



ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY



Contents

EDITOR'S NOTE

OUTLINES

by N. McDonald

FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTALS

by J. B. Hewitt

I WILL COME AGAIN

by D. McBride

CHRIST IN THE APOCALYPSE

by J. B. D. Page

STUDIES IN JOHN'S GOSPEL

by Wm. Hoste

THE PLACE THAT IS CALLED CALVARY

by J. A. Brett

TAKING POSSESSION

by E. Robinson

THE BURDEN AND THE BLESSING

by J. G. Good

BETWEEN CORINTH AND PAUL'S THIRD JOURNEY

by J. Heading

REVIEW

COMMITTEE'S REPORT

HYMNS AND THEIR WRITERS

by J. Strahan

CHARITY

1 Cor. 13

Though I articulate in tongues
From human or angelic lungs,
Prophetic Mysteries define
High mountain masses redesign:
My every mite philanthropise
Display my flesh for sacrifice;
My life's ambitions abdicate
Become a gloomy celibate
And have not love. My life is vain,
My excellencies most profane!
Another's agonies unfelt
No charity for him indwelt,
Of fellow-feelings unpossessed,
A tinkling cymbal like the rest.
Give me that man who sees a need
Who hastes a hungry soul to feed:
To weep compassionately; feel
Another's plight and with him kneel,
Bear willingly another's load
On such our charities explode.
Love never fails: its bounties pour
Forth from its multi-treasured store:
Giving, and never weighs the cost
By such no charity is lost!

—*John Campbell, Larkhall*

EDITOR'S NOTE

In "Last days perilous times shall come"—we cannot expect the closing days of the Dispensation to be any different from what we now find them to be. The world becomes worse year by year. Violence and corruption abound on every side, even as it did in Noah's day. It is strange, is it not, that the conditions described in 2 Timothy 3 are so very similar to those mentioned in the closing verses of Romans chapter one. The sins enumerated in that chapter have been thought by some to be a description of the descendants of Ham, in contrast to the descendants of Japheth and Shem in chapters two and three. Others have suggested that they describe a debauched Roman soldier in chapter one, a cultured Greek and a zealous Jew in chapters two and three. However, the features brought before us in 2 Timothy three are those of modern christendom—"A form of Godliness, but denying the power thereof." In our day all these depressing features are evident in the religious world.

The mention of "last days" does however bring a sense of hope. If this be the darkest hour of the night—The day is coming! If weeping endures for the night—Joy comes in the morning! This poor old world waits for the rising of the Sun of righteousness with healing in His wings—but

"We wait to see the Morning star appearing in glory bright,
This blessed hope illumines with beams most cheering the
hours of night."

Yes! Look up! Our Redemption draweth nigh. Our souls are indeed redeemed by precious blood, our bodies have been bought with a price—but we wait the redemption of the body. Oh, the joy of it! "Heaven—from whence we look for the Saviour Who shall change these bodies of our humiliation and fashion them like unto the body of His glory."

So lift up your heads, dear Saints, He is coming! Look up! He comes!

In view of His coming let us "occupy till He comes" "Follow Him till He comes," "Remember Him till He comes," "Be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." Until He comes let us be true to Him.

May I take this opportunity of wishing all our readers

the rich blessing of God in coming days, and grace to live holily, righteously and Godly in this present evil world till He comes.

I hope, if the Lord permits, to visit South African assemblies to minister God's word during the months of February, March, April and May of 1986, and I shall value the constant prayers of the Lord's people.

Outlines

by NELSON McDONALD (Scotland)

(3) HIS STATELINESS AND SUBMISSIVENESS

His Stateliness—Prov. 30.29-31.

The he-goat reminds us of the Lord's stately walk and the comeliness of His deportment. This was the surefooted animal teaching us of the careful and dignified steps of the Saviour. He never needed to—

- (i) Retrace a step.—John 1.36; Ps. 1.1.
- (ii) Recall a word.—John 7.46; Luke 4.22.
- (iii) Record a sin.—John 8.46.
- (iv) Regret an act.—Acts 10.38.
- (v) Remember a fault.—Heb. 7.26,27; cp. Gen. 41.9; James 5.16.
- (vi) Rectify a mistake.—Mark 7.37; John 8.29.
- (vii) Refine His character.—Phil. 2.5-11; Song of Sol. 5.16
- (xiii) Reform His conduct.—1 Pet. 2.22-25.

His Submissiveness—Isaiah 53.7.

The sheep teaches us of the submission of the Lord Jesus He was—

- (i) Meek.—Matt. 11.29; 19.14.
- (ii) Gentle.—2 Tim. 2.24;
- (iii) Tender.—Luke 13.34.
- (iv) Willing.—Luke 22.42.
- (v) Patient.—Isa. 53.7.
- (vi) Obedient.—John 10.3; Heb. 10.7.
- (vii) Loving.—John 11.5; 13.1; Gal. 2.20.

FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTALS

by J. B. HEWITT, Chesterfield

(35) THE HOLY SPIRIT IN ROMANS

This "Law Court Drama" is logically profound and is without question a most important production from the pen of the Apostle Paul. Every Christian who desires to become firmly grounded in the faith must read this book carefully and prayerfully to understand the Gospel of God.

It gives to us a systematic presentation of two major doctrines — sin and salvation. The first eight chapters constitute a unit in themselves. three logical divisions—Condemnation for sin (1.18—3.20): Justification by Faith (3.21—5.21): Sanctification of Life (6.1—8.39). It is in the third division we meet the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit.

The word for Spirit is PNEUMA; sometimes it refers to the new nature of which God is the Creator (2 Cor. 5.17), as in ch. 8.9. In 8.16 it is the Holy Spirit who is spoken of as the One who is the Giver of the new nature and witnesses with and through it. (See also 8.23,26,27).

The Spirit and Christ (1.3,4,8,9-11). The early verses describe the Person of the Gospel in His Incarnation, Deity, Sinlessness, Death and Resurrection. The Son who is co-eternal and co-equal with the Father, is the One Who became Jesus to save His people, was designated Christ for that purpose, is now Lord in His sovereign authority. He was designated and decisively demonstrated Son of God by the splendour of Resurrection. "According to the flesh"—Incarnation and Humiliation. "According to the Spirit"—Resurrection and Exaltation. Paul declares both positively and negatively, that all who are Christ's are indwelt by the "Spirit of Christ" who is also described as the "Spirit of God" (8.9-11).

The Spirit and Salvation (5.5) One of the results of Justification is the gift of the Holy Spirit. This is the first mention of the Holy Spirit in connection with the work of God in the believer, in this Epistle. The abundance of God's provision is indicated by the words "poured out." Here is one of the gifts that the Great Giver the Holy Spirit gives

(Gal. 5.22). He brings to us all the benefits of the death of Christ (v.8). All our hopes rest upon the Assurance of the love of God.

The Spirit and Sanctification (ch. 8) "Newness of Spirit" (7.6) is spiritual service of which the Holy Spirit is the author. It is inward for it proceeds from a renewed heart. **Liberation** (8.2). The law of the Spirit is the way of deliverance from the prison-house of sin. We have passed from the state of law into the state of grace by our union with Christ. This new law operates in the renewed spirit producing experimental righteousness. The overmastering rule of the Spirit of life transforms us. We have new moral dynamic (v.4). **Reorientation** of mental life (v.5). Things "fleshly," material, sensual and sinful end in death (v.6a). The flesh is hostile to God and cannot please God. The "things of the Spirit" which He teaches and imparts cultivates daily behaviour well pleasing to God. The life is pure and refreshed and peace is enjoyed (v.6b). The secret of spiritual life is to draw constantly upon the life available for us in Christ and be occupied with spiritual things. **Motivation** (v.9,10). We cannot be in the Spirit unless the Spirit is in us. Paul declares positively and negatively that all who are Christ's are indwelt by the Spirit. This vital union with Christ arises from the indwelling Spirit. Because of the righteousness found through faith, the believer's spirit knows life, the Spirit makes him live (v. 10).

Resurrection (v. 11). This is one of the best passages in the N.T. involving the doctrine of the Trinity. Our spiritual resurrection is the guarantee of our participation in the resurrection of the body. The name "Jesus" refers to His human nature, but "Christ Jesus" (RV.) is the Messiah in His representative capacity. His resurrection must repeat itself in that of others.

Obligation (v.12-14). Destinations govern obligations. We are duty bound to live for Christ. We yield to the government of the Spirit in our lives. Matthew Henry says, "We cannot do it without the Spirit working it in us, and the Spirit will not do it without us doing our endeavour."

We need to walk in the practical and experimental power of the Spirit as life. The guidance of the Spirit is the proof that we are the sons of God (v.14).

Recognition and Confirmation (v.15-17). The Holy Spirit coming into our hearts should banish the spirit of slavery so we need not fear. We should enter into the full blessedness of our filial relationship with God. We recognise our status and cry "Abba Father." We have both relationship as children, and family likeness as sons. "Adoption" is an act of transfer from an alien family into the family of God himself. Haldane says, "Adoption confers the NAME of sons, and a TITLE to the inheritance; Regeneration confers the NATURE of sons, and a MEETNESS for the inheritance." (John 1.12,13).

The Spirit delivers from the past and sustains in the present, also nourishes hope and expectation of immortality and glory.

Inspiration and Intercession (v.26,27). We are inspired to pray by the Paraclete called alongside to help us in our weakness. He joins His help to our weakness. He will pray for us, and will quicken our minds and hearts. We who walk after the Spirit are led by the Spirit. He enables us to mortify the deeds of the body, and to pray according to the will of God.

The Spirit and Service. Under the Spirit's direction Paul expresses his true patronism and deep concern for his own people. (ch. 9-11). He calls God to witness the genuineness of what he says (9.1). His good conscience was the result of the Holy Spirit's operation. The Holy Spirit is the power of evangelism. Note the results in Acts 2.v.37-42. The depth of grief and intensity of sorrow reveal Paul's passion for souls (9.1-3). Fervent in spirit describes the manner in which the Lord is to be served (12.11). In our communal life the Spirit produces love for "righteousness, peace and joy" (14.17-18). These are the subjective experience of the objective salvation expounded in the earlier chapters (3-8).

The benediction (15.13,14), reveals God as the Giver and Object of all true hope, bringing joy and power through the agency of the Spirit for maintaining peace in the Church.

Power for missionary labours comes from the Spirit, and all Gentile believers are sanctified by the Holy Spirit who has come to dwell within them (15.16).

Paul fulfilled his apostolic commission by the assistance of the Spirit of God. This proves he was a divinely appoint-

ed minister of Christ (15.19). We should be very careful to glory not in what we do for the Lord, as in what He does through us. Paul beseeches the believers at Rome to wrestle together in prayer for him. The Spirit's power should promote interest in prayer for all evangelical work (15.31).

'I WILL COME AGAIN'

by **DAVID McBRIDE, Banbridge**

In the hurly burly bustle of life it is difficult to get time to stop and take a look over our lives, thinking of the past. However on occasions we do reflect on happy moments, memories of loved ones, friends and neighbours who have now slipped out of this scene; victims of the last enemy yet to be destroyed—death (1 Cor. 15.26). This little magazine that we are reading bears the title 'Assembly Testimony.' This also strikes a chord in one's heart as we think of beloved brethren and sisters whose seats are empty in the assembly and they are greatly missed.

Pondering such things can leave us feeling sad and depressed but what joy and consolation there is to be found in turning to the Holy Scriptures. The little nugget we have drawn from its holy pages in John 14.3 speaks of that great event, soon to take place, the coming of the Lord Jesus to the air for His saints.

His first coming was in lowly guise, born of the virgin, wrapped in swaddling bands, laid in a manger, despised and rejected until at last crucified and slain, buried in the new tomb, raised again the third day and ascended to the right hand of the Majesty on High. All of that is past and we stand looking for the next great event. The words of the hymn are true.

'We are waiting for Jesus—His promise is plain
His word sure and steadfast, He's coming again.'

It may be that the reader in common with the writer has passed through sorrowing moments, or just now as you read these words the valley is your present experience—dear child of God what a blessed promise is ours—

'I will come again'

We surely echo 'Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.'

CHRIST IN THE APOCALYPSE (10)

by JOHN B. D. PAGE

THE ANGEL — PRIEST

Reading : Revelation 8.1-5.

John observed "there was silence in heaven for the space of about half an hour," just prior to which an angel stood at the altar where his golden censer was filled with incense, and he was given fire from the altar to ignite the incense. Then the angel went and stood beside the golden altar for the half hour of quietude as the smoke from the burning incense ascended before God. At the end of this time of solitude, the angel returned to the altar where he filled his censer with fire, which he cast upon the earth.

Obviously the scene is still in the celestial temple, and the seer is absorbed with the things of heaven, even as we should set our mind on things above and not on things here below (Col. 3.2, mgn.).

The opening statement, "there was silence in heaven for the space of about half an hour," has perplexed many readers of this paragraph whilst some commentators have left them in a state of mental confusion. Giving the prophetic significance of this apparently peculiar statement Dr. F. A. Tatford says "it relates to a calm preceding the storm of judgment which is yet to break upon the world during the period subsequent to the removal of the Church." Continuing, he says, "The awful silence endured for half an hour. Many attempts have been made to explain the length of this period, but none is satisfactory . . ." The primary purpose of our study is not prophetic but Christological, bringing out the background of John's thinking, which oriental readers would have understood without explanation. For understanding John's statement, which sounds strange to occidentals, we need to turn to the ritualism of the evening sacrifice, the events of which we have already outlined briefly in a previous article, but we shall now look at a part of the service more closely.

Between the slaying of the lamb by a priest early in the service and another priest placing it upon the altar where it was to be consumed by fire almost at the end of the ceremony, a different priest, who had already been chosen by the casting of lots like the other two, left the priests' court with its altar of burnt offering and entered the holy place of the temple. Clothed in white linen and carrying a silver censer of fire from the altar, this priest passed between the table of shewbread on the north side and the golden lampstand on the south until he came to the golden altar before the veil dividing the holy place from the holy of holies. Standing at the side of the golden altar, the priest took fire from his censer and placed it upon the golden altar, adding incense to it. Fragrant odours from the burning incense ascended heavenwards (cp.5.8). During this "time of incense" as it was known (Luke 1.10), lasting for "the space of half an hour," this solitary priest remained in the solitude of the holy place and the whole multitude of people, gathered outside in the courts of the temple, were bowed with outstretched hands towards heaven in silent prayer. Incidentally, Zecharias was the selected priest to officiate upon an occasion such as this, when an angel appeared and broke the silence by speaking to him (Luke 1.1-11).

The deep silence for half an hour that pervaded the temple and its courts during the evening sacrifice had its counterpart in the heavenly temple, for John observed "there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour." Also, the seer saw that "another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer" (8.3). Standing beside the altar and holding a golden censer, this angel assumed a priestly roll and so he is clearly differentiated from "the seven angels which stood before God," whom John had just seen (8.2). For the identity of this eighth angel, opinions differ.

G. H. Lang says "The idea that this angel is Christ seems unwarranted." In support of this statement he argues that John sees the angel in a position of standing at the altar whereas Christ as our "High Priest . . . (is) sat down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens" (Heb. 8.1, RV). Surely, such an argument ignores the dispensational aspect of these two scriptures, for the latter scripture, with its tabernacle setting, sets forth Christ seated

during this age of grace, exercising His priestly ministry on the basis of His finished atoning work (Heb. 10.12 & 8.6). In contrast, the former scripture (Rev. 8) has the setting of the temple and the age of law which will be resumed for the seven years of tribulation when Christ, the Angel-Priest, will stand at the altar as all priests did under the law previously (Heb. 10.11). It should be remembered that the Lord's relationship with the Church is different from that with Israel, and His dealings with the Church differ from those with Israel.

In *Revelation*, A. C. Gaebelain says, "This angel is not a creature but, like *the* angel of Jehovah in the Old Testament, he is our Lord Himself." Elsewhere, Christ is said to be "the Head of all principality and power" (Col. 2.10, cp. 1.10), a phrase which means that democratic equality is unknown amongst angels, and Christ, as their Head, has the pre-eminence over all hierarchies of both unfallen and fallen angels. It was in this guise of an angel, assuming a priestly character, that Christ appeared in the heavenly temple.

Wm. Kelly says, "Still there is nothing, as it seems to me, to contradict the idea that the Lord Jesus may be and is intended in chapter 8 as the officiating angel at the altar; indeed He is the Head of everything, the head of *all* principality and power. Why, then, might He not be viewed here in exalted, angelic glory? The personage spoken of acts as the angel-priest." (*Lectures on The Revelation*).

For carrying incense into the temple, a priest had a silver censer, but this Angel-Priest had "a golden censer" like that reserved for use by the high priest when he entered within the veil into the holy of holies on the day of atonement, to which there is a reference in Hebrews 9.4. This Angel-Priest's golden censer not only distinguished Him from other angels and priests, but it indicated clearly that He is the High Priest in the heavenly temple.

Initially, in the tabernacle, the high priest was responsible for the burning of incense besides other ritualistic duties of the evening sacrifice (Ex. 30.8), although later it became customary for a priest, selected by the casting of lots, to assume the responsibility (II Chron. 26.18, Luke 1.9). In the heavenly temple, neither custom nor selection by the casting

of lots prevailed, but the divine pattern for the High Priest, even Christ, to officiate was pursued.

Preparing for entry into the sanctuary, the Angel-Priest "stood at the altar" with His "golden censer," which was filled with fire from the altar, and then "there was given unto Him much incense that He should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne" (8.3). The implication is that the Angel-Priest was now ready to enter the heavenly temple for the half hour of silence and, standing beside the golden altar (which is clearly differentiated from the other altar mentioned earlier in the verse), He would burn incense upon it as all the saints in the outer courts of the heavenly temple prayed silently.

The golden altar is said to be "before the throne" whereas it was before the veil in the earthly temple (cp. Ex. 40.26). With the door open behind the rent veil in the heavenly temple (cp. 4.1), which was unknown in its earthly counterpart, John saw the golden altar before the mercy seat, the throne of God.

By implication in the 4th verse, the Angel-Priest is beside the golden altar in the celestial sanctuary, because John reports, "And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand." In years past, John had been among the worshippers in the temple courts as they said inaudibly their prayers to God for the half hour of silence during the evening sacrifice, but he, not of priestly descent, had not officiated at the golden altar for the time of incense. However, he was fully acquainted with what took place in the earthly temple, and he now saw in this vision the reality of it in the true temple, even heaven itself.

