5.9). The Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8.9); Of His Son (Gal. 4.6); The Lord the Spirit (2 Cor. 3.18). These reveal the nature of the Spirit.

His other names demonstrate His qualities. Note seven of these in Isa. 11.2—The Spirit of Truth (John 14.17; 15.26; 16.13); Spirit of Grace (Heb. 10.29); Spirit of Wisdom (Eph. 1.17); Of Life (Rom. 8.2); Adoption (Rom. 8.15); of Love, of Might (2 Tim. 1.7); of Power (Eph. 3.20); of Grace (1 Pet. 4.14). There are many others you can find using a concordance.

### **Divine attributes are His**

Omnipotence (Job 33.4; Psa. 104.30; Zech. 4.6; Rom. 8.11; 15.18,19). Omniscience (1 Cor. 2.10,11; 14). Eternity (Heb. 9.14). Omnipresence (Psa. 139.7; 1 Cor. 12.13 RV). Sovereignty (1 Cor. 12.11). This right belongs to God alone. Holiness (Luke 11.13). He is called the Holy Spirit over 80 times.

### **Divine works ascribed to Him**

Creation (Gen. 1.2; Job 26.13; 33.4; Psa. 33.6). Inspiration of Scriptures (Acts 1.16; 1 Pet. 1.11; 2 Pet. 1.21). Regeneration of souls (John 3.6; Titus 3.5). Sanctification of saints (2 Thess. 2.13; 1 Pet. 1.2). The Revelation of truth (Eph. 1.17,18). Statements which in the O.T. distinctly name the Lord, God or Jehovah, as their subject are applied to the Holy Spirit in the N.T. (Ex. 16.7; Psa. 95.8-11, with Heb. 3.7-9). The Holy Spirit is a distinct Person FROM, yet co-essential, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Son. He is the Author of a supernatural work—the work of God in our souls.

# THE CHURCH

by JOHN CAMPBELL, Larkhall

## AFTER THE RAPTURE

At the Rapture, the local Church loses its distinctive character; and the first change we will experience will be that of the body. If the believer has died prior to the Rapture, he will take precedence over the living (1 Thess. 4.16). Mortality shall be swallowed up of life. The dead shall rise first. The order is, "The Lord Himself shall "descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and "the trump of God," then the dead raised, then the living caught up, to be forever with the Lord. Some have suggested all will be confusion at that moment of rapture; tombs wrecked, gravestones displaced and ground upheaval As evidence of His resurrection, Matthew 27.52 says, "the graves were opened" and there was an earthquake: otherwise no mention of general confusion or catastrophe. Such is the might of our Lord's power, He could accomplish the physical resurrection of the saints worldwide, yet not disturb one single blade of grass! Following a bodily change, will be a change of place and condition. Earth exchanged for Glory, mortality for immortality. Not now life governed by faith; but life which knows no weariness or limitation, the "glorious liberty of the children of God," (Rom. 8.21).

I judge, the Judgment Seat of Christ, the Bema, will follow, the Reward Seat for deeds done in the body. Positions of distinctions then allocated for faithfulness here. Then the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Both truths in themselves, worthy subjects for separate analysis.

## THE ETERNAL STATE

The Scriptures alone, present the few facts we possess. Some certainties suggest themselves. Let us gather together what the Bible discloses about the future state of all who have trusted Christ as Saviour. First, we will experience an "out of the body" condition, at death. The spirit returns to God, Who gave it (Ecc. 12.7), and the soul goes to the place of its choice, while in the body. Between death and resurrection, we **have**, not we await (2 Cor. 5.1-4):—

1. A Building of God. - Ek - from God.
2. A House - A Dwelling.

3. Not made with hands - Not of Human construction.
4. Eternal - Not temporal.
5. In the heavens - In contrast to earth.
6. We earnestly desire this house.
7. We desire to be clothed with this house.

### **A BUILDING FROM GOD (2 Corinthians 5)**

The inspired play on the words of Vs. 1-4 is delightful and instructive. Tent, dwelling, building, house and spirit-body = OIKETERION =, V. 2. Our physical body, at death is spoken of as being dissolved. The word means to loosen down, as a Tent. The word HOUSE in V.2, and only in Jude V. 6, there translated, habitation, is used in the Septuagint of Jeremiah, 25.30, of God's holy habitation. This illuminates 2 Cor. 5.2. Note the confidence with which Paul asserts the truth he discloses = WE KNOW =; while the unbeliever gropes in the darkness of his unregenerate ignorance. The pronoun, WE, does not limit this knowledge to the Apostolic circle, it embraces the Corinthians, and we with them.

The clause, "not made with hands" means not of human construction. The laws of human generation do not apply here in the text of 2 Cor. 5.1. The words of John 1.13, explain the thought, "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

"Eternal" carries with it the truth of being age-lasting, in contrast to the "dissolving" of the earthly house; as "in the heavens" in contrast to earth.

In the present we groan, for two reasons:—

1. To be clothed upon with our spiritual body, because we fear nakedness.
2. We have a great desire for the change from mortality to life.

With such assertions let us be content. Speculation and conjecture about a temporal or astral body brings confusion into the known facts of divine inspiration. We are convinced the believing dead are, "With CHRIST" and "FAR BETTER."

### **THE ETERNAL STATE**

God fitted our human bodies for earth; He will fashion the resurrection body for Heaven. Only God can operate in this manner. He is Creator. Our earthly body housed our spirit and our soul. The resurrection body, which is from

-EK- God will house our personality, and since it is similar to the Lord's body in Resurrection, will possess features unknown to mortals, yet some akin to flesh. He, after His rising again could:—

1. Be seen and handled.
2. Prepare a meal and eat food.
3. Speak and hear.
4. Recall incidents before His death which caused Him sorrow.
5. Distinguish personalities.
6. Appear in a room, without opening the door.
7. Vanish out of sight.

Philippians 3.21 asserts we shall possess such a body, fashioned for eternity, never again to feel pain, shed tears or experience death.

We cannot spend eternity. It could, as humans, expend us. Where there is no past, i.e., the present as spent, or a future, which is the present yet to be; but always a forever, now. Time is but a parenthesis in the — to us — onward flow of timelessness, a state incomprehensible to human intellect. Tennyson was right when he said,

For "WAS" and "IS" and "WILL BE," are but "IS." We begin, we pursue and complete what we began, and measure it by the time taken in its accomplishment. In observing limitations of language, we will be engaged forever in contemplating Deity unendingly; praising and adoring the Lord Jesus Christ in the serried ranks of Heavenly intelligencies—Archangel, Sereph, Cherub, angels, Principalities, Powers, Might and Dominions, together with the vast hosts of the Redeemed beings. The least of our occupations will be judging and governing the world and judging angels. There are features it has pleased God to disclose, for in the unending ages yet future, God will demonstrate the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness to us through Christ Jesus (Eph. 2.7).

### **THE ETERNAL STATE OF THE UNBELIEVER**

The Bible is clear in its teaching about the future portion of the unregenerate dead. It is one of fixity and changelessness. In Rev. 22.11, they are unchanged as to their DESCRIPTION and their DESIRES. No possibility of a moral or spiritual change, carrying with them into eternity their

filthy nature with unsatisfied desires. The alcoholic, his unquenchable thirst, the fornicator, his fleshly passions ungratified. In Luke 16.26, Christ revealed they are fixed as to **Destiny**. No second chance beyond the grave.

Matt. 25.46 describes the unchanging **DURATION** of their punishment. It is everlasting. There is the thought of unchanging **DISTANCE**, between the saved and the lost in Luke 16.26. "Abraham afar off," and "great gulf fixed," convey ideas of remoteness, with no possibility of breaking the barrier God has placed there. And finally, the Devil, after 1000 years imprisonment, on being let loose, will again attempt to deceive the nations; and **DEITY** will remain inflexibly the same forever (Heb. 13.8). In a scene of unending misery their **DAMNATION** also will be unchanged and unchangeable.

### **The Lake of Fire**

To be forever lost, a soul from Hell,  
To estimate the cost, no one can tell,  
No hope on which to lean,  
No grain of comfort glean,  
In that benighted scene, ever to dwell!

## **WHO WAS TIMOTHY ?**

by **EUGENE STOCK**

(Reprinted from the Bible Student)

While Titus was a Gentile, Timothy was neither a Gentile nor a Jew in the full sense. His father was a Greek and his mother a Jewess (Acts 16.1). We have the names of both his mother and his grandmother in 2 Tim. 1.5, Eunice and Lois; and the mention of these in this way suggests that his father had died early. Although, no doubt, his Gentile paternity was the cause of his not being circumcised as a child, the mother and grandmother brought him up to know the God of the Hebrews, and he was taught the 'sacred Writings' of the Old Testament from infancy, as the Greek word for 'child' in 2 Tim. 3.15 indicates, meaning literally 'babe.' It is a beautiful picture that is thus presented to our view: the widowed 'daughter of Abraham' with her one young boy, living with her old mother in the far-off heathen city of Lystra, in the heart of the great territory we now know as Asia Minor; the child denied the much-prized sign of God's

covenant with Israel in deference to the father's wishes, but learning what was much better, the Book of the Covenant (the Old Testament), daily at his mother's knee; yet without the advantage which so many Jews in foreign cities enjoyed, of a synagogue for Sabbath worship and teaching—as we may fairly gather from Acts 14.