The half hour of silence during the evening sacrifice when the priest was inside the temple burning incense upon the golden altar and the worshippers were assembled outside for prayer has prophetic significance in relation to Christ and Israel after the rapture of the Church according to these verses in this eighth chapter. During those agonizing seven years of tribulation upon the earth, there will be a remnant of godly Jews in the outer court of this suffering world praying and pleading with God on high (cp. 6.10) and their prayers will mingle with the smoke from the burning

incense of their High Priest standing at the golden altar in the heavenly temple. The four sweet spices for making incense (Ex. 30.34) are figurative of the moral perfections of Christ as High Priest and, referring to "the smoke of the incense which came with the prayers of the saints," Dr. F. A. Tatford says, "To the prayers of the suffering saints of God, Christ added the incense of His own worth."

In application to the present day of grace, these verses illustrate that believers have access to the throne of God. Their prayers to the Father are offered through the Son as their High Priest, Who intercedes for them, and, through His perfection, the prayers are accepted by God.

Finally, "the Angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar and cast it into the earth" (8.5). This means that, with the half hour of silence in heaven for the burning of incense and prayer ended, the Angel-Priest left the golden altar and went to the altar where He filled His now-empty censer with fresh fire, which He cast upon the earth. Of course, there was no equivalent in the ritualism of the evening sacrifice. The fire from the altar becomes an instrument of judgment immediately, and so the imprecatory prayers of the tribulation saints for vengeance upon their enemies will be answered without delay.

With these two altars brought before us in this paragraph, it may be opportune to recall that it was at the *golden altar* where the two sons of Aaron the high priest, Nadab and Abihu, sinned, which resulted in their immediate death and was followed by an imposition upon Aaron of a restricted entry within the veil into the holy of holies (Lev. 10.1f & 16.1f). Later, in the history of the Aaronic priesthood, it was at the *brazen altar* where the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, priests of the Lord, sinned which led to their untimely death (1 Sam. 2.29-33 & 4.11), and the declension of the priesthood followed. In contrast to these Levitical priests, who failed miserably, John beheld Christ in the guise of an Angel, officiating faultlessly as High Priest at both the brazen altar and the golden altar in the heavenly temple. For us, as believer-priests when we draw near to the Lord, there is a warning from those four sinful priests to be heeded and an example from our great High Priest to emulate concerning our conduct in worship.

STUDIES IN JOHN'S GOSPEL

(Christ, the Interpreter of the Father)

by WM. HOSTE

3—IN A SCENE OF HUMAN JOY

There are striking parallels between the first chapter of Ezekiel's prophecy and the first chapter of John's Gospel. In both, a prophet-priest, outside the land, receives visions of God from an opened heaven, revealing the glory of the Lord, and both end with a Man upon the throne. This naturally leads on to a marriage feast. At Bethabara the Lord Jesus is seen as "the Lamb of God," interpreting the thoughts of the Father to repentant ones, who had confessed their sins in baptism. At Cana, He appears in quite another character, interpreting the Father to His disciples as the Bountiful Creator, who "knows what things we have need of before we ask Him," and "giveth us all things richly to enjoy," "filling our hearts with food and gladness." It is really Psalm 103 followed by Psalm 104. Many would judge the former to be at a higher level than the latter, but the praise of the latter really reaches the higher note. It is not only for what God has done, but for what He is. "Thou art very great." "He" of Psalm 103 becomes "Thou" of Psalm 104. "The Lord" becomes "O Lord, *my* God." There is the joy of forgiveness in Psalm 103. But in Psalm 104 there is the joy of communion, the "wine that maketh glad the heart of man" (v. 15). It is this which we have at Cana. It is noteworthy, that the first scene into which the Lord introduced His small nucleus of disciples was a scene of human joy, a marriage feast, thus setting His seal to the institution of Eden, and stamping with His approval the innocent joys even of a fallen earth. It seems a mistake to assert, as some do, that "the first man is gone," for marriage, like eating and drinking, moderate labour, and sleep, belongs to the estate of the first man who is "of the earth earthy," or, in other words, is "made of earth to dwell on the earth." It is the "old man," not the first man, which is gone for the believer, for that was crucified with Christ. Earthly relationships are not annulled for those who are in Christ, they take on a new and deeper character. Marriage is honourable for all, and "the unbelieving husband is

sanctified by the wife;" that is, set apart to her by the divine ordinance of matrimony, and the children are "set apart, though in no higher sense, as the fruit of it (1 Cor. 7.14). It is a pathetic fact that however much and often marriage has by human sin proved a failure, a wedding is more than anything else in this sad world an occasion of joy and gladness. If people are not cheerful on their wedding day, when are they likely to be? By the blessing of God, marriage "in the Lord" proves to many a source of happiness and blessing. God thus "sets the solitary in families," and provides mutual comfort and support for His creatures.

We may take the marriage of Cana as symbolical of kingdom joys in a future day, when "again shall be heard in this place (the land of Israel) the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voice of them that shall say, "Praise the Lord of Hosts, for the Lord is good; for His mercy endureth for ever" (Jer. 33.11). The disciples had "much tribulation" to pass through, before they could enter the Kingdom of God, but on that day at Cana, this was bridged over, and they had a foretaste at the start of their long journey, of the great marriage feast yet to come. Thus "He manifested forth His glory, and His disciples believed in Him"—their budding faith broke into blossom. Here then we see our Lord Jesus interpreting the Father's heart in a scene of human gladness, as the friendly Man among men, the kindly neighbour, rejoicing with them that rejoice—not an ascetic like John the Baptist, the Levitical Nazarite, to whom all wine was denied and a life enjoined contrary to nature—mourning to men who would not weep—the frivolous world around; but a true Nazarite of the dispensation of grace, type nearest to the heart of God, partaking of the blessings of this life, when they might offer themselves, piping to men who would not dance—the religious world, who mistake asceticism for devotion to God, because their system is founded on human ordinances. This would be proper to a worldly cult, "touch not, taste not, handle not, which all are to perish with the using, after the commandments and doctrines of men, which things have indeed a

*"Holy," as applied to children, is from the same root as "sanctified" of the unbelieving parent, and entails no change of character.

shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body but (where we follow the R.V.) are not of any value against the indulgence of the flesh" (Col. 2.23).

To judge from the map, Cana occupied the very site of Gath-Hepher, the city of Jonah the prophet—a fact so strangely ignored by the Pharisees, when they asserted "out of Galilee ariseth no prophet." But a greater than Jonah was present that day. He came with His disciples as the invited Guest. It was His wont to accept invitations; indeed, we never hear of His refusing one, whether to the houses of His own people, as Matthew, or Martha, or Simon the leper, or to those of the religious world, like Simon the Pharisee. But wherever He went it was as the Faithful Witness. It may be questioned whether Christians do not sometimes fail through indolence or fear of man, to avail themselves of invitations to the tables of the unconverted, even where they can go without the sacrifice of principle, or to participate in the foolish or sinful pleasures of the world. The question in such cases is not so much where, but how we go. Do I sit merely in fellowship with men, as one of themselves, or as a servant of Christ and a witness for God? "If any of them that believe not, bid you to a feast (some would say at once, under plea of separation, don't go), but the apostle adds, "and ye be disposed to go leaving the decision to the conscience of each), whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake," but, as the context shows, when principle is involved, standing firm for God.

Thus the Lord interpreted the Father by His condescending and loving interest in the joys of the home and of human friendship, not as on a pedestal of Pharisaic superiority, "Stand by thyself, for I am holier than thou," but as the meek and lowly One, never more morally separated from publicans and sinners, than when receiving them and eating with them.

But the Lord was more than the invited Guest. He became the bountiful Host, dispensing abundant provision to the needy, and that not at the suggestion of Mary — for human relationships, as was proved again in John 7.6, never might interfere with His service for the Father—but in the Father's own time. Mary, though wrong as to time, was right as to fact. Like the little maid in Naaman's house,

who, though she had never heard of a leper being cleansed, knew that the prophet of God could and would heal her master, so Mary, though she had never seen one miracle wrought in all the long years at Nazareth, knew He was the one to appeal to, and could and would supply the need. She was not discouraged by the seeming failure of her request; she knew His hour would come, and so gave her memorable advice to the servants—so timely for all of us—“Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it.” And when His hour did come, He knew what to do and how to do it. He stored His wine, not in wine jars, but in strange receptacles, in water pots, each holding about twenty-one gallons, set for ceremonial cleansing, so needful in a scene of defilement, under an earthly system of religion. But the water pots were empty, fit symbol of the emptiness of the forms they represented. But our Lord had them filled to the brim with water, to turn it into His wine. Thus He displayed the omnipotence of the Creator. The God of nature, the Lord of the vintage, laid aside the leisurely processes, so familiar to us, and performed in a moment what He usually did in months. Exactly when the water became wine, we are not told; it became so for practical use, when the servants obeyed the command, “Draw out now!” The wine is there if we will but draw it out and serve to the thirsty around. The secret of the Lord was with the servants. They knew, for they feared and obeyed. The governor of the feast tasted and wondered, but did he ever learn whence the good wine flowed? In any case, the Lord interpreted the loving-kindness of the Father for those who had eyes to see. To such He would say, “Your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.” The act was symbolical. How many are taught to say, “Thy love is better than wine”—“we will remember thy love more than wine, the upright love thee,” How often the waters of affliction are turned into the wine of joy! As Samuel Rutherford wrote, “When I get into the cellar of affliction, I search round for some of the Lord’s wine.” Joy is the second of the ninefold fruit of the Spirit from Him who is the Fountain of it, but lack of love here, often turns the good wine sour, and so spoils that which makes glad the heart of God and man. But surely the testimony of the redeemed of the Lord in heaven will be, “Thou hast kept the good wine until now.”

THE PLACE THAT IS CALLED CALVARY

by JOHN A. BRETT, Swindon

If there is one place on earth that is precious to the believer, it is 'the place that is called Calvary.' Although only mentioned by this name in Luke's gospel, it brings many wonderful thoughts to our minds, and we do well to meditate upon them. Let us just think of five of these sweet thoughts; revelations seen at Calvary.

'The fulness of God's Provision.'

It was Abraham, in Genesis 22.8, many years before Christ, that made the prophetic statement, that 'God will provide Himself a lamb.' John the baptist, pointed out Jesus as 'the lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.' The fulness of the provision is seen in the many repetitions of the word 'whosoever' in the gospels, for example, John 3.15, 'whosoever believeth in him should not perish.' It was full to the extent of the salvation of the world, and the reconciliation of all things.

'The fulfilment of God's Plan'

It is important for us to remember that Calvary was no surprise to God. The Lord Jesus on the Emmaus Road, revealed to His two travelling companions that 'from Moses and all the prophets,' the plan of God concerning the suffering and death of His Son, was clearly set out. Furthermore, we can see from Revelation 13.8, that God's plan did not start with Moses, for the verse tells us of, 'the lamb, slain from the foundation of the world.' Indeed God's plan relative to our salvation commenced before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1.4). At the age of twelve, our Lord made known to His earthly parents, the fact that His purpose was to be about His Father's business. It is the beloved apostle John that points out that 'Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished,' brought the plan of Redemption to its fulfilment with the cry 'It is finished' and then 'gave up the Ghost.'

'The finality of God's Punishment'

It is the Hebrew epistle that tells us that 'we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all' (Ch. 10.10). Just two verses further on we learn

that 'this man . . . offered one sacrifice for sins for ever,' and the chapter goes on to say that 'their sins and iniquities will I remember no more' (v. 17). The cry of our Lord Jesus, 'It is finished,' was not only a cry of termination, but also of completion. In John 17.4, the Lord tells His Father, 'I have finished the work that Thou gavest Me to do.' The Greek word for 'it is finished,' is TETELESTAI. This word used to be fastened to the door of the prison cell, when the prisoners debt had been paid in full. So we can see that at Calvary, our debt was finally and completely paid.

'The Fragrance of God's appointed Person'

Furthermore at Calvary, we see something of the fragrance of God's Son. As they nailed those precious hands to the cross, from the lips of our blessed Lord came the cry, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' Though in agony, when a dying malefactor asks the Lord to remember him, the Saviour assures him that 'today thou shalt be with Me in paradise.' With the darkness and the forsaking of His God imminent, our Lord from a heart overflowing with love, still thinks of Mary, and commends her into the hands of the 'disciple whom He loved.' As the Levitical sacrifices sent a sweet savour to God, so as a 'sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God,' the offering of our Lord Jesus is fragrant, and we can, in a measure, enjoy its fragrance.

'The Fruit of God's Planting.'

The Lord Jesus in His death, fulfils His own statement of John 12.24, and as a 'corn of wheat falls into the ground and dies.' The verse then states that 'if it die it bringeth forth much fruit.' So as a result of our Lord's death, we find that from the one 'corn of wheat,' there is an innumerable number of saints, themselves bearing fruit. May we, as we further consider Calvary, seek so to live as to glorify our Lord Jesus, and to bear fruit for Him.

We wish to thank all who responded to our appeal for back numbers of the magazine. Many copies were received anonymously and we desire to express our appreciation. Our failing stocks are now adequately filled.

TAKING POSSESSION

by EDWARD ROBINSON, Exmouth

Paul's Letters to the Ephesians and to the Philippians were written from prison about A.D. 61. They have much in common; both 'over Jordan' in character (i.e. taking us into heavenly places as having passed through wilderness circumstances, reaching 'the land'). The former deals with weighty and eternal matters which lie ahead of the saints; the latter (Philippians) emphasising that by the Spirit, we may already enjoy and lay hold of that which in its fulness awaits the day of eternity. Both are addressed to 'the saints in Christ Jesus.' It is the same expression which the apostle employs in the opening of chapter 8 of Romans, so well known and loved, 'No condemnation to those who are **in Christ Jesus.**' It is a title which views Christ as the Man in the glory: 'Jesus Christ' rather signifying from the divine view point, what is more foundational, 'other foundation can no man lay than that is laid which is **'Jesus Christ'**—another order of man giving character to a new generation.

But in the third chapter of his Epistle to the saints in Philippi, he writes of gains and losses with a true spiritual evaluation (v.7-21). What things were (aforetime) gain, those he counted loss for Christ. He was a realist and knew the value of wisdom in the Proverbs (23), 'buy the truth and sell it not.' It had cost Paul much and was valued accordingly. Truth is not easily acquired, nor costless; if appearing so it has not true value. The apostle continues (v.8), I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things and do count them but dung that I may **win Christ.**' Win Christ! What an obsession, yet to Paul normal Christianity. Alas, in the light of Paul's teaching, with many of us our Christianity is **abnormal.**

The apostle writes movingly, touching our affection for Christ, though not sentimentally, for his words are carefully weighed. They are calculated and pose a challenge, not to be by-passed but requiring a positive answer, with no neutrality. He is inviting us to come off the touch-line and (to mix metaphors) to plunge in at the deep end. He continues in this remarkable chapter (v. 10), 'that I may know Him and the **power** of His resurrection.' We may well

say, of course, Paul knew Christ, but even a Paul could continue and continue to seek to know Him of Whom the full knowledge is confined only to the Father. He well understood that Christianity begins with resurrection, a truth to be held not only in the mind as sound doctrine (which it is) but connected with it is transforming power which can effect the whole course of our Christian history. How sad if truth should become a mere catechism of repetition, a recital of Scripture with little impact on soul and spirit.

If, as it does, the cross divides the whole history of God's dispensations, perhaps negatively in the removal of the dross, so resurrection brings in an eternal basis positively. This is the power that Paul pursues so energetically. In this enthralling pursuit he has no rival but we may join him. It is in this sphere that all truth is rightly centred. In his zeal, Paul is desirous of sharing in the sufferings of Christ, 'the fellowship' of them, resulting in his being made 'conformable unto His death.' The exercises of the apostle have always a specific object—so often our own are vague, lacking in purpose. He continues (v. 11), 'If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.' The eye and aim of Paul keep in view the aspect of eternal life, not existence but an endless enjoyment of the quality of living.

Paul continues in the process of obtaining 'the prize' (v. 12-14, J.N.D.), not already perfected, pursuing in order to get possession of it (apprehend, A.V.). He then makes the remarkable statement, 'seeing that also I have been taken possession of by Christ Jesus.' Is he alone in this? Surely not. The same Spirit would stimulate us to take similar ground (as divine property, not our own), in order to take possession of this inestimable prize. There is no easy way or short cut, but deep exercise of soul to lay hold. He continues (v. 13,14), 'one thing—forgetting the things behind and stretching out to the things before, I pursue, looking towards the goal, for the prize of the calling on high of God in Christ Jesus.' He exhorts those who are perfect (mature, full grown) to be thus minded, with the promise that God would reveal this to such. He then, without boasting, asks that we be imitators of himself, our eyes on those so walking as a model. The chapter is worthy of much consideration, the reward is great, with eternal gain.

THE BURDEN AND THE BLESSING

by J. G. GOOD

Regarding Habakkuk, very little is known about the personal background of the prophet, who probably functioned during the reign of Jehoiakim. If this is the case, 2 Chronicles Ch. 36 provides the details as to the prevailing conditions under which Habakkuk ministered.

Firstly there was a disrespect for the sanctity of God's house, and secondly a despising of the servants of God. Two cardinal sins were committed, worship degenerated to idolatry, and the word of God was dis-owned (2 Chron. 36. 14-16).

Habakkuk means 'embracive,' he embraced the 'whole counsel of God. We shall see that the attributes of God which seem to be in opposition are seen to be working together for the blessing of His people. Like so many old Testament prophets, his personal faith shines out against the dark clouds of declension and departure. He was a man with a 'burden' concerned about the condition of things around him. Again, he was marked by a personal exercise, perplexity, prayer and praise. Ch. 1, verses 1-4, the prophet is concerned at the apparent lack of Divine intervention to stem the seeming success of the wicked in their persecution of the righteous, verse 4, 'the wicked doth compass about the righteous,' from verses 5-11 God speaks in answer to the questions of the prophet, from verses 12-17 Habakkuk replies.

The answers of Habakkuk are indicative of his healthy spiritual condition. Thus we see in verse 6, 'I will **raise up** the Chaldeans,' verse 12 'Art Thou not from **everlasting**, verse 7, 'Their judgement and dignity shall **proceed from** themselves,' verse 12, 'Thou hast **ordained** them for judgement,' and verse 11, 'Imputing this his power unto **his god**,' verse 12, '**O mighty God** Thou hast established them for correction.'