1. Then, one day, occur the events recorded in that chapter. Two travelling Jews come to Lystra, and begin preaching, not to countrymen of their own in a synagogue as elsewhere, but to such heathen as will listen to them (verse 7). Apparently they are not much noticed until one day a startling sight rouses the whole city. Here is a well known character, a cripple from his birth, leaping and walking, at one brief word from these strangers. The cry is raised "The gods are come down!" "This dignified personage must be Zeus himself, the father of gods and men; and this one, who does most of the speaking, must be his attendant Hermes! \* Fetch the priest! Bring oxen and garlands! Let sacrifices be offered! Lystra is indeed honoured!" Barnabas and Paul, not being acquainted (apparently) with the mother-tongue of the Lyconians used by the populace in their excitement (though evidently Greek was also spoken), fail at first to make out what is going on. It was as if an English preacher in Wales were puzzled by the cries of the bilingual Welsh, who understand him though he does not understand them. But presently the strangers do perceive what is meant, for here is the priest about to sacrifice the ox before them; and then we hear their indignant remonstrance, and their appeal to the people to turn to the one Living God Who has given the rain and fruitful seasons.

Did young Timothy witness all this? It does anyway seem that he saw the sequel, when Paul was stoned and left for dead; for, long years after, the Apostle reminded him of his 'suffering and persecutions' 'at Lystra' (2 Tim. 3.11). And was Timothy's conversion to Christ one of the fruits of this missionary visit? It seems so; for he, like Titus, was spiritually a 'very own child' of Paul's (1 Tim. 1.2).

\* Zeus and Hermes are the names of these gods in the Greek (see R.V. margin). The A.V. adopted the more familiar Latin names, Jupiter and Mercury, and the R.V. does not alter these in the text.

2. Two or three years pass away, and Paul is again at Lystra (Acts 16.1-3). Timothy is now 'a disciple,' 'well reported of by the brethren,' not only there, but at the more important city of Iconium. Had the young Christian been evangelizing already? There were 'prophets' in the Church who marked him out and named him as a future missionary (1 Tim. 1.18). No wonder Paul, who no longer had Barnabas and Mark with him, but only Silas, felt that God had raised up for him a fresh and promising companion, and 'would have him to go forth with him.' But there was one obstacle. The Gentile converts were not to be subjected to the Jewish rite of circumcision, but here was a young man who was half a Jew, and who was to accompany Paul to many cities where there were large Jewish communities. Certainly they would not tolerate one of their own race without the covenant token. So the Apostle, on his great principle of being 'all things to all men,' 'took and circumcised' Timothy, seeing no inconsistency in this even while at that very time he was conveying to the various churches the decrees of the Council of Jerusalem which exempted the Gentiles from the rite (Acts 16.4). Then came the 'laying on of hands' (1 Tim. 4.14; 2 Tim. 1.6). The Greek prepositions used are different; the 'gift' coming through (*dia*) Paul's hands, but 'with' (*meta*) the presbyters' hands. \*

3. The young evangelist now leaves his home and his mother, and goes forth with Paul and Silas to preach the Gospel. Their progress through Asia Minor is traced in Acts 16.4-8, till at Troas they stand on the seashore and look across the Ægean Sea towards Europe; and the vision of the 'man of Macedonia' calls them thither. They have now become a party of four, as we find by the word 'we' occurring for the first time (verse 10), showing that they had been joined by Luke, the beloved physician, who writes the

\* Paul definitely states in 1 Cor. 12.4-11 that it was the special prerogative of the Holy Spirit to impart spiritual gifts. F. W. Grant comments on 1 Tim. 4.14: 'In Timothy's case this gift had been given through prophecy, with the laying on of hands of the eldership. It was not the laying on of hands that communicated the gift, although it acknowledged it no doubt. The gift was given through prophecy (2 Tim. 1.6), the voice of God announcing it, as prophecy means here as elsewhere. He had thus a special place which none of us can pretend to.'—(Editor of Bible Student).



narrative. But he is only with them a little while. The 'we' occurs again at Philippi (verse 16), but after that we find 'they' as before. Only Paul and Silas are mentioned by name, but Timothy is with them, as we find a little later (17.15); and a passage in the Epistle to the Philippians (2.19-20), written years after, reveals Timothy's presence at Philippi on this first occasion: 'I hope . . . to send Timothy shortly unto you . . . Ye know the proof of him that, as a child serveth a father, *so he served with me* in furtherance of the Gospel.' Moreover, we know that he joined in the preaching at Thessalonica, for both the Epistles to the Thessalonians are written in the names of 'Paul and Silvanus (i.e. Silas) and Timotheus,' and the words 'we' and 'our,' which occur so often in those letters—thirty-five times in the first three chapters of the First Epistle—tell us that Timothy had his share in their labours and trials.

But when Paul is hurried away from the next city, Berea, to escape his Jewish pursuers, he goes on to Athens alone, leaving Silas and Timothy at Berea. He sends them, however, instructions to follow him quickly (Acts 17.14,15), but the narrative only shows them joining him later at Corinth. It is only from the First Epistle to the Thessalonians that we find that Timothy did follow him to Athens, but was sent back to Macedonia to comfort and strengthen the Church at Thessalonica. (See 1 Thess. 2.17,18; 3.1,2. Ramsay explains Timothy's movements differently, but I fail to reconcile his view with these passages). Then Paul, discouraged by his lack of success at Athens, goes on to Corinth alone; in that great commercial and specially wicked city he is 'in weakness and in fear and in much trembling' (1 Cor. 2.3); and the narrative of the Acts indirectly confirms this (18.1-11). He is working at his tent-making in order to pay his way, and only uses the Sabbaths in the Jewish synagogue for quiet 'reasoning and persuading'; 'but when Silas and Timothy come down from Macedonia,' Paul is 'pressed in the spirit' (A.V.), or 'constrained by the Word' (R.V.), and *then* begins that mighty work which shows that the Lord had 'much people in that city' (verse 10). In this work we might anyway be sure that Timothy had his share; but we are expressly told so in 2 Cor. 1.19 'The Son of God, Jesus Christ, was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timothy.'

4. We next meet with Timothy at Ephesus, in that long period of 'three years' during which Paul worked in that great city (Acts 19.22; 20.31). From here he is sent, with a companion, Erastus, into Macedonia (19.22), where he would no doubt visit the churches of Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea. He is also to go on to Corinth, as Paul announces in a letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 4.17), and further (16.10,11) specially commends him to them. 'If Timothy come, see that he be with you without fear; for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do; let no man therefore despise him.' Clearly the Apostle is a little afraid of the reception Timothy may meet with there, knowing his gentle and naturally timid character. It appears that Timothy failed to correct the evils rife at Corinth (if he ever reached there), and that then Paul sent Titus instead.

Afterwards, when Paul himself is at Corinth (Acts 20.2), Timothy is with him, as appears from the Epistle to the Romans, which was written from that city at that time, and which contains a message to the Roman Christians from the young evangelist (16.21). Then when Paul starts on his journey to Jerusalem with the 'collection,' Timothy and others go on before him and wait for him at Troas (Acts 20.4,5). But there is no indication that he went all the way to Judaea, as certainly Luke and Trophimus did (21.15,29); nor that he was with the Apostle during the latter's two years' detention at Caesarea (24.27); nor that he was in the ship wrecked at Melita, as Luke was (28.1). But we find him afterwards at Rome, as his name is joined with the Apostle's in three of the Epistles written during the two years there (Phil. 1.1; Col. 1.1; Philem. 1); and Paul hoped to send him to Philippi, as appears from a passage already quoted: 'I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy shortly unto you'—words followed by a beautiful testimony to his character: 'I have no man likeminded, who will care truly for your state . . . But ye know the proof of him,' etc. (Phil. 2.19-22).

5. The rest of our knowledge of Timothy's career is derived (with one exception) from the two Epistles to him. During one of the later journeys of Paul, after his release at Rome, the Apostle leaves Timothy at Ephesus to superintend the work there (1. 1.3); and thither he sends the First Epistle. The Second Epistle is written from the Roman dun-

geon during the second more rigorous imprisonment, and it begs Timothy to come to Rome quickly. The one addition to our knowledge is in the Epistle to the Hebrews (13.23), 'Know ye that our brother Timothy hath been set at liberty.' It may be that Timothy did reach Rome, either before or soon after Paul's execution, and was there arrested himself, and that the writer of Hebrews hearing of his release, proposed going with him to the Jewish Christians (whoever they may have been) to whom this Epistle was written—'with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you.'

Tradition makes Timothy 'Bishop' of Ephesus after this, and relates his martyrdom, the Ephesian mob attacking him on account of his protest against a festival in honour of Diana, and killing him with clubs.

## **ASSEMBLY MEETINGS**

by JOHN HEADING, Aberystwyth

### **(1). Basic Considerations**

One of the basic verses showing the activity of the first church established in Jerusalem is Acts 2.42, "they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in (the) prayers." Such a verse consolidates much N.T. teaching about assembly service, so we should take 2 Corinthians 13.5 very much to heart, "*Examine yourselves . . . prove your own selves.*" The various meetings of the assembly may be given scriptural names, but are they characterized by scriptural principles? We may think it easy to judge things that are *outside* the assembly (1 Cor. 5.12), by asserting that in these days of massive religious departure from the Word of God we cannot see much of God's pattern around. Yet it is our responsibility to judge things within, by checking whether our obedience is better than any sacrifice of self and zeal perhaps directed to the pursuit of what is not scriptural.