The place for the faithful is on the watchtower or fenced plot, Ch. 2.1, this is the expression of the desire to exercise faith in the will and ways of God. It is only in the place of seclusion and separation that we see the 'vision.'

As we enjoy the presence of God in His holy temple, Ch. 2.20, we are initiated into the mind and will of God

relating to His plans and purposes, we learn the meaning of Shigionoth-variable tunes, which appear to be in discord. It is difficult to reconcile the Grace of God with the Government of God, only in His presence can the Conductor produce harmony to the blessing of those with a burden about these things. What a lesson to learn that the seeming hard to understand experiences, are all in the hands of the mighty God described for us in Ch. 3.16, verse 16 reminding us that self must be humbled if ever we are to have an experience with God.

We reach the high-water mark of Habakkuk's experience in Ch. 3.17-19.

Fig tree - Identity. The nation of Israel no longer recognised as the people of God, but lost among the nations of the earth.

Vine-Sanctity. Set apart by God as a peculiar people to bear fruit alas reverting to the wild vine bearing no fruit. Psalm 80.8.

Olive-Testimony. Again the chosen nation destined to be for the honour and glory of God, a by-word among the heathen.

Field-Poverty. The land flowing with milk and honey was but a memory.

Flock-Safety. Carried away into Babylon, scattered, an easy prey for the predator.

Herd-Continuity. No line of succession was being maintained. In such a state of utter and abject poverty the prophets personal faith shines.

My salvation-Appropriation.

My strength-Continuation.

My Feet-Preservation.

Mine High Places-Elevation.

My Stringed Instrument-Appreciation.

The Chief Singer, presumes the presence of others, personal enjoyment of the things of God, determine the spiritual tone of the gatherings of His people. This appreciation we take with us, it is the result of personal exercise in the presence of God. The Chief Singer when given His rightful place, takes the variable-tunes the praises of His people and presents this worship in the worth of His own person to the Father (Heb. 2.12).

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

BETWEEN CORINTH AND PAUL'S THIRD JOURNEY

by **JOHN HEADING, Aberystwyth**

All parts of Paul's missionary journeys are full of meaning, even those parts that may appear to be "in between" in character. The reasons for the Lord's ways in guidance cannot always be explained. Thus at the beginning of the second journey, Paul was forbidden by the Spirit to preach the word in Ephesus (Acts 16.6), while at the end he visited Ephesus for a few weeks (18.19). From a natural point of view, he took a ship to journey from Corinth to Ephesus (about 230 miles), and another ship to journey from Ephesus to Caesarea (about 600 miles) en route to Jerusalem.

Paul had been in Corinth for one and a half years plus "a good while" (18.18). His policy was to move on when a work for the Lord had been established. In this case, he journeyed with Priscilla and Aquila — he had stayed with them in Corinth (18.2), and they remained his friends in the Lord until the end of his life (2 Tim. 4.19).

This was no doubt Paul's first visit to Ephesus. Today, visitors may see the site of its ruins, but then there were hundreds of thousands of people living there. Its centre contained a theatre, baths, libraries, streets of marble, with the road to the harbour seventy feet wide and lined with columns. The "temple of Diana" was one of the wonders of the world, containing an image of its goddess thought to have been a fallen meteorite. Although Paul could see the error behind such idolatry and luxury, yet he did not at first dispute with the Gentiles who practised idolatry; rather he went into the synagogue.

The word "himself" in verse 19 implies that only Paul went into the synagogue to engage in such public service—not Priscilla and Aquila. This is because every believer has his own gift granted by the Lord. Thus here Paul exercised the gift of an evangelist (Eph. 4.11), whereas Priscilla

and Aquila had other gifts, so would not engage in work for which they were not equipped by the Lord. What gift do we exercise? Do we seek to engage in work for which we are not equipped? So as in every place, Paul reasoned with the Jews. He used the Old Testament to explain the prophecies concerning Christ, His sufferings and glory. "This Jesus . . . is Christ" (Acts 17.3), leading to forgiveness and justification. In other words, he used the Old Testament in a reasonable way to suit the background knowledge of his hearers. In previous places, antagonism quickly set in, but here this was not so. In Ephesus, three months were necessary later for antagonism to set in, when many were hardened (19.8-9), necessitating Paul's withdrawing from them. Like Pharaoh, they played with the manifestations of God, until the opportunity was withdrawn.

The Ephesian Jews wanted Paul to tarry for more teaching. (This is similar to John 4.40, where the Samaritans wanted the Lord to stay, though He only remained for two days: "Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also" (Mark 1.38).) But Paul had to go to Jerusalem; he would return "if God will." In other words, all plans must be subject to the divine will. This is a lesson for every believer, as James wrote, "To day or to morrow we will go into such a city . . . ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that" (James 4.13-15).

Thus Paul landed at Caesarea, where Cornelius and Philip lived. He would not be there again until six more years (Acts 21.8). In Jerusalem, he found that there was a great financial need, and he resolved to help them during his third missionary journey. He would gather a great collection from churches formed during his first two journeys (see 1 Cor. 16.1-4; 2 Cor. 8-9; Rom. 15.25-31). The apostle with others would then take this gift to Jerusalem in six years time.

Finally Paul journeyed to Antioch, "his base" that he had left some ten years previously. Later he commenced his third journey with the same initial object as he had for his second journey (Acts 15.36); "Let us go again and visit our brethren." So he visited Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples. Thus he came again to Asia, proving that his original plan had been according to God's will.

Meanwhile, what had been happening in Ephesus? (Acts 18.24-28). Aquila and Priscilla had been left alone; the only two believers in a city of idolatry. They were not public evangelists, so what could they do? They could not reason in the synagogue as Paul had done; they would not rush into work for which they were not gifted, so they would wait upon the Lord to show His choice of service for them. They were a married couple “in the Lord” (1 Cor. 7.39), and “heirs together of the grace of life” (1 Pet. 3.7). Altogether, they were in contact with Paul for about twelve years. They moved together through encouragement and afflictions, laying down their own necks for his life (Rom. 16.4). When they had been first expelled from Rome (Acts 18.1), we feel that they were believers already. They were with Paul in Corinth for over one and a half years, moving with him to Ephesus where they were together for three years. They must have returned to Rome after the persecution in Ephesus, though they had again returned to Ephesus when Paul wrote his final epistle to Timothy. There is a tradition that they were both beheaded. Their Christian lives form a lesson for us all; their married lives enhanced their opportunities for service, rather than diminished them. In particular, because the Lord was there, we may note what they received into their home:—

1. **Apostle received.** Originally, Paul had sought them out in Corinth (Acts 18.2), and stayed with them because of a common occupation as well as being one in the faith. All that Paul taught in Corinth, they also heard and learnt. Thus they would have heard the gospel that Paul preached (1 Cor. 15.1-4). They would have needed that, since when in Rome that had not heard all the truth. Thus they would have learnt that “Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.” They would have heard Paul teaching about the Lord’s supper: “I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you” (11.23). They would have learnt that preaching and faith come by the Spirit and not by the wisdom of men (2.5). Similarly we should receive every aspect of the apostolic teaching.

2. **Apollos received.** This man was eloquent and an expert in the Old Testament Scriptures. He taught diligently the things “of the Lord,” or rather “of Jesus” as other manuscripts give. But he was very restricted, for he taught only

“the baptism of John.” He knew nothing of the sacrifice and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. However, he was fervent in what he knew, and did not prove to be argumentative when further truth was presented to him. Now Priscilla and Aquila were personal workers in the home; hence they received Apollos and “expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly” (Acts 18.26). There was light in the home, and here we find the nature of the gift that the couple possessed—real personal workers.

3. Assembly received. Assemblies did not meet in halls in those days; homes of believers had to be used. Thus the assembly in Rome met in the home of Priscilla and Acquila (Rom. 16.5), and likewise in Ephesus (1 Cor. 16.19). Hence there had to be holy conduct in the home, suitable for the presence of the Lord and His people.

Apollos did not stay long in Ephesus. He went to Achaia (the province in which Corinth was situated). A letter was written from Ephesus commending him so that the Corinthians could receive him. In other words, they could trust his teaching, else there would have been danger; compare Acts 9.27 where Barnabas introduced Paul to Jerusalem, else there might have been dangers in admitting one feared and unknown. In other words, be careful whom you receive, for there are many deceivers; “receive him not” if he does not bring “this doctrine” (2 John 10).

In Corinth, Apollos engaged in two kinds of work. (i) He helped those who had believed through grace (Acts 18.27), and (ii) showed Christ from the Scriptures to the Jews who did not believe. So he was a man of many gifts. Yet what did he leave behind in Ephesus? There were twelve disciples of John the Baptist (Acts 19.1-7), evidently having been taught by Apollos before his instruction in the more perfect way. Paul had to correct this when he arrived in Ephesus. Secondly, in Corinth some men formed themselves into an Apollos-party (1 Cor. 1.12), completely contrary to any wish of Apollos. Paul had to correct this when he wrote his first epistle to them.

In other words, Christian service can be somewhat complicated and involved on occasions; we all have much to learn so as to remain faithful to the Lord. These events can speak to all of our hearts, encouraging us in a day of small things.

REVIEW

The Collected Writings of W. E. Vine

There have been very few brethren in this present century, whose writings have been such a help to the Lord's people as those of W. E. Vine. I have had both the privilege of listening to him minister the word, and also reading many of his writings in MSS form. He was a very simple speaker, easy to listen to, easy to understand. As a man he was as sweet as his name bringing joy and comfort to the saints. As a writer he excelled. His Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words should be possessed and used by every believer. His expository works have been published over the years and many of them have now been collected together and produced in four attractively bound volumes, making an excellent set for any bookcase. Every reader of "Assembly Testimony" should possess and carefully read these four volumes. The writings of W. E. Vine, outline very clearly the truths that are really believed in the assemblies of God's people.

Obtainable from—

Gospel Tract Publications, 48 York Street, Glasgow, G2 8UW.

COMMITTEE'S REPORT

To the thoughtful, the end of another year is a time for sober reflection, as well as a solemn reminder of the relentlessness of the passage of time.

The feelings of Moses with regard to the brevity of life are clearly seen in his prayer "We spend our years as a passing thought" "So teach us to number our days that we may acquire a wise heart" (Ps. 90: vv. 9, 12 JND). The pithy remark of a seventeenth century saint is worthy of remembrance as a principle by which a believer should walk, "That all the time which God allows him, is but enough for the work He allots him."

The product of spiritual reflection is so often, on the one hand, sorrow—as we realise how half-hearted and unfaithful we can be at times in matters pertaining to God. On the other hand, thankfulness—as we prove the goodness and faithfulness of One Who ever abideth faithful.

Such faithfulness was seen at the inception of "Assembly Testimony," when brethren commenced the work deeply exercised about the edification of God's people, with a magazine which was scriptural and spiritual in content. The same faithful God has by His grace enabled the magazine to continue with increasing circulation over the years.

However, increase in circulation is not the primary object but rather, as the title "Assembly Testimony" would indicate, that

the magazine would be a means of encouraging saints to sober living, faithfulness to God's Word and the maintaining of Godly testimony to the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, in dark days of departure.

As the work of the magazine demands time, energy and devotion, and more so on the part of some, thanks are expressed to the Editor, the Assistant Editor, the Secretary and his wife, our brother John Glenville and to our brother Robert Martin, who so kindly audits the accounts and advises in a most helpful and professional way.

We are mindful too of those who contribute with articles—these take time and diligent study. Those who help by their prayers, letters and practical fellowship—to all of these we express our sincere thanks, and remind all our hearts that such work is only "till He come."

HYMNS AND THEIR WRITERS (31), by Jack Strahan, Enniskillen

"TEN THOUSAND TIMES TEN THOUSAND"

HENRY ALFORD (1810—1871)

"Some men have their memorial in stone; others in the hearts of those who have known and loved them; still others live on in the institutions they have founded and shaped. But among the most fortunate of mortals are those who remain contemporary by the continuing influence of their literary works. Such a man is Henry Alford." This, an introductory to Henry Alford by Dr. Everett F. Harrison, immediately arouses our interest and increases our desire to know something further about this influential and interesting personality.

Henry Alford was born at 25 Alfred Place, Bedford Row, London on October 7th, 1810, the son of Henry Alford, an episcopal clergyman, the rector of Aston-Sandford. His mother died at his birth and as an only child, Henry received in early years all the attention and tender care that a devoted father could bestow. He was a precocious child. When only six years of age, he outlined and illustrated a small book, "The Travels of St. Paul." At the age of 10 he wrote, "Looking unto Jesus, or the Believer's Support under Trials and Afflictions." In his 11th year there followed, "A Collection of Hymns for Sundry Occasions." As a youth of 16, he entered in his bible, "I do this day, as in the presence of God, and my own soul, renew my covenant with God, and solemnly determine henceforth to become His and do His work so far as in me lies;" and throughout life Alford never deviated from that solemn intent.

Henry Alford at the age of 17 enrolled at Trinity College,

Cambridge and after an out-standing career there, graduated with honours in 1832; two years later he became a Fellow of the College. He entered the Church of England and following a two year period as curate in Ampton went on to become vicar at Wymeswold, Leicestershire and there he ministered for a period of 18 years. He next moved to Quebec Chapel in London where for four years he exercised a notable ministry, his Sunday afternoon meetings there oftentimes frequented by members of Parliament, notable lawyers and other eminent intellectuals. In 1857, he was appointed by Lord Palmerston as Dean of Canterbury and there he remained until his death on January 12th, 1871. He is buried near to Canterbury Cathedral in St. Martin's Churchyard and on his tomb is inscribed the expressive epitaph (in Latin)

"THE INN OF A PILGRIM JOURNEYING TO JERUSALEM"

Henry Alford was a man of tremendous ability, one of the most gifted men of his day—a painter, a mechanic, a musician, a poet, a preacher, a scholar and a critic. "He was" remarks one contributor, "a man who could do anything and do it well." But it is his literary works which abide. "His literary labours extend to every department of literature" declares James Davidson. He was an unwearying writer and published in all some 50 books, but by far his greatest work was his critical commentary on "The Greek Testament." This, the product of more than 20 years labour, appears in four volumes and bears ample testimony to his outstanding scholarship. Of it, A. P. Stanley says, "It remains confessedly the best that exists in English of the whole volume of the New Testament."

The life and testimony of Henry Alford was beautiful throughout by a delightful balance of love and truth. He loved all who loved His Lord. Besides he dearly loved the truth of God and declared it with firmness, yet in a meek and quiet spirit. Once in his university days after completing the reading of his New Testament he wrote in his journal, "Always estimate men in proportion as they estimate this Book." Some 30 years later he wrote again, "I am fully prepared, however unworthy, to cast in my lot among those who are digging in the soil of Scripture for the precious truth that lies beneath." The word of God was his daily bread and oftentimes at the end of a day's study he would close his books, stand up and give God thanks for spiritual food. He acknowledged God in all his ways and laboured unsparingly as one convinced that God had a work for him to do.

Henry Alford was a notable hymnwriter and besides composing original hymns translated others from their original languages. He compiled several collections of hymns, and in his "Year of Praise," appearing first in 1867, there were no fewer than 55 hymns of his own composition. Millar Patrick's judgement of Alford's hymns is that they are, "like glowing coals brought

from the altar of a soul whose whole joy was worship." Oftimes the product of a soaring spirit engaged with some heavenly theme, the expression is rich and majestic, firing the soul. The deep sorrow of bereavement that crossed his path in the year 1866 led to one of his finest hymns,

"Ten thousand times ten thousand,
In sparkling raiment bright,
The armies of the ransomed saints
Throng up the steeps of light;
'Tis finished, all is finished,
Their fight with death and sin;
Fling open wide the golden gates,
And let the victors in.

What rush of hallelujahs
Fills all the earth and sky!
What ringing of a thousand harps
Bespeaks the triumph night!
O day for which creation
And all its tribes were made!
O joy, for all its former woes
A thousand-fold repaid!

O then what raptured greetings
On Canaan's happy shore,
What knitting severed friendships up
Where partings are no more!
Then eyes with joy shall sparkle
That brimmed with tears of late;
Orphans no longer fatherless,
Nor widows desolate.

Bring near thy great salvation,
Thou Lamb for sinners slain;
Fill up the roll of Thine elect,
Then take Thy power and reign;
Appear, Desire of nations—
Thine exiles long for home;
Show in the heaven Thy promised sign;
Thou Prince and Saviour, come."

The return of the Lord Jesus our "Prince and Saviour" will be glorious! It is recorded of King Charles II that at the outbreak of the great plague of London that he fled in terror from the stricken city to Hampton Court and took his treasures with him. Though the pestilence raged within the city and many died, he showed no concern; he sent no contribution to the Relief Fund. When the ravages of the plague were past, the king turned again towards his London palace, heralds riding on before to announce his

coming. The people, however, on hearing the announcement retired within their homes, closed the doors and shutters and left the streets utterly deserted. As reports of such desolation filtered back to the approaching king, he was filled with shame and turned back again to Hampton Court. There he awaited the hours of darkness and then secretly crept back through the deserted streets to his London palace. In all his journey, there was not one soul to greet him. But it will not be so at the return of the Lord Jesus. Alford in his hymn anticipates that great event and catches something of the atmosphere of that glorious day. Then countless armies of redeemed will gather on Canaan's happy shore, then every exile be home at last and painful partings all forgotten in blessed reunion. Tear-dimmed eyes will sparkle once again and a rush of hallelujahs fill both earth and sky as the day of Calvary's ultimate triumph o'er every issue of the fall be ushered in. Towards that great consummation everything presently is marching on; all creation waits for it; every redeemed soul longs for it, and Henry Alford within his heart, felt that it could not come too soon.

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

SPIRITUAL CONFLICT

by E. Robinson

FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTALS

by J. B. Hewitt

JOTTINGS by W. W. Fereday

GOD IS OUR REFUGE

by F. Ferguson

STUDIES IN JOHN'S GOSPEL

by Wm. Hoste

IS SUNDAY SPECIAL?

by J. B. D. Page

DENOMINATIONALISM

by D. Coulson

OUTLINES by N. McDonald

HYMNS AND THEIR WRITERS

by J. Strahan

Tune : Hail, Thou once despised Jesus.
or I will sing the wondrous story.