We must realize that meetings by themselves do not form believers into a local assembly; adding is God's work (Acts 2.47; 4.14; 11.24), and He uses His servants gifted as evangelists and teachers to achieve His ends. Rather, meetings are one manifestation of the existence of a local assembly. Otherwise one may gain the unscriptural thought

that the hall where meetings take place is the church (and this is the common idea held by the man-in-the-street). The local assembly is far from being a part-time institution consisting of being together for various hours during the week; it is a full-time bond of true fellowship that is expressed (partially but not fully) by the meetings that are convened.

In these papers, we shall first present some basic considerations that ensure that assembly meetings possess a spiritual standard consistent with N.T. teaching. Then we shall ask the question, "Does it matter?" about various aspects of assembly meetings, and finally we shall consider many examples of these meetings.

**1. God's Word and not Man's.** The Word of God alone must be our guide in all matters pertaining to assembly meetings. This inspired Word has been given so as to be "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3.16). Similarly for the N.T. message; it enables us to serve "not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts" (1 Thess. 2.4). Before the people entered into the land, the Word of God was very clear: the only place of service was to be "the place which the Lord your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there" (Deut. 12.5). In the land, David's tabernacle and Solomon's temple were erected respectively on mount Zion and mount Moriah, and these were the centres of worship. But some kings, such as Jeroboam, Ahaz and Manasseh, formulated their own religious systems, though restoration was available to return to the Word of God through Moses and David. Later, when the Lord was here, the Word of God had been displaced, and Jewish tradition was the order of the day, with their temple, sacrifices, synagogues, law and doctrine. "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Mark 7.7) was the Lord's assessment of the religious scene around Him. How the Lord's people today should be thankful that they have been redeemed from their vain manner of life received by tradition from the fathers (1 Pet. 1.18). Today, in evangelical interdenominationalism, some of the Lord's people choose the highest common factor of all the various doctrines and practices available, and seek to build upon that foundation. But is this holding the whole Word

of God, or neglecting part of it? The Scriptures know nothing about relegating parts of the divinely given pattern, and retaining only that which is common to all those who love the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. This attitude can only bring about compromise on important issues, treating as irrelevant other parts of Scripture.

**2. Holiness.** Assembly meetings should be characterized by holiness. An unsanctified atmosphere brought in by some renders it very difficult for others to maintain spiritual service. In the O.T., God had said, “the tabernacle shall be *sanctified* by my glory . . . I will *sanctify* the tabernacle . . . and the altar . . . both Aaron and his sons” (Exod. 29.43-44). At the end of his life, David recalled his preparations that he had made for “the *holy* house” (1 Chron. 29.3). In an unsanctified frame of mind regarding his heathen Egyptian wife, Solomon nevertheless declared that “the places are *holy*, whereunto the ark of the Lord hath come” (2 Chron. 8.11). The prophet Ezekiel foresaw restoration, “This is the law of the house . . . the whole limit thereof round about shall be most *holy*” (Ezek. 43.12).

In the N.T., the same principle applies: “the temple of God is *holy*, which temple ye are” (1 Cor. 3.17); “in whom all the building . . . groweth unto an *holy* temple in the Lord” (Eph. 2.21).

**3. The Lord's Presence.** If this is not recognized, then an assembly may degenerate over the years into Laodicea, its character being similar to many a worldly association. “That I may dwell among them” was God's intention in the building of the tabernacle, (Exod. 25.8). Later, the land was described as the Lord's possession “wherein the Lord's tabernacle dwelleth” (Josh. 22.19). Concerning the house of God that was to be built, He said to Solomon, “I will dwell among the children of Israel” (1 Kings 6.13). The full recognition of God's glory among them would have kept the people from many a fall. Similarly during the Lord's lifetime on earth, His presence was described by John as “the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory” (John 1.14); could a man ever be the same after having known the reality of such a divine presence? Thus after His resurrection, the Lord prepared the disciples for His forthcoming unseen presence: when “the disciples were assembled” He came unto His own

(John 20.19). Paul pressed the O.T. promises into the changed N.T. situation, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them" (2 Cor. 6.16). Consequently, as forming the temple of the living God, their conduct in "perfecting holiness in the fear of God" had to be completely consistent with the living presence of the Lord.

**4. Recognition of the Headship of Christ.** Man is head in his proper sphere, but in an assembly meeting both men and women, by their heads being respectively uncovered and covered, display the truth that the Headship of Christ is recognized therein. If the truth of 1 Corinthians 11.2-16 is neglected (and this neglect today is of very recent origin, so cannot have its basis in the age-old Scriptures of truth), then many other aspects of assembly meetings fall by the wayside. For example, for the Lord's Supper the Corinthians came "together not for the better, but for the worse" (v. 17), so much so that by their actions they implied (to Paul, at least) "this is not to eat the Lord's supper" in spite of partaking of the emblems (v. 20). Chapter 14 shows that the conduct of meetings was in disorder, with many brethren taking part at one time to no profit. Chapter 15 shows that a gospel with no resurrection was preached, with faith vain and men still in their sins. To recognize the Lord as Head would avoid all this!

**5. Control by the Spirit.** In assembly meetings, the quiet, peaceful, reverent yet ordered control by the Spirit should be in evidence. He takes up whom He will, in contrast to man's ordered and traditional arrangement where one man is in control, a copy of the old Jewish priestly system. In 1 Corinthians, spiritual gifts are distributed by the Spirit, "dividing to every man severally as he will" (12.11). In Acts chs. 13 and 16 we read of men separated by the Spirit, and led into specific avenues of service. In 1 Corinthians 2, knowledge for service comes by the Spirit; in Ephesians 5.18-20, song and thanksgiving are by the Spirit, as also is prayer (6.18). We "worship by the Spirit of God" (Phil. 3.3, R.V.), and all this demonstrates that we must not "quench" the Spirit (1 Thess. 5.19). Such verses as these span the range of assembly activity, yet the still quiet voice of the Spirit can be disturbed by the restless energy of the flesh, which sometimes seeks licence to tire the saints with unprofitable utterances.

**6. Spirituality.** The realm of nature is what we call *natural* (whether good or bad). The realm of the Spirit is what we call *spiritual*. The realm of the Lord is what we call *dominical*, an unusual word that occurs only twice in the N.T., translated “the *Lord's* supper” and “the *Lord's* day” (1 Cor. 11.20; Rev. 1.10). The word “spiritual” appears 15 times in 1 Corinthians, but only 11 times elsewhere in the N.T. Thus we read of spiritual meat, spiritual drink, a spiritual Rock, spiritual gifts, spiritual blessings, spiritual songs, spiritual understanding, a spiritual house. Three times men are spoken of as being spiritual — that is, they are dominated by the outlook and activity of the Spirit given by the Risen Lord. In 1 Corinthians 2.11 to 3.2 the reception of the divine mind by a *spiritual* man is according to God's methods and not man's. In 14.37, a *spiritual* man knows that the regulation of assembly meetings is by “the commandments of the Lord.” In Galatians 6.1, restoration by a *spiritual* man is achieved by quietly seeking to help another overcome by unspirituality. If brethren or sisters are spiritual, maintaining spirituality during meetings, there would be no outbursts of laughter and worldly conversation within seconds of the end of meetings, because the true atmosphere of such meetings should persist long after their termination.

**7. Loyalty.** In the N.T., there was never the attitude that says, “Let us be present for the breaking of bread, but it doesn't matter if we are not seen again throughout the week.” The writer to the Hebrews suspected that this danger might be present, so he exhorted “not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is” (Heb. 10.25). In writing like this, we stress that we are not talking about legitimate absences. When there was a material sanctuary, some men and women displayed enormous loyalty to the things of God: Joshua “departed not out of the tabernacle” (Exod. 33.11); David would dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of his life (Psa. 23.6; 27.4); Anna “departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day” (Luke 2.37). Paul's Epistles show in many places that he engaged in daily prayers and thanksgivings for the local assemblies; his thoughts and presence, when possible, were always with them. But today, in a large assembly, it may seem easy to miss this or that

meeting, and expect not to be missed, particularly if one is regular in one's absences. Yet in a very small assembly, loyalty is necessary to maintain the testimony—where the presence of every brother and sister is essential, where a brother cannot be absent to preach elsewhere, and perhaps where even holidays have to be dispensed with so that the assembly meetings are maintained.

## THEY THINK IT STRANGE

by PAUL SQUIRES (Ford Park, Plymouth)

The title of this article appears in 1 Pet. 4.4 In verse 3 Peter is writing of the old walk/life and in verse 4 of the result of the new walk/life. We cannot over emphasise that for the saint (one who is holy, set apart, i.e. positionally) the six sins of verse 3 are PAST; "the time PAST of our life." We have died with Christ and have been raised to "walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6.4).

Let us look at these six sins and verse 4.