'Tis our Lord Who was rejected
And then on the Cross did die.
Now to Heaven He hath ascended;
"Worthy is the Lamb." they cry.
He Who always 'pleased the Father'
Ever was 'the sinner's Friend,'
And as we now bow in worship
Offer praises without end.

He Who trod the wine-press lonely,
Sat so tired by Sychar's well,
Healed the lame and broken-hearted,
Of His Father's love did tell,
Worshipped now by saints adoring—
Loud their voices sound in praise.
Through the Work of His redemption
Mortal man a song can raise.

So, dear Lord, as now we're gathered
Only in Thy precious Name,
Worshipping in fond remembrance,
And Thy blessing here to claim.
All the saints will join in praising—
Heaven's arch resound the strain,
Singing with the countless numbers
"Worthy is the Lamb once slain."

—E. W. Bone, Southsea.

SPIRITUAL CONFLICT

by EDWARD ROBINSON, Exmouth

Paul writes to the Galatians (5.17), 'The flesh lusts against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh.' It is an inward conflict from which no believer is able to opt out, although some may have little awareness of such conflict. In such case there is little doubt that the flesh predominates. This absolute incompatibility is set out clearly by John (3.6), 'That which is born of the flesh is flesh: that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.' The flesh is incapable of improvement; it may be educated and refined but remains unchanged. It is of all importance to understand that to be born of the Spirit is **constitutional**, ensuring that victory over the flesh is entirely possible—that to be born anew is not only a doctrine but an assurance of such capability. At the end of chapter 17 of the book of Exodus the reality of the conflict is set out clearly, 'For the hand is on the throne of Jah; Jehovah will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.'

That Amalek is figurative of the man after the flesh is clear from the histories of king Saul and David, with that of Samuel. Saul himself is such a man, giving insight into that kind of man in his inability of discernment in the case of Agag, king of Amalek, (1 Sam. 15.13-22). He fails utterly to understand that God has judged finally that order of man, whether king or the most humble. Saul preserves Agag and the best of the flock with the object of using the latter as sacrifices to offer to God. How needful for us that only that which is of the Spirit be offered in worship to-day also. The best of the flock seems a laudable object, but quite contrary to the prophet's injunction: Saul hates David, representative of the man 'after the Spirit.' So subtle is the distinction that even the priestly prophet Samuel is deceived in choosing Saul in all his natural comeliness.

Let us revert to that very remarkable Chapter 17 of Exodus. The people are without water, complaining bitterly to and against Moses. But Moses has a very powerful weapon, a rod signifying the power of God. With it he had already smitten the river of Egypt (the world in figure). Now, using that same symbol of the authority of God, he is to smite the rock from which the water springs forth. As

often in Scripture, the water is figurative of the Holy Spirit, the rock is Christ which leads us to Isaiah 53.4. 'We did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted.' It is affecting to us to reflect that the sorrows of Christ were to the end that we should receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, with all that that entailed that is vital to Christianity. It is not without significance that in our chapter Joshua is now introduced. He is successor to Moses, able to lead into heavenly territory (the land). 'And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword' (17.13).

There is a picture of the conflict in the histories of Esau and Jacob, representative of flesh and Spirit respectively. Indeed, even before birth it is recorded (Gen. 25.22,23). 'And the children struggled together within her (Rebekah) and she said 'Why am I thus' and she went to inquire of the Lord. And the Lord said unto her, 'Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger.' The spiritual must prevail. This same principle is observable elsewhere in the O.T., e.g. Cain and Abel, Abraham and Lot, Joseph and his brethren. The opposition comes at times not from what is gross evil, but from that which is merely natural. It might be added that the spiritually minded man is practical, down to earth and not un-natural.

It is not surprising that so fundamental an issue should find expression in the Epistle to Romans and in chapter 7 Paul equates bondage to the law over against the yielding of our bodies to righteousness unto holiness (7.19). He speaks of the law having dominion over a man as long as he lives (v.1). Using the figure of marriage he sees deliverance from the first order of man (the flesh) only by way of death (spiritually). This in order to be free to be 'married to another,' Christ —another order of man completely. Again, the Old Testament provides an apt illustration in Abigail, who was married to a churlish man, Nabal, and thus identified with him (1 Sam. 25). She was desirous of being 'married to another,' namely David. However, she can be free only by death and that of the man with whom she was identified. So the man after the flesh must be kept in the place of death, thus making room for us to live 'after the Spirit' for the pleasure of God.

FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTALS

by J. B. HEWITT, Chesterfield

(36) THE HOLY SPIRIT IN 1 CORINTHIANS

The behaviour of the Corinthian saints indicates it is possible for a believer to have the Holy Spirit and not be spiritual (3.1). They were still carnal believers. A carnal believer is one who allows the flesh to have a definite sway in his life. He walks in the flesh, follows its leading, responding to its desires and yielding to its lusts. The carnal man in Romans 8, 6-9, is an unbeliever. The chief problems within the fellowship were those typical of emotional immaturity. From the nineteen references to the Spirit in the Epistle we learn that the cure to rivalry and squabbling is to be endowed and superintended by the one Spirit of unity.

In Preaching the Gospel (2.4) Paul was not moved to preach, nor was his mode of preaching determined, by any superiority of speech, for, to human wisdom, a crucified Saviour was ridiculous. The controlling factor in preaching the Gospel is not with human wisdom or in eloquence of human words, but in "demonstration of the Spirit." This proof compensated for lack of persuasive words of wisdom (1.17). Mere human wisdom is powerless to save. Had Paul persuaded the Corinthians by clever reasonings, and grounded Christianity upon their philosophy, his work would have perished with the wisdom of the age. Note his bearing (1), theme (2), manner (3), method (4) and aim (5).

The Revelation and Understanding of Divine Truth (2.9-16). The Holy Spirit is the revealer and worker in operation and manifestation (v. 9,10). The profound and eternal truths of our salvation, are not discernable by human ingenuity, they are revealed through the Spirit (v. 9). (a) He searches everything, even the depths of God (v.10). The secret thoughts of God are disclosed to us. Man with his human spirit is totally incapable of understanding the thoughts of God. This capacity is dependent upon the presence and activity of the Spirit of God (v. 12,13). (b) The

gifts of the Spirit of God are folly, out of reach and beyond understanding (2.14).

All saints receive the gift, the Spirit from God (v.10). One makes use of His presence and grows in knowledge, grace and power, while the other, neglecting and grieving the indwelling Spirit, remains a carnal believer. To which class do you belong?

Note three kinds of men are mentioned (1) The Natural Man; man in his unregenerate state (v.14). (2) The Spiritual Man; He is indwelt by and controlled by the Spirit (v.15). (3) The Carnal Man is the believer under the dominance of the flesh and therefore unable to digest strong food (3.1-2; Heb. 5.12-14).

The Sanctity and Stability of the Assembly (3.16,17). It is by the Spirit that God indwells the Church making it a shrine (3.16). The Local Church is called by various names in this chapter. (1) God's Husbandry or Vineyard (v.9). "What then is Apollos?" (v.5RV). The ministry of these servants was complimentary and there was complete harmony between them, as God's fellow-labourers (v.9). (2) God's Building (v.9b), The one building which God alone indwells and which the various workmen must be careful how they build (v.10). (3) Temple of the Holy Spirit (v.16). He makes it a shrine. It is by the Spirit that the various members came together to form one body. Trace the expression "KNOW YE NOT" ten times in this Epistle. "Temple," is the word for the holiest of all, the inner sanctuary.

What the Corinthians professed to believe was not matched by their practice. To desecrate the Divine sanctuary is a capital offence. Building in destructable matter is "corrupting the Temple." To defile the sanctuary by wrong doctrine, as in 15.12, will come under the disciplinary hand of the Lord.

Personal Purity (6.19) Some of these saints needed to be warned against taking "the members of Christ" and making them "members of a prostitute" (6.15). They claimed "all things are lawful for me" justifying immorality as a demonstration of Christian freedom. May we flee these things. The individual believer's body is the Temple of the Holy Spirit. Voluntary attachment which in one case leads to ultimate degradation (v.16), and in the other promotes the

highest exaltation, of the human personality by the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit. The body is for the Lord who brought it with a price, therefore "glorify God in your body." Personal purity and corporal sanctity are inseparable.

Sanctification and Inspiration (7.34,40). This was another question asked by the Assembly (7.25). As there is no recorded teaching of the Lord to appeal to, Paul gives his judgment, refusing to speak with apostolic authority. There is no sin attached to marrying even if one is called to special service (v.28). The reference to the Second Advent calls for concentration of the minds of believers upon the Lord and how best to please Him. Married or unmarried, life should be days of undivided interest in the Lord, holy in body and spirit (v. 34,35). He had the gift of inspiration, his teaching was by the Spirit of God (v.40b).

Distribution of Gifts (Ch. 12). Here are some features of a Spirit-controlled Assembly. The social setting of a pagan, excitable community, accustomed to extravagant and showy forms of worship, must be remembered. The Spirit of Christ is emphatically the Spirit of **Unity**; his action and power are never divisive.

Today, there must be (a) **RECOGNITION OF LORDSHIP** (v.3). Verse 2 probably refers to ecstatic utterances of heathen oracles. Hence the simple test of v.3, which eliminated heathen oracle and Jewish blasphemer alike. It is only through the gracious ministry of the Spirit that any man can say that "Jesus is LORD" RV., for such a confession of faith requires nothing less than a supernatural revelation of its truth (Matt 16.16,17). Not every ecstatic utterance is motivated by the Holy Spirit i.e. "Jesus is accursed."

The Lord exercises His supreme authority in controlling His Assembly. (b) **DISTRIBUTION OF GIFTS** (v.4-7). Paul endeavours to show that the operation of the Holy Spirit is creative and unspectacular, seen rather in gifts of character and spiritual endowment than in the supernatural manifestations so esteemed by them. They are derived from a Divine source (v.4). There is diversity in their action (v.5). Different in their assignments (v.4); activities (v.5), and effects (v.6.7). The aim is "profit" and "unity" through the Spirit (see Eph. 4.7-16).

(c) **Manifestations of the Spirit** (v. 8-12). The gifts are different, but the purpose of each gift is the edification of the Assembly. The gifts are listed in a descending order of value, the more valuable are mentioned first. They are listed in the order of their importance (v.28-30). Note the Word "ALL" in v. 13, and v. 30. While all were included in the baptism in the Spirit (v.13) all did not speak with tongues (v.30).

(d) **Unity of the Body** (v. 12-27). The analogy of the Body is asserted and justified. Variety, unity and dependence are enjoined (v.12-14). The body can be neither all eye, ear or nose (v.17). Every faculty necessary is supplied (v.17,18), all animated by one Spirit (v. 19,20). There are unseen members (the heart) which are vital, "comely" parts (the face) which have honour beyond necessity (v. 23-24). Unity is maintained and all are interdependent (v.21,22). Care is bestowed on weaker members (v. 24,25), and harmony is encouraged. Sympathy experienced in prosperity or in adversity (v.26).

The service of all gifts is to glorify God (v.27-31). Chapter 13 indicates the manner in which these gifts should operate.

The Operation of Gifts (ch. 14). The trouble at Corinth lay in an embarrassment of spiritual gifts (1.7a; 14.1). Two gifts are singled out and compared and contrasted as to their relative values. What are the lesson for us today? There are neither prophets nor the gift of tongues today but the principles of prophecy abide (v.3). The purpose of all ministry; to reach the mind, conscience and heart (v.3). The personal aim in ministry (v.6) "profit you." The language used should be easy to understand (v.9). All ministry given should edify the church (v.12). The message must be understood by the speaker (v.19). In spiritual understanding we are not to be small children, but men (v.20). The truth itself will convince and judge an unbeliever, if present (v. 24). "Let all things be done unto edifying." (v.26). Ministering brethren should be under divine control and consider each other (v.29). Our worship meeting suffers from brethren who do not possess the gift of teaching, they should remain silent (v.30). The ministry given is judged by competent men who have spiritual discernment (v.30). Proper order will give every gifted man a turn (v.31). All

ministers should exercise complete self-control (v.32). Sisters must not speak in the church (v.34). The women at Corinth were a special problem (11.2-16). Sisters must not engage in any public ministry in the Assembly. To do so is rebellious (v.34) and shameful (v.35). Elders who allow, or encourage this practice are denying the principle of verse 40. All must be controlled by the commandments of the Lord embodied in verses 26-40. The value of Spirit given ministry; expresses love, edifies others, glorifies Christ, transforms character and wins outsiders.

JOTTINGS BY W. W. FEREDAY

ISAIAH 4 (beginning at v. 2) is short and sweet. All Israel will be converted to God "in that day"—the day towards which all prophesy points, the day when our Lord will show Himself from heaven in power and glory. He will be "beautiful and glorious" in the eyes of His long-estranged people, and they will be holy, with all filth washed away. Jerusalem will be divinely preserved from all further harm by the cloud, outward and visible sign of Jehovah's abiding presence, reminiscent of those wonderful days of old when the Shekinah filled both tabernacle and temple. What a transformation for Jerusalem and its people! What wonders a faithful God will yet accomplish for His own pleasure, and for the glory of Him who was slain.

* * *

THE Bethany household is suggested in Colossians 3. Lazarus was the risen man (v. 1); Mary delighted to hear the words of her Lord, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly" (v. 16); and Martha faithfully pursued the duties of the house. The home is provided for in Col. 3.17-25; 4.1. We should live with our hearts in heaven, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God, but we should perform loyally all the duties connected with our present state and earthly relationships.

* * *

THE great Shepherd of the sheep has found me, and I am on His almighty shoulders being carried safely home. He will find me again in another way at His coming; for He will not overlook even the humblest and feeblest of His own. But in what condition will He find me in that great day? Peter exhorts us to "be diligent that we may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless" (2 Peter 3.14). Rejoicing filled His heart when He found me as a straying sheep; and rejoicing will fill His heart when He conducts me into the Father's house.

GOD IS OUR REFUGE

by FRANKLIN FERGUSON, New Zealand

The 46th Psalm is clearly a Millennial Psalm; and the exaltation of Christ, as Lord of the whole earth, is its theme. The works of Jehovah, their decisive results in the desolation of human pride, and the quelling of the anger of the nations by the majesty of His power, is in view. Israel's deliverance from all their enemies will then be consummated and a new era of peace and blessing upon earth will be brought in. The Church, previously caught up and glorified, will reign with Christ. But the Psalm has a present application to all of us who have found a refuge in Him Who will in the appointed time, fully bring to pass all that it foreshadows, that our hearts may find rest amid the changing scenes and upheavals of this our day. So that we may triumphantly say, "The God of Jacob is **our** refuge"!

THE APPLICATION TO US

The present is a day of "trouble," there being nothing like it since the foundation of the world, but not worse than what is yet to come. The most stable things, likened to earth and mountains, are being moved and carried, as it were, into the midst of the sea. The nations of Europe and Asia rage, and the roar and tumult of their strife is heard afar off, even to the ends of the earth, and all nations are moved with the swelling thereof. The basest passions of men are let loose, and the thin veneer of civilisation, culture, and even Christianity, is painfully evident to all. Colossal destruction stalks abroad, and inconceivable misery follows in the wake. Human blood flows in great measure, and the wails of the wounded, and the dying, and the bereaved rise to heaven in ever-increasing volume. What desolations are made in the earth, and what multitudes are drinking a cup of wormwood and of gall!

What should be the language of the redeemed in such a scene? "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore, will not we fear;" and "The Lord of hosts is with us." God alone can be our confidence, and He only can now, as ever, make wars to cease. He has His way in the sea and His path in the mighty waters (Isa. 43.16), and wars and tumults can be made to do His bidding; for He chastens the nations even as He does the individual

soul. "Be still, and know that I am God," are words to calm our spirit; therefore, we may rest assured of the accomplishment of His purposes in this titanic upheaval, purposes of mercy and grace as well as of judgment. The heart finding repose in Him shall not be moved, and the streams from the river of God shall make the heart glad.

STUDIES IN JOHN'S GOSPEL

(Christ, the Interpreter of the Father)

by WM. HOSTE

4—IN A SCENE OF SUFFERING (John 5.1-9).

The soil of a sin-blighted world, is more congenial to suffering than to joy. Cana feasts are rare oases. Joy is an exotic. Sickness and pain are indigenous. "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." The great multitude at the pool of Bethesda, "impotent" and "waiting," is a fair sample of this world. What, then, was our Lord's attitude to suffering, during His earthly ministry? How did He interpret the Father? That He should come where sufferers were, says much, but once there, He could not be indifferent. Compassion was a keynote of His ministry. But what drew it out of Him, would repel others; a man full of leprosy (Mark 1.41); a man full of demons (Mark 5.19); a Jew full of enmity (Luke 10.33); a selfish crowd, whom He had served all day breaking in on His rest. Here, toward the sufferers, lying in their filth and misery at Bethesda, He was no doubt moved with the same compassion, thus interpreting the heart of Him who is "full of compassion"—"The Father of mercies and the God of all comfort" (2 Cor 1.3). For us, too, "His compassions fail not," "for we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities" (Heb. 4.15). A feast was the occasion of the Bethesda miracle, one of the three great annual feasts, we may suppose, to necessitate our Lord's presence in Jerusalem, but which, is unimportant. Whatever it might be to the mass of the Jews, to Him it would be "a feast of Jehovah," and no doubt all the legal requirements of the day in their very spirit were observed by Him. In what house of feasting would He then

be found? Rather in a house of mourning, the porches of Bethesda, "where lay a great multitude of impotent folk, blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water." Little enough of feasting had come their way, but now the Lord of the feast was present. His disciples had accompanied Him to the marriage feast; here He would seem to be alone, perhaps He could not trust them in such a scene. This "great multitude" may represent the religious world, especially Israel under law, helpless and hopeless, and dependent for blessing on irregular interventions of Divine favour, the visits of the angel of the Lord.* But a greater was present that day, unrecognised, but ready to bless, the Lord of the "angel." Had some sufferer been praying with the psalmist, "Shew us Thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us Thy salvation!" the answer would have been doubly appropriate, "Surely His salvation is nigh them that fear Him." Jesus was in their midst. They need not wait. He could do for them, then and there, as for us, above their highest prayer and thought. And why was He there? Not to apologise for God for all the suffering in the world, not to deny its reality with that spurious "science" falsely-called "Christian," nor yet to preach the counterfeit gospel of future bliss by present pain, nor even to introduce improved hygienic conditions or schemes of social betterment (doubtless much needed) for the sufferers around the pool. Physical needs are not ignored by Christianity, but higher needs must be kept first. The world has copied the social activities of Christians: hospitals, orphanages, etc., while denying their motive power—the faith of Christ. Why then was the Lord there? First and foremost to do the will of the Father, in this work of mercy symbolical of the excellence of grace over law. "What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son," could do. The law could point the moral of their sad estate, but was

*The latter part of verse 3 and the whole of verse 4 are omitted by the Sinaitic and Vatican and Cambridge Uncial MSS, and some other weighty authorities, but are retained in the Alexandrine (London) and other Uncials, and some versions of good authority. The reply of the impotent in verse 7 is undisputed. What sense would this have, were the disputed words in 3 and 4 not genuine? He was in a great hurry to get into the pool when troubled, but who could tell what was meant, if the previous reference was absent.

powerless to "raise the fallen, cheer the faint, heal the sick, or lead the blind." Christ alone could do all this, and He is there to do it, wherever there is human need. He is still at faith's disposal, near and ready to save and bless.

Christ as the Healer.

This opens out an important enquiry as to the "limitations" imposed on our Lord's ministry of healing. Certainly there was no limitation as to power. Had not He who had "life in Himself," power over all disease and death? Must not all suffering therefore flee before Him? We do not find it so. His compassion and power did not express themselves in indiscriminate relief. The Son of God was manifested to destroy "the works of the devil" (1 John 3), but these must not be confused with the *effects* of sin. Sin and sins are the works of the devil; sickness and suffering are effects of sin, for the race directly, for the individual sometimes directly, but more often indirectly, as in the case of the blind man of the 9th of John, "for the glory of God, that the works of God might be made manifest in him." This should comfort those exposed to the erroneous teaching, that all sickness is a proof of unbelief, if not of positive sin in the sufferer. In such circles, bodily healing is the pivot of true religion, the hall mark of genuine faith. But this shows an ill-balanced grasp of the truth, a feeble sense of spiritual values. Physical healing was an accessory, not the essence of our Lord's ministry; a credential of His Messiahship, not like the resurrection, the crowning witness to His eternal Sonship. His miracles were a divine seal to His claims, and also to the testimony of His apostles, "God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost according to His own will" (Heb. 2.4). Had He willed it, such signs would have continued. We have as a permanent witness, the record of them, as also of the Star of Bethlehem, the Herald Angels, the Resurrection, and the tongues at Pentecost. Far be it for us to discourage "faith in God;" we need more of it, in sickness as in health. But faith, based on a defective interpretation of the Word of God, easily becomes presumption and fanaticism. "Faith healers" seek to attach a Satanic stigma to all medicines by dubbing them "drugs" and "not of God." Did Satan give to these their healing properties, or are they, no less than the foods we eat,

“creations of God,” to be received “with thanksgiving?” There is no antithesis between Divine healing and the use of “means.” Even in James 5.14, the word “anoint” is the mundane word *aleiphein*—not the sacred word *chriein* (lit. ‘touch with hand’) of religious anointings. Oil was and is recognized as a healing agent, in many countries. Was there ever a more direct Divine healing than that of Hezekiah? Fanaticism would have refused the fig plaster prescribed by Isaiah, but faith accepted and applied it. Now, some tell us, that if we use “means,” we run the risk of denying the Name of the Lord as Jehovah-Ropheka—I am the Lord that healeth thee. But it has to be remembered that this promise was conditional—not on prayer and faith—but on obedience to Jehovah’s commandments. And the promise was not the cure of sickness when ill, but an immunity from it altogether. It is surely noteworthy that so radically an anti-Christian sect as “Christian Science,” already referred to, undoubtedly is, while denying the Person and Work of Christ in any Scriptural sense, should appeal to New Testament miracles to substantiate their own claims to heal; “Christ and His apostles did it, why not we?” they argue, “we are therefore a divine revelation.” But miracles may be Satanic, for the Antichrist will work miracles by the power of the dragon (Rev. 13.12-15). To remove by an act of power all the effects of sin, would neither be righteous or beneficial, and God nowhere pledges Himself to do it. That depends as far as man is concerned, on his attitude to God and his faith in Christ. In the dire effects of sin, we read its exceeding gravity. Suffering may lead sinners to God (Job 33. 19-24), and if rightly borne, conforms the Christian to the image of Christ, and “yields the peaceable fruits of righteousness.” The devil and his works have been judicially *destroyed by the death of Christ. It is only a question of time for this to be manifest to all. This disposes of the mistaken notion that sinning will continue for ever in the regions of the lost. The sinful nature will be unchanged, the will to sin as determined as ever, but never will one more commission of sin be permitted in the Universe, when once the lake of fire has closed on the impeni-

* Not annihilated, but annulled, or rendered ineffective (cf. Rom. 3.3; 4.14; 1 Cor. 1.28, etc.).

tent. It would be a defective system, which allowed criminals to commit in prison, the acts which brought them there.

Besides the general considerations already referred to, as affecting the question of healing, which hold good for all time, there were definite bounds, mostly temporary in character, within which the exercise of our Lord's miraculous powers, was limited. But here we must define our terms. How could a Divine Person be limited? The limitations were not of His powers, but of their exercise, not imposed, but voluntarily accepted, not of ignorance or inability, but of reserve and self-restraint. The Lord Jesus did not cease to be God, or to exist as God, when He took "the form of a servant," and became man. He retained everything essential to true Deity, while refusing nothing proper to perfect humanity. But in not insisting on the retention of what He had always possessed by His very nature, equality with God, "He emptied Himself," and that not by relinquishing His Divine attributes, which would have entailed emptying Himself of Himself—an impossibility—but as the following phrase of Philippians 2 explains, by "taking upon Him the form of a servant." He did not cease to be what He had always been, but entered into a new relation to the Father, which meant, holding both Divine and human attributes, to use them not for Himself, but as the bondsman of the Father; consenting to live henceforth as the dependent One, never to move, speak, or act, except at His bidding. We know where that obedience led Him, "even to the death of the Cross." There, He fully glorified the Father, met every claim against the sinner, and bore His people's sins. Is the Lord Jesus to be the only one to follow this path of dependence? No, all true service is on the same principle.

Satan, who had the highest place as servant in heaven, revolted against the will of God, and entered the path of self-will, which could only lead to eternal judgment and abasement. The Lord took the lowest place as Servant on earth, became subject to the will of God in all things, fully glorified Him before the universe, and will ever occupy the highest place in the glory, as the Son of Man. He thus became the faithful Interpreter of the Father's will, accepting all the circumstances of His choice. By the first of these, He was conditioned as man.

1. *Geographically and Ethnically*.—He was brought up in a despised city of Galilee, instead of at Jerusalem, “the Holy City,” the centre of Rabbinnical learning. His sphere of service, instead of being world-wide, was conformed to a small country, much the size of Wales. His mission, instead of being to every creature, was to “the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” Instead of claiming the universal throne, He was satisfied to present Himself as the heir to David’s throne.

2. *Practically*.—Even in His testimony to Israel His service was confined within the circle of the Divine plan. He made no claim to initiative. He did the works prepared for Him, and no other. “The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do.” “As I hear I judge.” “My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent Me.” His whole life was the interpretation of the Father’s purpose. Outside this limit, no miracles were performed. But this purpose was no arbitrary one. It was already revealed in principle in the prophetic Word.

3. *Prophetically*.—“He was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers” (Rom. 15.8). We read for example, “He healed all that were sick, that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses” (Matt. 8.17). Earlier, we learn that His movements were regulated by that same Word “He came and dwelt in Capernaum . . . that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by Esaias the prophet” (Matt. 4.14; Isa. 9.1,2). A Messiah without miracles could not be the Messiah of prophecy. They were His necessary credentials, and thus, in the synagogue of Nazareth, He applied Isa. 61.1 to Himself with the words, “This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears.” “Not eyes,” for they had seen no miracles, but the fame of Capernaum had reached their ears. Later, it was by appeal to His miracles (not to the signs at His baptism) that He confirmed the faith of John in prison.

4. *Ethically*.—The moral condition of men influenced his miraculous ministry (Matt. 13.58). Faith favoured, unbelief obstructed it. “He could not do many mighty works there, because of their unbelief.” “If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth” (Mark 9.23). His works

demanded a certain moral attitude in those needing healing. Thus, He put out the scorers (Mark 5.40); He led the blind man out of Bethsaida, the scene in vain of so many wonderful works (Mark 8.23). And His miracles in Jerusalem, the city of rejection, were but few. The one man healed at Bethesda fulfilled at any rate two conditions—he was helpless and he knew it; he did what he was told, and so shewed his faith.

5. *Dispensationally*.—Some who are more exhorters than teachers — are impatient of dispensational teaching, lest Christians be robbed of the practical application of Scripture, as for instance of the “Sermon on the Mount.”* But in reality, it is only as taken in its dispensational setting, that a true application can be made of any Scripture. “Distinguish the dispensations, and the Scriptures agree,” as Augustine has it. Interpret according to dispensation, then apply to present circumstances according to the analogy of the faith. Had these simple principles been grasped, how much misapplication of Scripture would have been prevented. Thus, there are only three miracles of healing described by John, whereas the Synoptists abound in such? The answer lies in the dispensational character of the latter. For instance, in the period from Matt. 4.23; 9.35, embracing our Lord’s great personal kingdom testimony, the historical record presents us with one succession of miracles, calculated to convince the nation that “the Kingdom of God was come unto them” (Matt. 12.28). This period ends with the rejection of the testimony by the leaders of the nation, ascribing to Satan the miracles of Christ (chap. 9.34). In chap. 10 the Lord associates the twelve with Himself, the testimony widens, but ends in the same rejection. The people come to the right conclusion, “Is not this the Son of David,” that is, “Is not this the rightful heir to David’s throne?” but the conviction is at once quenched by the same blasphemous suggestion (chap. 12.24). Thus the kingdom is rejected, and the testimony takes on anew character.

* e.g.—As regards Matt 5.5, the Christian is not encouraged to be meek by the promise of inheriting the earth. That is the hope of Israel. The inheritance of the believer is now “reserved in heaven,” which cannot mean an earthly inheritance reserved in heaven, but a heavenly inheritance. The Christian is to be meek, so as to walk worthy of his high calling (Eph. 4.2).

Parables, we may almost say, henceforth replace miracles. Why—if as some assert—there be no break at chap. 12, the change in the testimony, and why do miracles henceforth take a secondary place?

What a contrast, indeed, between Matthew and John! In the former Gospel, our Lord is more than accessible. He seeks out the sufferer. No ones and twos are healed, but multitudes. "All manner of sickness and all manner of diseases," "all sick people," "healing every sickness and every disease," are phrases characteristic of its early chapters. In John, the miracles are few and far between. The key is close at hand. The testimony in Matthew is a kingdom and therefore a miraculous testimony. In John, there is no proclamation of the kingdom. John begins where the Synoptists only arrive, when well on their way, with rejection. We read Calvary in the words, "His own received Him not" (John 1.12). This gospel presents Him as the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.

The same phenomenon is seen in the course of the Acts. Miraculous intervention are plentiful at the beginning—because there the presentations of the kingdom in the Jewish sense are specially to the fore, but as the testimony changes, so does the miraculous fade away. This would account for the fact that in* "The Prison Epistles," in which the "mystery" is officially revealed, there is not a word about miracles. And those who expect them now "do err, not knowing the Scriptures," or their place in the dispensations of God.

Until the last enemy has been destroyed and the kingdom be restored in enhanced splendour to God, even the Father (1 Cor. 15.24), there will still be sickness and suffering in the world. Those called to pass through these trying experiences, may surely cry for relief to the Good Physician, and also seek the fellowship of their brethren in prayer, while not neglecting the common sense precautions and remedies, which it has pleased God to place within their reach. But if He be not pleased to bless the means used, or deliver from the infirmity, His presence and sympathy are assured. And His promise remains, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for My strength is made perfect in weakness."

* Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon.

IS SUNDAY SPECIAL?

by JOHN B. D. PAGE, Northampton

Indignation amongst many people has been aroused in recent months about the Government's Sunday Trading Bill which if enacted, would remove all restrictions on Sunday trading, and so it would mean that shops could be opened on Sundays as they are on weekdays. Consequently, to stir up public opinion to oppose this Bill, there is a campaign, according to press reports, to *Keep Sunday Special*, which is sponsored by a group of churchmen, representing the Church of England, the Free Churches and the Roman Catholic Church, besides politicians from all parties.

Whilst the motive of these men may be good, believers will see that the campaign savours of Ecumenism which is not only sweeping through Christendom worldwide but it seems to be the forerunner of the harlot world-church (Revelation 17). Surely, the campaign sponsors are a strange mixture for the defence of the Lord's day! According to the scriptures, believers should not associate themselves with a mixed company.

Instead of aligning ourselves with an unholy alliance in Christendom, we are able to intercede with the Lord in the secret place against the possibility of a new law to permit trading on Sundays as on weekdays. Although politicians may not realize it, we know much is wrought by prayer.

In view of these introductory remarks it would appear that :

Sunday is jeopardized.

For centuries, Christians in Britain have enjoyed not only religious liberty but also the freedom of worship on the Lord's day, knowing that the day itself is protected by various statutory restrictions. If this Sunday Trading Bill reaches the statute book, it may have far-reaching adverse effects for believers.

A few facts relating to the background of the Government's Sunday Trading Bill may be helpful. It stems from *The Auld Report* of 1984 which is the outcome of a Committee of Inquiry set up in 1983, and so the observance of the Lord's day has been thrown into the cockpit of politics. Britain may be one of few, if not the only nation, that

has Sunday observance legislation, which dates back to the Puritans, many of whom were fine godly men and, whilst the law was then intensely restrictive, it was intended to be protective for the Lord's day. The Puritans have left their mark upon the nation but, with the passing of the years, the contemptuous epithet 'Puritanical' has been cast at Christians who seek to keep the Lord's day holy and follow a path of separation from the world.

Since the days of the Puritans, there has been legislation to de-regulate in measure the observance of Sunday from time to time. Today, as in the past, antagonists to the keeping of Sunday different from weekdays argue that the law is indefensible. In view of the prophetic scriptures about the last days (1 Tim. 4.1-3, 2 Tim. 3.1-5), believers should not be alarmed about the antagonism to observance of the Lord's day.

In their enthusiasm for keeping the Lord's day in a Sabbatic manner, some Christians have confused the Sabbath with the Lord's day, and so we need to satisfy ourselves from the scriptures that :

The Sabbath is different.

Having seen briefly that legislation regarding the observance of the Lord's day is in jeopardy, the Lord's day should be differentiated from the Sabbath. First, the seventh day needs to be considered during *the primeval and patriarchal periods*, which were before the Law. Following His work of creation, 'God . . . rested on the seventh day from all His work' (Genesis 2.2). The Creator's rest was not on account of exhaustion (Isaiah 40.28), but it indicated satisfaction. It shows that, from the beginning of human history, there is the principle of one day in seven having been set apart by God as a day of rest to meet man's physical need. The Israelites put it into practice with the divine provision of manna, which was *before* the giving of the Law at Sinai, for the Lord said, 'Six days ye shall gather . . . (the manna), but on the seventh day, which is the sabbath, in it there shall be none. So the people rested the seventh day' (Exod. 16. 26,30).

With *the age of Law*, observance of the Sabbath became binding upon the Israelites as a nation, because it was incorporated in the Decalogue. The fourth Commandment opens with the command, 'Remember the sabbath day to

keep it holy,' followed by an explanation of, and then the reason for, its observance (Exodus 20.8-11). This is the only commandment where the people were told, 'Remember . . .', indicating that they already knew that the day had been hallowed by God, because it marked the completed work of creation. (Genesis 2. 1-3, cf. Exodus 20.11).

As observance of the Sabbath formed part of the Israelites' national constitution, the Lord deemed fit to explain to them that '. . . the sabbath . . . is a sign between Me and the children of Israel' (Exod. 31.16f). Although other nations have emulated the principle of setting aside one day in seven for rest, the Sabbath is 'a sign' that the nation of Israel is separated unto Jehovah (Exod. 31.13) because Israel, unlike other nations, has a unique relationship with Him.

With the passage of time, even the Jews' attitude to the fourth Commandment changed. Nehemiah was grieved when he saw men in Judah 'treading wine presses on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves and lading of asses, . . . and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath day' (Nehemiah 13.15). These weekday activities were a definite breach of Sabbatic observance (Exod. 20.8). With departure from the scriptures in Nehemiah's day, the spirit to liberalize soon appeared amongst the Lord's earthly people. Not surprisingly, there was a re-action to this liberalism which took the form of legalism. With the intention to rectify such a course of events and return to the scriptures, the Rabbis legalized by developing and systematizing the God-given regulations relating to the Sabbath, so that its observance, instead of being a blessing, became a burden to the people. That was the situation in the days of the Lord Jesus as shown several times in the gospels, but two instances will suffice for illustration.

Having healed the impotent man, the Lord Jesus told him to take up his bed (i.e. his pallet) and walk, which he did. Seeing the man, the Jews said to him, 'It is the sabbath day; it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed' (John 5.10). By telling the man that his action was 'not lawful,' these Jews had in mind the Rabbis' interpretation of Jeremiah 17.21f, where the Lord said through His prophet, 'bear no burden on the sabbath day, nor bring in . . . or carry forth a burden out of your houses on the sabbath day . . .' which,

according to the Talmud, meant that it was unlawful to carry anything from a public place into a private house or the same act in the reverse order. Obviously, if the Rabbis were right in their interpretation, the Lord Jesus, who came not to destroy the law but to fulfil it (Matthew 5.17), would not have told the man to break the law by carrying his bed on the Sabbath. But the Rabbis gave a forced, or should we say, a false interpretation.

When the disciples plucked ears of corn and rubbed them in their hands, which was permissible under the Law (Deuteronomy 23.25), certain Pharisees complained, 'Why do ye that which is not lawful on the sabbath days?' (Luke 6.1f). According to Rabbinical teaching, the disciples had broken the Sabbatic law in two ways: to pluck the ears of corn was to reap, and to rub them in their hands was to thresh, which, of course, is not scriptural but ludicrous. To put Sabbath observance into the right perspective as divinely intended, the Lord Jesus said, 'The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath' (Mark 2.27).