LASCIVIOUSNESS — the Greek word is *aselgeia* and refers to those actions which would give rise to distaste, even disgust, in any civilised community. It is translated "filthy" (2 Pet. 2.7), "lasciviousness" (Mark 7.22; 2 Cor. 12. 21; Gal. 5.19; Eph. 4.19; 1 Pet. 4.3 Jude 4) and "wantoness" (Rom. 13.13; 2 Pet. 2.18).

LUSTS—cravings (see article entitled LUSTING in Nov./ Dec. '83 issue of A.T.). Note the references in the First Epistle of Peter (1.14; 2.11; 4.2-3). For the Second Epistle see 1.4; 2.10; 2.18; 3.3.

EXCESS OF WINE—"wine-drinking" (J.N.D.). Ephesians 5.18 reads "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit." All Christians are indwelt by the Spirit (a truth needful of reiteration), but not all know what it is to be "filled with the Spirit." This One of the Godhead Three, Whom we hear too little about, is to be in full control.

REVELLINGS — the Greek word *komos* is translated "rioting" (Rom. 13.13 and "revellings" (Gal. 5.21; 1 Pet. 4.3).

BANQUETINGS — "carousings" (R.V.), "drinkings" (J.N.D.).

ABOMINABLE IDOLATRIES—"unhallowed idolatries" (J.N.D.).



In verse 4 the word “run” is ‘to run in company with’ (the verb is found also in Mark 6.33 and Acts 3.11) and “excess of riot” may be rendered “sink of corruption” (J.N.D. and see footnote in New Translation).

The result of the new walk/life is two-fold, strangeness and evil speaking. Those who are unsaved and know us will **THINK IT STRANGE** that we do not keep company with them in the sins outlined, as perhaps once we did. Think of our Lord and Saviour: He mingled with sinners, the very lowest of the low, yet was ever the separate One, a Man of dignity. Let us “follow His steps” (2.21).

The duty is ours to explain to those who perhaps wonder at the changed life, how it came about. May we seize every opportunity to speak of the glorious Person Who has saved us and the marvellous life available in Him.

---

**HYMNS AND THEIR WRITERS (24), by Jack Strahan, Enniskillen**

---

## **“GUIDE ME, O THOU GREAT JEHOVAH”**

**WILLIAM WILLIAMS (1717—1791)**

Wales has always been a land of song. Perhaps, no other country in the world has a finer singing tradition and few have superior riches in tunes. When spiritual revival swept that land in the 18th century, it seemed as if a long spiritual winter had ended—spring-time had arrived. Throughout the land at that time, a new spirit of song was awakened as never before and the voice towering above all the others was that of William Williams of Pantycelyn. He was the outstanding hymn writer of the great revival. Dr. Elvet Lewis in his “Sweet Singers of Wales” states that “what Paul Gerhardt has been to Germany, what Isaac Watts has been to England, that and more William Williams has been to the little Principality of Wales. His hymns have both stirred and soothed the whole nation for more than 100 years; they have helped to fashion a nation’s character and to deepen a nation’s piety.” William Williams has gone down in history as, “the Sweet Singer of Wales.”

William Williams, the fourth child of John and Dorothy Williams, was born in 1717 at Cefn-y-coed near Llandovery, Carmarthenshire. When William was a young man, the family moved to an adjacent and more prosperous farm at Pantycelyn and this homestead remains to the present the family home of the same Williams family. Thus Pantycelyn and William Williams became inextricably

identified with each other—he exists for us today as, “Williams Pantycelyn.”

William Williams as a boy received a good education. His parents planned that he should become a doctor and as a medical student he was sent to Llwyn-Ilwyd Academy about 30 miles from home. It happened that one day as he was returning home from college on horseback, and passing through Talgarth, Breconshire, he was arrested by the oratory of an open-air preacher mounted on a tombstone within the churchyard wall. He had never heard anything like it before but (as he records later) it was a voice evidently “from heaven” to his soul. Howel Harris, the young Methodist evangelist, was the preacher that day and that message brought salvation to Williams, then a medical student of 20 years of age. Within a few days of conversion’s experience, Williams became convinced that God would have him give up medical studies and become a physician of souls. He was appointed a deacon of the Church of England at the age of 23 and for three years served two small curacies in South Wales. Williams, however, incurred the displeasure of the ruling bishop by his evangelical views, by his going outside his own parish to preach the gospel and by his association with such dissenters and revivalists as George Whitefield. Those offences the bishop could not tolerate and Williams was refused full ordination as a priest. However, Williams all the while had been ill at ease within the established church and was happy to throw in his lot with fellow revivalists, taking all Wales as his parish. In association with Howel Harris of Trefeca, Daniel Rowland of Llangeitho and Howel Davies of Pembrokeshire, he moved up and down the country like a flame, arousing the people to a consciousness of their sin and need of a Saviour and mightily was he used of God, though suffering persecution in many parts. Howel Harris wrote of him, “Hell trembles when Williams comes, and souls are taken daily by Brother Williams in the gospel-net.” In about half a century he travelled some 100,000 miles throughout the Principality on horse-back or on foot proclaiming the glorious gospel. He died in his home at Pantycelyn on the 11th January, 1791 at the age of 74, after a long and painful illness—honoured, much respected and indeed greatly loved, and was laid to rest in Llanfair-ar-y-bryn churchyard, Llandoverly. A visitor to that spot today may there see his tombstone and read from the epitaph :