From these two scriptures, legalism as a reaction to liberalism is well illustrated, and we need to be on our guard today against this danger. We should not be legal or liberal, but we need to be scriptural in both our belief and behaviour.

Turning from the past to the future, we now look at *the millennium* when the temple will have been rebuilt and filled with the glory of the Lord, and temple-worship will be not restricted to only Jews as in the past. As the Lord deals differently with Israel from the Church, the Sabbath will be observed again, not only by Jews but also Gentiles. According to the scriptures, 'from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh (a term which includes all nations) come to worship Me, saith the Lord' (Isaiah 66. 23, cf. 56.1-6), which means that, as each Sabbath dawns, both Jews and Gentiles will go to the temple for worshipping Jehovah-Messiah. As it was under the law, so the sanctity of the Sabbath will be observed in this future age of righteousness: 'they shall hallow My sabbaths,' the Lord told Ezekiel (44.24).

Having looked briefly at the Sabbath from its institution at creation, both before and during the age of law and in the millennium, which is still future, it is clear that the Sabbath relates to Israel and not the Church. This has

prepared the way to discover from the scriptures how :

The Lord's day is observed.

Turning now to the present church age, Christians are not enjoined to keep the Sabbath, and this is presumably the explanation that the fourth Commandment, unlike the other nine, is not quoted in the New Testament. Whilst believers in this day of grace are empowered by the Holy Spirit, which was unknown under the Law, to fulfil (and not ignore) the demands of the Law, they are not required to hallow the seventh day. Any attempt to keep the Sabbath is emulating the Galatian Christians, to whom Paul said, 'Ye observe days (i.e. Sabbaths), and months (i.e. new moons), and times (i.e. festive seasons) and years (i.e. Sabbatic years),' but such observances are powerless to produce spiritual results or enrich the soul. The keeping of such days puts believers under bondage (Galatians 4.9f). Referring again to these various observances, Paul says to the Colossian believers that not only the annual feast-days and monthly observances of the Old Testament but also 'the sabbath days' are 'a shadow of things to come,' whilst the substance is found in Christ (Colossians 2.16f). Therefore, that which is in Christ is for the enjoyment of believers, and it is vastly superior to Sabbatic observance.

It is true that Paul went to the synagogue on Sabbath days during his missionary journeys (Acts 13.42,44; 17.2; and 18.4), but the purpose of his going was not compliance with the Mosaic law. If it had been, then he would have put himself under bondage to that law, against which he warned the saints in Galatia. The object of his frequenting these synagogues was not to participate in Judaistic worship but to preach the gospel to a gathered company of Jews.

Although believers in this present age are not under the law, the principle of keeping one day in seven has been retained. As grace characterizes this era, the Lord has not given a command for Christians to hallow the first day of the week. However, a close study of the scriptures shows that the first day of the week is unique in three ways.

Firstly, the resurrection of Christ makes the day distinctive, for all four gospel writers record that it was on the first day of the week that the Lord Jesus rose from the dead (Matthew 28.1, etc.), and this great event marked the completion of His redemptive work.

Secondly, from the Feast of Firstfruits (Leviticus 23.10f) when Christ rose from the dead, fifty days had elapsed and so the 'day of Pentecost was fully come' (Acts 2.1, cp. Leviticus 23.15). Remarkably, this was the first day of another week when that first day saw the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the believers, which formed the church.

Thirdly, with the first day of the week made distinctive by the Lord's resurrection and His redeemed people filled with the Holy Spirit, it was appropriate for local assemblies to gather together on 'the first day of the week' in order to 'break bread' (Acts 20.7), and so 'proclaim the Lord's death until He come' (1 Corinthians 11.26). This is the occasion, according to the scriptures, when an offering to the Lord should be taken, and not at every meeting of the saints. 'Upon the first day of the week,' there should be a collection for the Lord's work, and each member of the assembly should give 'as God hath prospered him' (1 Corinthians 16.2), which was a divinely given principle for the Jews to observe in respect of their freewill offering on the day of Pentecost, otherwise known as the Feast of Weeks (Deuteronomy 16.10).

Nowhere in the scriptures is the first day of the week termed a Sabbath. However, it is undoubtedly a good witness to ungodly neighbours for Christians to keep it in a Sabbatic manner by not doing weekday jobs and not pursuing pleasures which are legitimate for other days of the week.

The differences between the Sabbath and the Lord's day may be tabulated thus :

THE SABBATH

1. The seventh day of the week.
2. The day of rest for the Creator.
3. Its observances :
 - a. was obligatory under the Law;
 - b. marked out an earthly people, Israel ;

THE LORD'S DAY

1. The first day of the week.
2. The day of Christ's resurrection, the basis of our rest due to His finished work of redemption.
3. Its observances :
 - a. is a privilege under grace ;
 - b. distinguishes a heavenly people, the Church;

- c. indicated what Israel **could do** for God;
- d. was celebrated by the offering of two lambs as a burnt offering for the morning and evening sacrifices and by the reading of the scriptures.

- c. signifies what Christ **has done** for us ;
- d. is marked by 'the breaking of bread' in remembrance of the Lord Himself and by 'the collection.'

Since the first day of the week is the Lord's day, not only in name but in practice for Christians, it means that the day belongs to the Lord, and it should be set apart for the Lord. Our conduct on the Lord's day should distinguish it from other days.

In years past in many Christian homes, framed text cards adorned the walls, but they are rarely seen today as though we are ashamed of the scriptures. Sometimes, one saw a card with a verse relating to keeping the Sabbath, but the author had undoubtedly in mind the observance of the Lord's day. The verse ran as follows :

A sabbath well spent
 Brings a week of content
 And health for the work of the morrow,
 But a sabbath profaned
 Whate'er may be gained
 Is a certain forerunner of sorrow.

(The articles by brother Page on 'Christ in the Apocalypse' will return in the next issue, D.V.).

DENOMINATIONALISM

by D. COULSON (Newmarket)

For several years the assemblies of the Lord's people have, among other problems, suffered from inherent weakness in their testimony and service for God because of "Denominationalism." That is, the so-called "freedom," on the part of some believers that are in fellowship in assemblies, to engage in denominational activity. i.e. preaching in the Baptists, Evangelical Missions, etc.

Please notice that it should not be called "interdenominationalism" for that implies that the local assembly is a denomination. In the sense in which that word is normally understood, it is not!

If a definition should be required as to what an assembly is, then the following is offered as such:

“A local assembly is a scripturally constituted company of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ; governed in its worship and service by the Holy Spirit of God; in accordance with the principles laid down in the Word of God; and within the confines of which each individual believer is enabled to function as a priest before God and men.”

If this definition is correct then it surely distinguishes the local assembly from every other form of religious gathering, whatever it may call itself.

Further, if the local assembly is the expression of the mind of God, as delineated in the Scriptures, so far as the ground of gathering, worship and service of believers is concerned; then also by definition every other form of religious gathering is unscriptural; whether it be the Romanist on the one extreme or the Evangelical Church with its pastor, etc. on the other. Every form of denomination in Christendom can be found between these two extremes.

With the foregoing therefore in mind, what are the implications for the assembly in any locality, that has “denominationally minded ” believers among its members?

The following observations are suggested for the consideration of any readers that may be unsure of these implications.

Seven reasons are given below, which, when subjected to careful consideration, must clearly indicate that “Denominational” activity is detrimental to the well-being of the local testimony and to the believers themselves; whether it be those in the assembly; those in the denominations or those engaged in the denominational activity. No one profits but all ultimately suffer in one way or another.

1. It saps the life and energy of the assembly because time, money, and gift are deployed, in unscriptural practices, that otherwise would be channelled into the local testimony.

2. It considerably weakens the scriptural validity of the local assembly in the eyes of the “denominational” believers, making them more entrenched in the denomination of their choice when they see the believer in the scripturally constituted order fraternising with the system to which they themselves belong.

3. It compromises every fundamental principle upon which the local assembly position rests: i.e.

- (a) The Lordship of Christ
- (b) The Sovereignty of the Holy Spirit
- (c) The Authority of the Word of God
- (d) The Priesthood of all believers.

These four basic principles are integral to each other—none can subsist without all being operative—if one principle is compromised then they all are compromised—which ever way the matter is approached. “Denominationalism,” with its varying degrees of ritual, sacerdotalism, clerisy, etc. is a positive denial of each one of these principles and therefore no believer who is in assembly fellowship can engage in denominational activity without compromising his or her position as far as these principles are concerned.

4. It engenders a spirit of strife and disunity between the members of the assembly to which the “denominationalist” belongs. Some agree with him; some disagree. So, for the supposed good that is being done to the “believers in the systems,” untold harm is being wrought in the assembly itself. Brethren, if only we could say, respecting the arch enemy of God and man—the devil, “we are not ignorant of his devices” (2 Cor. 2.11) Satan will employ any means that he can to wreck God’s purpose as seen in the local assembly and this is one effective way that he is doing it.

5. It renders the “denominationalist” in the assembly useless and impotent in his ministry, for they are mostly gifted men that are ensnared by this evil; for they can no longer minister to the saints in teaching things that would contradict their ways and pursuits. How can such an one teach the foregoing principles when his very conduct in service is a contradiction of these very things? Likewise how can his ministry in the other sphere be effective? If someone should be saved under his preaching, can he, as he should, direct such an one to the assembly for baptism and spiritual development. If he did it would be a direct breach of trust as well as a probable breach of the denomination’s trust deed governing the tenets and practices of such. No, brethren, this is one effective way of sterilising a man’s ministry and effectiveness for God.

6. It introduces the element of “two masters” — ‘he will love the one and hate the other.’ This principle will unmistakably control the “denominationalist” when it comes to loyalty to one or the other as far as attendance is concerned. Should he have to choose to attend an assembly meeting or some other interest in the sphere of christian service, then undoubtedly the other interest will take first place—it will take precedence over the assembly gathering if so that it falls on the same evening.

7. Finally it is a practice that is dishonouring to the Lord Jesus Himself. Paul, speaking to the Ephesian elders at Miletus said, “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock . . . to feed the church of God (the local assembly) which He hath purchased with His own blood (with the blood of His own) (Acts 20.28). It cost the Lord Jesus His life’s blood to redeem and purchase to Himself such a company of believers, and every other company of believers down through the course of this age in every place. To resort to man made systems and denominations is to belittle the value, in God’s eyes, of every scripturally constituted company that has been planted and sustained by the Spirit of God.

In writing the foregoing, the writer is not unmindful of the many believers that are in the denominations; he himself being saved out of such nearly forty years ago. However the separated believer can be far more effective in his testimony and usefulness to these many believers in an individual capacity than ever he may be in going among them in the unscriptural and man organised sects that abound on every hand today. If one’s individual testimony to such is done in the fear of God and dependence upon the Holy Spirit then it may well achieve the end result of bringing such into the sphere of the local assembly with all its privileges and joys of fellowship.

Anxiety and prayer are more opposed to each other than fire and water.—*J. A. Bengel.*

The beginning of anxiety is the end of faith, and the beginning of true faith is the end of anxiety.—*George Muller*

Outlines

by NELSON McDONALD (Scotland)

4. A MEDITATION OF HIM. (Ps. 104.34)

The Birth He Fulfilled—Is. 7.14; Matt 1.23; John 1.14; Gal. 4.4.

The Business He Undertook—Luke 2.49; John 4.34; 6.38; 8.29.

The Baptism He Obeyed—Matt. 3.13-17.

The Book He Read—Luke 4.17; Ps. 40.8.

The Behaviour He Practised—Acts 10.38; Mark 7.37.

The Benevolence He Showed—John 11.5; Luke 7.13.

The Banquet He Instituted—Luke 22.19; 1 Cor. 11.23; Matt. 26.26.

The Bread He Brake—Luke 22.19; 1 Cor. 11.24;

The Body He Gave—Heb. 10.5,10; Jn. 10.17; 1 Cor. 11.24.

The Blood He Shed—Luke 22.20; Matt. 26.28; 1 Cor. 11.26; 1 John 1.7.

The Buffeting He Suffered—Matt. 26.67; Mark 14.65; 1 Pet. 2.20.

The Bruising He Endured—Isa. 53.7,10; John 19.1-5; Matt. 27.29-30.

The Burden He Bare — John 1.29; 19.17; 1 Peter 2.24; Isa. 53.12.

The Battle He Fought—Heb. 2.14; Job 41.8; Matt. 12.29;

The Blessings He Bestows—Eph. 1.3, Prov. 10.22; Num. 6.24.

The Brethren He Loves—Heb. 2.11-13; John 20.17; 21.23; Ps. 22.22.

HYMNS AND THEIR WRITERS (32), by Jack Strahan, Enniskillen

“THERE IS LIFE FOR A LOOK AT THE CRUCIFIED ONE”

AMELIA MATILDA HULL (1812— ? 1882)

“Not many noble (“high-born”—J.N.D.) are called” (1 Cor. 1.26) and yet, in sovereign grace, God sometimes visits such families with His salvation. In the last century, the Hulls of South Devon were a shining example of such Divine intervention. They

were a noble family of renowned military tradition and lived at Marpool Hall on the outskirts of Exmouth, and though today their ancient family home has disappeared and been replaced by a public park (Phear Park), yet still there remains in that part of England very fragrant memories of the Hulls of Marpool Hall.

Anna (Amelia) Matilda Hull was born on September 30th, 1812, the youngest of a family of eleven children of William Thomas and Harriott Hull of Marpool Hall. Her father was a retired army captain. Of Amelia's personal life, very little has been left on record apart from the story of her conversion. However, the circumstances of that great event are so full of interest and are so inextricably linked with the birth of her lovely hymn, "There is life for a look at the Crucified One" that they were worth relating. It has been recorded that when Amelia was about twenty years of age she heard the gospel of Christ for the first time. A visiting evangelist had pitched his tent near to their family home and invited the neighbouring people to come and hear the gospel. One night Amelia ventured to go. She slipped in at the back of the tent and listened with intent to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Her heart was troubled. When she returned home and told her father where she had been, he was furious. He told her that association with such "rangers" and their meetings was not becoming to anyone of her station of life, and he forbade her to go back. However, Amelia's heart had already received the first droppings of the living water and she thirsted for more. She felt she must go back and in spite of her father's forbidding, she returned the following evening. The message on that occasion was taken from John 3, 14 & 15, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." In that meeting Amelia looked by faith to the Christ of Calvary and was saved for eternity.

On her arrival home, she met with her father's fury. He was beside himself with rage. Taking her to the library he scolded her severely for what she had done and ordered that she appear there again next morning at 9 o'clock to be horse-whipped. With mixed feelings, Amelia retired for the night: having incurred her father's displeasure she was sad, and yet the deep joy of God's salvation filled and flooded her soul. She thought upon the events of the past evening—upon the greatness of the message which had brought her peace and, as she did so, she jotted down her heart's musings upon a piece of paper. When 9 o'clock arrived, she made her way to the library with the piece of paper in her hand. There stood her father; his riding whip lay upon the table. She entered, handed him the piece of paper and waited. Captain William Thomas Hull stood there that morning and read the words of Amelia's composition,

"There is life for a look at the Crucified One,
 There is life at this moment for thee;
 Then look, sinner, look unto Him and be saved,
 Unto Him who was nailed to the tree.
 Oh, why was He there as the Bearer of sin,
 If on Jesus thy guilt was not laid?
 Oh, why from His side flowed the sin-cleansing Blood,
 If His dying thy debt has not paid?
 It is not thy tears of repentance or prayers,
 But the Blood, that atones for the soul;
 On Him, then Who shed it, thou mayest at once
 Thy weight of iniquities roll.
 Then doubt not thy welcome, since God has declared
 There remaineth no more to be done;
 That once in the end of the world He appeared,
 And completed the work He begun.
 Then take with rejoicing from Jesus at once
 The Life Everlasting He gives;
 And know with assurance thou never canst die,
 Since Jesus, thy righteousness, lives."

and as he read, a change came over him. He sat down and buried his face in his hands. God had spoken to his heart and he was now a broken man. Gone was any thought of horse-whipping his daughter. Instead in the library that morning, Captain Hull sought and found his daughter Amelia's Saviour.

From that day forward, a great transformation was effected both in the Captain's personal life and in every-day life at Marpool Hall. He had become a new creature in Christ Jesus and Marpool Hall became a Christian home. Several other members of the family experienced the same saving change and led lives wholly devoted to the service of God. Through the influence of the Hull family, a hall on the Exeter Road was acquired for the preaching of the gospel and in 1843 a private cemetery was secured at Withycombe, to be used exclusively for the burial of believers in assembly fellowship. Five of the eleven members of that notable Hull family have been laid to rest in that little cemetery. Truly the miracle of God's salvation wrought unprecedented change in that illustrious family of South Devon.

Amelia's lovely hymn, penned on the night of her conversion, has been blessed by God to countless hearts. The verses are marked by a great simplicity and an amazing clarity. Nevertheless, they express tremendous spiritual truth—truth which again and again has been used by the Spirit of God to help sin-burdened souls find the way to salvation. By these words, Amelia Hull sweetly draws seeking souls to the cross of Christ. That cross

becomes precious; it becomes everything. How assuredly she speaks to hearts there! There all arguments are silenced; there all questionings cease; there all human endeavour is abandoned, for the Saviour's work is so totally sufficient for the soul's salvation. Sin's load has been completely borne. Sin's debt has been fully paid. Full atonement has been made at inestimable cost, and salvation's work for sinful man stands perfect and complete. What divine provision for worthless creatures . . . and all that has been procured there on that cross by the Infinite Sufferer may be secured personally by the sinner through "a look of faith!" Oh the immensity, the finality and the sufficiency of the Saviour's sacrifice! It meets the sinner's need in full and forever . . . but, if not, then Calvary must forever remain the supreme tragedy of all history, the great mystery of all ages.

"Oh, why was He there as the Bearer of sin,
If on Jesus thy guilt was not laid?
Oh, why from His side flowed the sin-cleansing Blood,
If His dying thy debt has not paid?"

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

CHRIST IN THE APOCALYPSE

by J. B. D. Page

STUDIES IN JOHN'S GOSPEL

by Wm. Hoste

PRAGMATIC PRONOUNS

by J. G. Good

OUTLINES

by N. McDonald

FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTALS

by J. B. Hewitt

TALKS TO YOUNG BELIEVERS

by J. Ritchie

HYMNS AND THEIR WRITERS

by J. Strahan

KEPT

(Tune : Mudstone — S.M.).