“WILLIAM WILLIAMS”

“A sinner saved”

“He waits here the coming of the Morning Star”

William Williams may be described as a truly great man. Besides being a great theologian, he was a great preacher. Besides

being a great poet (reckoned by some authorities as the greatest of all Welsh poets), he was a great hymn-writer. In his hymns, numbering about 860 in all, we have the combination of truly great poetry and perfect theology. He wrote almost entirely in Welsh and cannot be freely or successfully translated; so his greatness as a hymnwriter cannot be truly assessed or appreciated, except by the Welsh people themselves. Springing as he did from a rural background, he drew widely for his compositions from nature around him—the dawn, the sunset, the mountains, the harvest field, a summer's evening, a winter's night, a clear morning after a storm or a quiet haven by the sea. These he used to reflect the experience of the soul, believing that the book of nature harmonised fully with the revelation of scripture. Williams' hymns were a mighty influence among the Welsh people of the 18th century for many who could not themselves read soon learned his hymns and thousands of people knew a great many of them by heart. Such was their spiritual content that the common people used them more for private meditation than for community singing.

Of the very few of Williams' hymns which we have in English today, the greatest and most widely known is, "Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah." Originally written in Welsh it consisted of five verses and was first published in 1745. Some years later Peter Williams (no relation) translated three verses into English. This translation, however, did not entirely satisfy William Williams, its original composer. He, himself, therefore re-wrote the hymn, preserving the first verse much as Peter Williams had rendered it but re-writing completely the second and third verses.

"Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah,  
     Pilgrim through this barren land;  
 I am weak, but Thou art mighty,  
     Hold me with Thy powerful hand:  
         Bread of heaven,  
 Feed me till I want no more.  
 Open now the crystal fountain,  
     Whence the healing stream doth flow;  
 Let the fire and cloudy pillar  
     Lead me all my journey through:  
         Strong deliverer,  
 Be Thou still my strength and shield.  
 When I tread the verge of Jordan,  
     Bid my anxious fears subside;  
 Death of deaths, and hell's destruction,  
     Land me safe on Canaan's side:  
         Songs of praises  
 I will ever give to thee.

The lovely Welsh tune, "Cwm Rhondda" to which this hymn is sung today was composed by John Hughes in 1907. The hymn and the tune are complimentary, indeed, almost inseparately linked and have a universal appeal. Welsh men are unrivalled singers of this hymn and especially in the open air. Besides, the hymn has now been translated into 75 other languages.

The imagery of the hymn is based on the 40 years journey of the Israelites through the wilderness to the land of Canaan. Williams, in his hymn, identifies himself with the pilgrims to Canaan and, appreciating the tortuousness and dangers of the way, he solicits the guidance, the care and the protection of the God of Israel. As through the wilderness, the pilgrim makes his way, his eye and heart are lifted to heaven, "Guide me," . . . "Hold me" . . . "Feed me" . . . so he proceeds to the better land Truly Williams' hymn is the prayer of the pilgrim!

---

## ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY

Editor : A. M. S. Gooding.

Correspondence relative to Editorial matters should be addressed to the Editor : 7 Sparrow Gardens, off London Road, Kilmarnock, Scotland. (Telephone 24245).

Assistant Editor : B. Currie  
49 Glenburn Road, Dunmurry, BT17 9AN, N. Ireland.  
(Telephone Belfast 621343).

### Committee :

Tom Armstrong, Thomas Beggs, Ronnie Johnston,  
James McKeown, James Moore.

Secretary : William Neill.

This magazine is supported solely by the freewill offerings of the Lord's people.

Friends residing in England, Scotland and Wales may kindly forward their donations to : John Glenville, Kingdon Cottage, King Street, Colyton, Devon, EX13 6LA.

Friends residing elsewhere should please forward gifts to : William Neill, "Beth-Asher," 109 Lurgan Road, Banbridge, Northern Ireland, BT32 4NG. Phone (08206) 24238.

Please address correspondence, including all new orders, orders for back numbers and extra copies, cancellations and changes of address to William Neill at above address.

You can HELP US by stating the NUMBER of copies required, and submitting NAME and ADDRESS, including POSTAL CODE, IN BLOCK LETTERS, please.