Kept by the power of God,
Kept underneath His sway,
Kept in the world His feet had trod,
Kept till the break of day.

Kept by the power of God,
Kept! Not the tempter's prey,
Kept and consoled by staff and rod,
Kept till the break of day.

Kept by the power of God,
Kept! The world kept at bay,
Kept through the tempest, storm and flood,
Kept till the break of day.

Kept by the power of God,
Kept though the flesh dismay,
Kept! I'm saved through the precious blood,
Kept till the break of day.

—*John Glenville.*

CHRIST IN THE APOCALYPSE (11)

by JOHN B. D. PAGE

THE ANGEL — REDEEMER

Reading: Revelation 10.1f.

John had another vision of an angel. This mighty angel from heaven was enrobed with a cloud and he stood astride upon the earth, having one foot on the sea and the other on dry land.

Again, the problem of identification arises. G. H. Lang argues that this angel, as he does concerning the angel-priest (ch. 8), is not Christ but here he is Michael the arch-angel, who is, of course, always associated with Israel and not the Church (Dan. 12.1, Jude 9). "Who is this angel?" asks A. C. Gaebelain, who then replies "It is Christ Himself. We saw our Lord in angel's form before the opening of the seventh seal and then He appeared in *priestly* dignity. Here before the sounding of the seventh trumpet he appears again in the same form, but He is called a mighty angel and we behold Him in *royal* dignity."

Among other writers who also express the view that this angel is Christ, Philip Mauro comments, "The mighty Angel is a symbolical representation of Christ Himself. For everything that is said to characterize this Angel pertains to Deity." As we shall look further into these verses, we shall discover that this is apparently correct. Before doing so, the prophetic location of this vision is worth noting.

Prophetically, the activity of the Angel-Priest (ch. 8) is during the tribulation when the wrath of God will be poured out upon Israel and the nations, and the setting is the heavenly temple. However, when the Angel-Redeemer (ch. 10) emerges, as Walter Scott points out, "the half-week of sorrow (i.e. three and a half years) is nearly spent, but its last hours reveal the world in mad and open rebellion against God and His saints, on whom the Beast and the Antichrist wreak their fury." This vision unveils "a Mighty Angel," Who is greater and stronger than the gruesome Beast in Rome and the fearful Antichrist in Jerusalem at that time.

In this vision, John said, "I saw another mighty (or, strong, RV) angel . . ." On a previous occasion, he said,

“I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book . . . ?” (ch. 5.2). Although both angels are said to be “strong,” they are not synonymous. The earlier angel is a created being, endowed with exceptional strength, but this Angel is an uncreated Being Whose great strength is not derived from an outside source but it is underived, for He is the Source of all strength and power which He will ultimately display. Of this Mighty Angel, John saw that He is “come down from heaven” which in itself is a supernatural act. Just as “no man hath ascended up to heaven” (John 3.13), so no man has descended from heaven, which is a logical deduction to make. Therefore, the act of coming down from heaven is not of man but of God. For His first advent, Christ “came down from heaven” (John 3.13, and 6.33, etc.), and likewise for His second advent He will “come down from heaven,” as stated here, but the scriptures show that He will come down first to the air (1 Thess. 4.16f) and seven years later He will come down to the earth. There will be one coming but two phases to the coming, and the second is here in view. The preposition “from,” or ‘out of’ (lit.), preceding the word “heaven” signifies ‘movement from within’, and so the point of His departure will be not the atmospheric or sidereal heavens which would be from without, but the third heaven, even “heaven itself, . . . the presence of God” (Heb. 9.24), which is his present abode.

Looking at the Angel’s raiment, John said He is “clothed with a cloud.” Opinions differ whether the cloud is natural or supernatural, whether it is of mist or the shekinah cloud which was upon the tabernacle and later the temple. Knowing something of John’s deep understanding of the Old Testament scriptures, the shekinah cloud is undoubtedly the Angel’s clothing. For the nature of the cloud, we may recall that “a bright cloud overshadowed” the Lord Jesus and three of His disciples at His transfiguration (Matt. 17.5), and the word “bright” (*photeinos*, Gr.) is translated “full of light” elsewhere (Matt. 6.22). Whilst a cloud obscures the sun, this shekinah cloud-garment would have appeared ‘bright,’ being ‘full of light’ to an onlooker like John. Of course, the shekinah cloud is a symbol of the Divine Presence, which is in keeping with the Person of this Angel.

Furthermore, “a (or, the, RV) rainbow was upon His

head." The definite article, as in the Revised Version, makes the rainbow specific, and so it must be the same "rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald" (Rev. 4.3), as seen by the seer earlier. Also, Ezekiel saw in a vision "the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in a day of rain" encircling the throne occupied by One Who had the appearance of a Man, Who was, undoubtedly, the pre-incarnate Christ in human form (Ezek. 1.26-28). Unlike a natural rainbow and that seen by Ezekiel, this rainbow was of one colour. Therefore, the emerald coloured rainbow, which had encircled the throne earlier, is now a halo upon the Angel's head.

Here, in Revelation, is the last mention in the scriptures of the word "rainbow." For its first mention, we turn to Genesis 9.13 where the Lord tells Noah that He will set His "bow in the cloud" as a sign of His perpetual covenant with the post-diluvial world. Remarkably, in both the first and last occurrences of the word, the rainbow is associated with a cloud. In Genesis, it is a rain-cloud, and the rainbow was a God-given assurance to Noah and his posterity that the newly purged world would not again be destroyed by the waters of judgment. In Revelation, it is the glory-cloud with which the mighty Angel was clothed, and the rainbow formed a halo around His head. With the clouds of divine wrath about to pass and the millennial day approaching, the rainbow-halo may be a sign to a future remnant of godly Jews that the seven year storm of judgment has passed for ever and the mighty Angel will make a new covenant with them as they enter the new world.

"And His face," said John, referring to the Angel, "was as it were the sun," which reminds us that "the countenance" of the Son of Man "was as the sun shineth in its strength" (1.16), which John beheld earlier. As on that occasion, a simile of the oriental noon-day sun is used here to describe the brilliance of the glory with which the face of this Mighty Angel was radiant. When the Lord Jesus was transfigured, "His face did shine as the sun" (Matt. 17.2), which long lingered in John's mind, because decades later he said "we beheld His glory" (John 1.14, cp. Luke 9.32). The radiance of the Angel's face is explained by the fact that the glory, which was formerly upon the mercy seat and between the cherubim, is now embodied in Christ,

and so the divine glory is no longer an emblem but a Person. In consequence, He is the effulgence of the glory, which emanates not only from His face but His whole Being.

Continuing, "and His feet as pillars of fire," said John. Of the Son of Man, John had observed earlier that "His feet (were) like unto fine brass" (1.15), which is cited from Daniel (10.6). Such a statement is symbolical of Christ coming again in judgment to the earth, as expressed in II Thessalonians 1.7f, ". . . the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven . . . in flaming fire taking vengeance . . .," which will be upon apostate Israel and Christ-rejecting Gentiles.

The mighty Angel "set His right foot upon the sea, and His left foot on the earth," as John saw Him. He stood astride the globe! What a symbolical picture of world dominion, at which many men have aimed throughout the centuries and still do! Of course, the right to such global power and position belongs to Christ alone, and not to fallen man. In this vision, Christ was seen by John not as Man but in the guise of a "mighty Angel," because angels rank higher and mightier than men in the order of created beings. In angelic power, He asserts His undisputed claim to world dominion. Initially, God gave to man "dominion over the fish of the sea, . . . and over the cattle, and over all the earth . . ." (Gen. 1.26), but, through sin at his fall, he lost it. Since the Noachic flood, man has had, through fear and dread, dominion over the beasts of the earth and the fish of the sea (Gen. 9.2).

During the days of His flesh, Christ was offered world dominion by Satan but He *refused* it (Matt. 4.8f). Later, He was offered regal dominion by the people but He *recoiled* from it (John 6.15). For the millennial age yet to come, the glorified Christ will *receive* universal dominion from His Father (I Cor. 15.24f), and then the powers of hell will be stultified and mankind pacified

In that coming age of righteousness, the dominion of Christ will not be of short duration like Adam's, but it will endure "throughout all generations" (Psa. 145.13, Dan. 7.14). During the era of His worldwide sovereignty, the nations will be for His inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth will be for His possession. (Psa. 2.8).

STUDIES IN JOHN'S GOSPEL

(Christ, the Interpreter of the Father)

by WM. HOSTE

5—IN A SCENE OF NEED (John 6)

The miracle of the feeding of the five thousand is unique, in being the only one—if we except of course the crowning miracle of the resurrection—which is narrated in all the four Gospels. There must be teaching of special importance to be learnt from it. The sister miracle of “the four thousand” is given in Matthew 15 and Mark 8. Probably had our Lord Himself not settled the matter otherwise (Matt. 16.9,10), the critics would have asserted in their lofty fashion, the identity of the two miracles. Perhaps they have done so, for modern Sadducees that they are, their *forte* is knowledge of their own writings rather than of the Holy Scriptures.

The fact that two distinct miracles were performed, so closely similar, may throw light on some of what are termed “the discrepancies of the Gospels.” Perhaps we have too readily assumed the identity of incidents, which, though similar are after all distinct. In the miracle before us, the Lord is presented as interpreting the Father in a scene of human need, as the One who “opens His hand and satisfieth the desire of every living thing,” and who knows and forestalls His people’s wants, before they ask Him. In each of the synoptists the occasion is the same. The evil curiosity of Herod had been aroused, by the fame of Jesus. “This is John whom I beheaded;” and, he “desired to see Him.” But the Lord withdraws Himself from the inquisitiveness of the proud, and reveals Himself to the humble seeker. “He hath filled the hungry with good things, but the rich He hath sent empty away.” The twelve had just returned from their mission. He knew their frame, they were weary and needed rest. “Come ye yourselves apart,” He said, “into a desert place and rest awhile; for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat bread.” Accordingly they took shipping to a desert spot on the northern shore of the lake; but the people passed round the lake on foot, and outwent them. The place be-

longed to Bethsaida (Luke 9.10), the scene of so many miracles (Matt. 11.21). The city was to witness perhaps, one more appeal to their repentance and faith. Instead then of a place of peace and repose, it was a scene of hustle and confusion which our Lord and His disciples found on landing. The very crowds they had been ministering to, and had been obliged to leave for quietness sake, were there awaiting them. What would be our Lord's attitude to these men? Fallen human nature would have become testy and irritable. Did He reproach them for their selfishness and lack of consideration to Him and His tired disciples? Nay, for in Him we see perfection. "He was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd" (not first because they were physically needy, but without spiritual guidance), "and He began to teach them many things" (Mark 6.34). and then, as Matthew tells us, He "healed their sick" (chap. 16.14).

Next arose the problem of food. Our Lord's question to Philip seems to have been a private one. The Lord had Himself called Philip, perhaps there was a special link between his Lord and him, a peculiar desire on the part of Christ to see him grow in grace.

A natural thought, when we see a crowd, is how will their needs be catered for. When the Lord saw one, He made their needs His own. How shall we cater for them? "Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?" Philip's difficulty was not so much whence, but how. He names an unheard-of sum, far beyond the resources of their common bag. But even that would not be sufficient. The penny is the Roman denarius, equivalent to ninepence of our money. Two hundred pence would then be £7 10s, enough to buy to-day about 250 of our two pound loaves. This would mean among 5000 men one loaf to twenty, a meagre supply, even were their loaves like ours! * Our Lord's question to Philip was "to prove him, for He Himself knew, what He would do." The Lord has ways outside our ken. His resources are varied and inexhaustible, while our faith easily drops into a rut and is soon exhausted. Philip's proving, like our own too often, shewed he had been a slow learner in the school of grace. Our Lord had already fed greater multitudes in another wilderness for 40 years, and Philip

* While the currency is dated, the principle is not!

might have remembered how "He brought water out of the flinty rock, and gave them bread from heaven to eat," as it is written for his and our learning in the Psalms

The Lord was "proving" Philip's faith. When Israel murmured and demanded meat for their lust, he should have recalled the Lord's answer, which staggered even Moses, "Ye shall not eat one day, nor two days, nor five days, neither ten days, nor twenty days, but even a whole month" (Num. 2.19,20). How could such an unheard of thing be? "Shall the flocks and the herds be slain for them to suffice them, or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them to suffice them?" Moses could see only two possible ways of feeding with flesh the host of Israel—the slaughter of all their cattle, or a mighty haul of Red Sea fish; but the Lord could see a third and better way. It was to be His provision, not theirs, and He would bring it to their very tents. "The Lord knew what He would do." "Is the Lord's hand waxed short? Thou shalt see now whether my word shall come to pass unto thee or not." "The people asked and He brought quails." But was this in reality a blessing? No. "He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their souls." A fat body, may hold a lean soul. To the aged who dwell in the house of the Lord it is promised, "They shall be fat and flourishing" (Psa. 92.14).

Jehovah could supply Elijah's needs through the unclean birds of prey, the starving widow in the far-off land of Jezebel, and later in the wilderness, where there were neither ravens nor widows. Once more, "man did eat angels' food," or at least food from an angel's hand. Deserts are favoured spots for the people of God. It is there they really learn His resources. Elims are preceded by Marahs.

How could famine-stricken Samaria hope for enough and to spare, on the morrow? Unbelief could only suggest one way, and that for it an impossibility. "If the Lord would make windows in heaven, might this thing be." The Lord might have done it that way. He promises, in fact, to His people, as we know, that if they bring all the tithes into the storehouse—that is the portion of His poor and of His servants—"to open the windows of heaven and pour them out such a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Mal. 3 10). This blessing is not only spiritual but material, as the following verses show. You may save

in doctors' bills and dentists' bills, and bills for repairs, what you have given to the Lord. But to go back to Samaria, was the Lord's hand shortened? Was He shut up to one way of supply? Nay, "He Himself knew what He would do." He made His enemies hear "a dreadful sound," and disgorge their rich spoil into the laps of His people. Unbelief did not partake, however, for though it cannot "shut up His tender mercies," it can shut off its own share of them. But "God is faithful."

He knows, He loves, He cares.
Nothing this truth can dim;
He always does the best for those,
Who leave the choice to Him.

"He Himself knew what He would do." So far the apostle ought to have been assured, for He was the Christ—the Power of God and the Wisdom of God; but they could not have guessed how He would provide, for "His ways past finding out" (Rom. 11.33), and His wisdom is very *variegated (Eph. 3.10).

Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never-failing skill,
He treasures up His bright designs,
And works His sovereign will.

No one would have supposed that this lad, with his little store, would be the source of supply for all this people. Yet he was the providential provision of the Father. God does use means, but very inadequate, save to the eye of faith. "A small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground," was to nourish the thousands of Israel; the scrapings of a meal barrel; the dregs of a cruse of oil to keep an Elijah alive; three hundred feeble men with trumpets, to deliver His people from a vast host; a little maid to bring Naaman to himself; "the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." And here no baker's storehouse, but five barley cakes; no great haul, but two insignificant fishes, "weak things" indeed, but "mighty through God." The lad may have been an apostle's boy. He must at least have been of the apostolic band, for in all the other Gospels

* "Polupoikilos" — primarily, marked with a great variety of colours, of cloth, or a painting, then manifesting itself in a great variety of forms, as here.

the apostles speak of the food as being their own. "We have five loaves and two small fishes." Whoever He was, he was ready at hand at God's moment, and though the supply was meagre, it was enough and to spare, when brought to Christ. Nothing is too small to yield to Him, or too great to withhold. It may remind us of "the deep poverty of the churches of Macedonia, which, by the grace of God, "abounded to the riches of their liberality," a feeble echo of that wonderful "grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich." And lest we should think this is something quite outside and beyond our experience, the Spirit of God adds—"God is able to make all grace abound towards you; that ye always, having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work." For He who multiplied the five barley cakes and fish still lives, and can "multiply your seed sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness" (2 Cor. 8.15; 9.8,10). "Little is much if God be in it." Did ever crumb grow to bigger loaf, or slender store to richer feast? Now the guests are seated on the thick grass to insure their comfort, and in hundreds and fifties, to insure their orderly supply. "All ate and were filled," and "the fishes divided He among them all." None were neglected, none surfeited, none unsatisfied. So is God's provision in nature, and in grace. Air, water, sun to be had for the taking, and "food for the service of man," free too, in response to the most modest labour, but for the fall, and in spite of the fall, a full supply of grace through the atoning blood of Christ, available for a guilty world and for needy saints "My God shall supply all your need, according to His riches in glory by Jesus Christ." God's care is over all His works, but especially toward "the household of faith," "He careth for you;" "your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things;" therefore, "Take no anxious thought," "Be careful for nothing." "Casting all your care upon Him." Thus the Lord interprets the Father. He provides for the multitude, but He does not forget His own. To each fell a basket of fragments. Surely not half-chewed, mauled pieces of bread and fish. The Lord would not offer such fragments to His servants, but, as I take it, what remained of the great store, "over and above to them that had eaten," "good measure pressed down and

running over." Whatever others may think will do for the Lord's servants, it would not be His thought to provide them other than with something clean, and fresh, and "worthy of God." Had there been thirteen apostles, no doubt there would have been thirteen basketsful. Like the widow's oil, the fragments would not have stayed, when there was another basket to fill. There ought, indeed, to have been a thirteenth basket for the Lord Himself, but He did not lay up in store for His own needs. That, no doubt, it was the privilege of others to do for Him. Thus their individual needs were fully met. Here the word for basket is *kophinos*, a wicker-basket as always in the account of the miracle. But in the account of the feeding of the 4,000, another kind of basket—*spuris*—woven out of reeds, is mentioned. There were only seven of these, representing perhaps fulness of supply according to their collective need. Some make much of the individual need, some much of the collective, but both have their important place. No doubt the assembly is made up of individuals, and if the whole is to prosper, it must be through the individual members. But there is also a collective need and responsibility. What may meet the individual need, may not be suitable for the collective. There are the twelve baskets, that each may enjoy his individual supply. There are the seven baskets, that no one may say to his brother, "I have no need of thee." We cannot get on alone. We are members of a body, to which every joint supplies its measure.

The feeding of the five thousand evoked a true, though inadequate, acknowledgment to our Lord's Person, "This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world." The remembrance of analogous miracles in the days of Moses and Elisha would enable the multitude, without much spiritual apprehension, to recognise in Him "the prophet" foretold by Moses (Deut. 18.15). According to *Dr. Ederheim, this prophecy was not held to be Messianic by the ancient Rabbis, which explains the distinction between "Christ" and "that prophet," drawn by the deputation sent by the Pharisees to John the Baptist (John 1.20,21). This is used by Moslem controversialists to prove that Jesus was not "the prophet"—a role reserved for Mahomet. But whatever they or the Rabbis may say, our Lord was recognised

* "Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah."

as "the prophet," not only here, but in Matt. 21.11, where the words should be rendered, "This is the prophet, Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee." Peter too, by the Spirit, applies the Deuteronomy passage directly to the Lord in Acts 3.22.

That He, however, was "the Son," "the Heir," did not enter into their conception of things. That He was "come to seek and to save that which was lost," and that this entailed the work of redemption, met no need of theirs. They "would have taken Him by force and made Him a King," but not on His terms—that of repentance, which was the very condition of the Kingdom. Our Lord's refusal to be made a king after man's heart, is no proof He did not come to be their King after God's heart. In His public entry into Jerusalem He had this definite object in view. It was understood in this sense by the multitude of His disciples (quite a distinct class from "the multitude" here), and was so interpreted by the Holy Spirit. "All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, 'Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold thy King cometh unto thee'" (Zech. 9.9). When the Old Testament prophets speak of "the Kingdom," they refer to the literal Davidic kingdom, based on moral and spiritual sanctions (e.g., "A King shall reign in righteousness" Isa. 32.1). No refinements of interpretation can explain this away. It is really a serious anachronism to read back into the Jewish prophets the present Gospel dispensation, an interval not then revealed. Israel, as a nation, rejected their King, and are for the present rejected. The Gospel is now proclaimed without distinction to Jew and Gentile, and the old wall of partition is broken down in Christ. To interpret such words as "Behold *thy* King cometh unto thee," as the offer of the Gospel to Israel, as we have it to-day, is to ignore all dispensational truth and introduce serious confusion.

But though the people recognised His miraculous powers for their temporal benefit, and desired to enjoy them further, they had yet a far deeper lesson to learn.

The Lord would interpret the Father, not only as the Supplier of man's material food, but of the Heavenly Bread, the Bread of Life. That would perish with the eating—a temporary provision for a temporal need: this would en-

dure "unto everlasting life," increasing as fed upon. That must be earned with the sweat of the brow, this must be believed for. The word for "believe" is in the present—"become a believer." But the Lord was in the presence of unbelief, and unbelief has but a short memory, asks for signs and misapplies the Word of the Lord. It was Jehovah, not Moses, who gave the manna to Israel (Neh. 9.15). But at best, that was only the figure of Him who is "the true Bread," given by the Father. The bread of earth comes up from the earth, the bread of God (**His** bread before becoming the Bread of life for man), came down from heaven. That sustains life, this gives life unto the world.

Though they asked for the bread, they knew not it was Jesus Himself, nor would they feed on Him, when He gave them to know it. But those given to Christ by the Father, and taught of Him, do come and feed upon the Living Bread with faith and appetite.

The manna could not avert death, but whoso eats this Bread shall never die, but live for ever. But once more, the Heavenly Bread transcends the earthly, for not only does it give life, but is itself the "Living Bread."

That Bread was His flesh, which He would give for the life of the world. The change of the figure from bread to "flesh and blood" is very important. There can be no partaking of Christ through incarnation, but only through the death of the Cross, on the ground of accomplished redemption. Those who apply this eating and drinking to partaking of the Lord's supper, under whatever name they term it, fall very far from the truth. The necessity to "eat the flesh and drink the blood" of Christ, as spoken of here, was, and is peremptory and absolute. Achieving that, means eternal life, failing that, eternal death. Who would dare to affirm that everyone partaking of the Lord's supper has eternal life, or omitting to partake is doomed to perish. Moreover, the Lord's supper was not instituted till long after our Lord spoke these words, and yet those addressed were held responsible then and there, to eat His flesh and drink His blood. It is true the Lord had not died, but the types and prophecies were eloquent witnesses to the death of Messiah, the Jews themselves being witnesses. This eating and drinking, is the appropriation of His Person and work.

It is a spiritual, not a literal or so-called "sacramental" partaking. "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." This truth was too hard a saying for many a professed disciple. How could a slain Christ fulfil their hopes of earthly glory? What would they then, were they to see the Son of Man ascend and disappear where He was before, His whole mission to Israel an apparent failure. From that time, many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him. "Will ye also go away?" asked the Lord of the apostles. "Lord, to whom shall we go?" replied Peter, "Thou hast the words of eternal life, and we believe and are sure that Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Had he never learnt that lesson before, he had learnt it the previous night when, sinking beneath the waves of the Sea of Galilee, he had felt the strong right hand of Christ grasp and save him. He had tasted that the Lord was gracious. He would learn to feed upon Him still, and in doing so to be conformed daily to His image.

Man earthy of the earth, an-hungered, feeds
On earth's dark poison tree,
Wild gourds and deadly roots and bitter weeds,
And as his food is he.
And hungry souls there are, that find and eat
God's manna day by day,
And glad they are, their life is fresh and sweet,
For as their food are they.

PRAGMATIC PRONOUNS

by J. G. GOOD

The authorship of Psalm 119 has been attributed by some to Ezra, the primary reason being, his affection and reverence for the Word of God (Ezra 6.6). The reader of this Psalm is introduced to a veritable storehouse of spiritual experience. We are impressed by the personal involvement of the writer, he is keenly aware of his privileges and resulting responsibilities, in this respect the supreme place of the Word to guide and direct is deliberate, coupled with a Divine design aimed at the blessing of the writer and reader.

It is the personal commitment that this paper would emphasise. Seven times over in this Psalm we find the writer stating his personal experience and progress in the ways of

God, in the words, 'I AM,' this repetition gives us an insight into the innermost thoughts and desires of the speaker, providing sound spiritual advice for our day.

Pilgrim Character (verse 19), 'I AM a stranger in the earth hide not Thy commandments from me.'

Strangers away from home, pilgrims going home. 'They confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth' (Heb. 11.13). Two features marked Abraham as a pilgrim, a tent and altar, a pilgrim for God and a worshipper of God. How easy to lose the pilgrim character, to be ensnared in the mesh of worldliness and materialism. There is a future generation mentioned in the book of Revelation, they are referred to as 'earth dwellers' refusing to acknowledge the claims of God over the earth. (Rev. 14.6). The Christian desires a 'better country that is an heavenly' (Heb. 11.16). How necessary are the commandments of God to a stranger and sojourner during our pilgrimage here, in a waste howling wilderness we are dependent upon heavenly communications for our guidance. 'Thy commandments,' Divine instruction, for the Dependent individual, 'from me.'

Principled Company (verse 63), 'I AM a companion of all them that fear Thee and of them that keep Thy precepts.'

There is nothing more calculated to destroy our testimony for God, than the choice of wrong companions. Fear and obedience are co-related, again we see this demonstrated in the life of Abraham (Gen. 22.1). Obedience to the revealed Word of God is of paramount importance, a reverential fear brings this condition about. This should be the criteria regarding our choice of companions, do they fear and obey God? 'How can two walk together except they be agreed' (Amos 3.3). Compromise should not be tolerated when it comes to the question of the authority of the Word of God. We need discretion in these matters, it is not to our credit to be large hearted at the expense of the commandments of God.

Progressive Chastisement (verse 83), 'I AM become like a bottle in the smoke, yet do I not forget Thy statutes.'

His condition is figurative of the skin bottle dried and blackened in the smoke as it hung suspended from the roof. How true this is of the Christian in the furnace of affliction,

shrouded and shrivelled in the ever increasing smoke of present trial. The picture here is one of progression (verse 81), 'soul fainteth,' (verse 82), 'mine eyes fail,' (verse 84), 'how many are the days of Thy servant.' How good to see the attitude in which this state was endured, 'yet I do not forget Thy statutes.' The word statute occurs twenty-two times in this Psalm, it comes from a root which means, to hew, to cut in, engrave, inscribe, and so carries the thought of that which is ordained, decreed, prescribed and enacted. (W. Graham Scroggie) Is the Word of God leaving its mark upon us?

Potent Claim (verse 94), 'I AM Thine save me for I have sought Thy precepts.'

What a claim we have on our Lord Jesus Christ, purchased by His precious blood, delivered from the penalty and guilt of sin, but still very conscious of the evil root principle within, this is why we re-iterate the words 'I am Thine, SAVE me.' The daily salvation of the believer depends upon the continuity of our coming unto our great High Priest. 'Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him' (Heb. 7.25). The coming mentioned in this verse is not the initial coming for salvation, but as the word infers it is a coming constantly as believers to draw succour and support from the infinite resources of the High Priest functioning for us now in the presence of God. Let us come with boldness and claim His power to meet our present plight, the resources are far greater than our extremities!

Present Conflict (verse 107), 'I AM afflicted very much, quicken me O Lord according unto Thy word.'

The subject of affliction is a feature of the book of Psalms, and especially of Psalm 119, in which it is mentioned four times, verse 67, 'Before I was afflicted I went astray' here Discipline is in view (verse 71), 'It is good for me that I have been afflicted,' the thought here is that of Design (verse 75), 'Thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me,' the source is Divine, the fourth mention is in verse 107, 'I am afflicted very much,' could we think of this as being Destructive, in a good sense, bringing with it the need for reviving. Without the intuition that a Divine Hand was at work many a child of God would be driven to insanity. The aim of this

affliction is to bring us nearer to our God.

‘Bless I then the Hand that smiteth,
Gently, and to heal delighteth,
Tis’ against my sins He fighteth,
Peace, peace is mine.’

Personal Confession (verse 125), ‘I AM Thy servant, give me understanding, that I may know Thy testimonies.’

What a privilege to be engaged in His service (Acts 27.23). ‘If any man serve Me, let him follow Me’ (John 12.26). There has been a change of masters (Rom. 6.16-20). The two basic requirements of a servant are understanding and knowledge, understanding is the key to knowledge. There can be no substitute for the apprenticeship in the school of grace. Moses needed the backside of the desert experience and Paul the Arabian interlude to be equipped and taught of God. The prime reason for this request by the writer in this verse is given in the following verse ‘They have made void Thy law.’ The way to expose error is to present truth. There should be a continual repetition of ‘The things most surely believed among us’ (Luke 1.1). The servant’s brief ‘Thy testimonies,’ this excludes the propagation of man made doctrines.

Precious Condition (verse 141), ‘I AM small and despised yet do not forget Thy precepts.’

O that there were more ‘small’ people in our assemblies today.

‘He that is down, need fear no fall,
He that is low no pride,
He that is humble ever shall,
Have God to be his guide.

‘Bind on humility’ (1 Pet. 5.5). Pride is a pernicious disease in a Christian, and is the growing medium for other well known associated evils. The humiliation of the Saviour described for us in Philippians 2, deflated Paul, ‘I counted loss for Christ,’ (Ch. 3.7). It is impossible to have right views of the Cross and at the same time worship self. The estimation of self is on a declining scale when we remain in the shadow of the Cross. We may be small and despised, but here as elsewhere in this Psalm the support and shelter of the believer is the immutable Word of God!

Outlines

by NELSON McDONALD (Scotland)

(5) JOHN'S GOSPEL.

- Ch. 1. The Ministry of the Trinity.
Ch. 2.19. The Ministry of the Temple.
Ch. 3-10. The Ministry of the Teacher.
Ch. 11. The Ministry of the Tomb.
Ch. 12. 1-11. The Ministry of the Table.
Ch. 12. 12-19. The Ministry of the Throne.
Ch. 13. The Ministry of the Towel.
Ch. 14-17. The Ministry of the Tranquility.
Ch. 18.38. The Ministry of the Truth.
Ch. 19. The Ministry of the Tree.
Ch. 20. The Ministry of the Triumphant.
Ch. 21. The Ministry of the Treasurer.

The Lord Jesus in John's Gospel

- 1.1.3. The Supreme One.
2.10. The Satisfying One.
3.14. The Suffering One.
4.18. The Searching One.
5.23,30. The Sent One.
6.27. The Sealed One.
7.46. The Shining One.
8.46. The Sinless One.
9.7. The Sightgiving One.
10.11. The Shepherding One.
11.25. The Sympathising One.
12.32. The Saving One.
13.5. The Serving One.
14.3. The Sooncoming One.
15.16. The Selecting One.
16.7. The Spiritgiving One.
17.17-19. The Sanctifying One.
18.22. The Smitten One.
19.9. The Silent One.
20.27. The Scarred One.
21.7. The Sovereign One.

FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTALS

by J. B. HEWITT, Chesterfield

(37) THE HOLY SPIRIT IN 2 CORINTHIANS

In this Epistle Paul answered his detractors who questioned his apostleship and criticised his ministry and his motives. It is one of the most personal of Paul's Epistles. Bishop Handley Moule says, "Reading this epistle we feel as if we can see his face, touch his hand, catch the accent of his voice and detect the tears in his tired eyes."

Paul opened his heart to his readers and revealed the price he had paid, the sufferings he endured, and the comfort he experienced from the Holy Spirit.

Confirmation (1.22). Paul used four precious words to underline God's attitude toward us:—establish, anoint, seal, earnest.

(1) **Established into Christ** (RV). God has placed us on the Rock (Psa. 40.2; 1 Cor. 3.11). We are being daily confirmed in our union with Christ. This is a continuing process following our conversion. Confirmed in the faith (Col. 2.7) and in grace (Heb. 13.9). Being settled and assured in Christ we should be faithful. (2) **Anointed**. By the Holy Spirit God has consecrated us to His service and makes us like Christ (Luke 4.18,19; 1 John 2.20,27).

The Holy Spirit should direct our service and He enables us to obey the will of God (Acts 16.6,7,10). (3) **God Seals What He Anoints** (Eph. 1.13; 4.20). It is a mark of Divine ownership. The Holy Spirit marks those in whom He dwells as belonging to God. It brings certainty and signifies security (Dan. 6.17; Matt. 27.66). (4) **Earnest**. The "deposit or pledge" is the foretaste of our interest in the heavenly inheritance (Rom. 8.23; Eph. 1.14). It is a down payment given in advance. The future is therefore certain. It is the pledge of resurrection life in all its glory (5.5). The Holy Spirit indwelling ratifies the promise of God to fulfil every good thing. May we be faithful to God.

Recommendation (3.3). Epistles of Christ written with the Spirit (v. 8). The contrast is drawn between the writing of the Law on the Tables of stone, and the "writing of the

Gospel” on the hearts of men. The validity of Paul’s ministry is judged by the quality of his work. “You are our letter of recommendation.” He appeals to their changed lives. They were a letter from Christ and written by the Spirit. The Spirit had done the work, it was not done by Paul (v. 4-6). Dr. Graham Scroggie writes: “The crown of literature is soul-literature (3.3). Think of the **AUTHOR** of it—God; the **MATERIAL**—human hearts; the **INSTRUMENTS**—Christians; the **MANNER OF WRITING**—by the Spirit; the **THING WRITTEN**—the mind of Christ; the **PUBLICATION** of it—consistent Christian living; the **READERS**—all men.”

Are we capable of being understood as representing and reproducing Christ?

Transformation (3.18). The ministry of the Holy Spirit brings life (v.6), gives liberty (v.17), and produces likeness to Christ (v. 18). The testimony about Christ is illustrated by radiant reflections, we become mirrors. We unveil Christ most effectively by reproducing his glory in Christlike lives. This is very practical.

(a) Contemplation. “We mirror the glory of the Lord” (Weymouth). Paul saw a vivid contrast here between Moses (v. 13) who veiled his face, and the Christian who gazes at the Lord with unveiled face and is being changed (4.4). Beholding, we catch the light and reflect the glory of the Lord. “Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in His wonderful face.” Gaze long and often.

(b) Reflection. A mirror can reflect only what it sees and what it receives. Some see the mirror as Christ and God’s Word. We behold in silent contemplation. Others in the context contrast the permanent glory reflected in the saint with the transient glory seen in the face of Moses.

(c) Continuation “from one degree of glory to another” (RSV). It will be a progressive daily transformation.

(d) Transformation. Becoming more and more like the Lord Himself (Acts 4.13). “It all comes from the Lord who is the Spirit (RSV). Emphasizing the personality and deity of the Spirit This is a lifelong, glorious experience and will be perfected one day (Phil. 3.21).

Commendation (6.6,7). The chapter deals with the character of the minister. An appeal for consistency (v. 1-10) and for consecration (v. 11-7.1). In verses 3-10 there are

twenty eight ways specified in which we may commend ourselves as God's servants. Here is a catalogue of what Paul endured in the spread of the Gospel (v.1). He shows that in normal situations the grace of God can be displayed in our lives. In v. 6,7 we see how Paul met and overcame affliction in service.

Endurance is possible by "power from on high" (v. 7). The sterling qualities he exhibited under trials in serving the Lord, are within the reach of every child of God. "Pureness" — singleness of purpose, sincerity of motive. "Knowledge" — insight which comes through communion with God. "Longsuffering"—in relationship to people who may be stubborn. "Kindness"—an attitude towards others which is thoughtful and considerate. "Love"—an unaffected and genuine concern for others. "By the Holy Spirit" enabled to overcome; a message which is true, and the power of God which can convict and convert others. These are the only effective means of daily victory over Satan, sin and self.

Correction (11.4). This does not refer to the Holy Spirit. False teachers sought to change the truth taught to, and held by, the Corinthians. Note the word, "another," used in different senses. "Another Jesus," that is "allos," another of the same kind. "Another spirit" and "another gospel" is "heteros" another of a different kind They listened to false teaching, but questioned that of the Apostle.

They were being seduced by false teachers who presented a defective Christology, and had made a great impression at Corinth. They were dispensers of a different spirit, one of bondage (Gal. 5. 1-4). They tolerated men who by a spurious gospel were undermining the work of God in their souls.

Any doctrine which contradicts the fundamental truths of the Gospel should be firmly withstood (Jude 3; 1 John 4. 1-6). We need today a faith that is exclusively resting in and centred upon the Lord Jesus alone. We should be absolutely separated and devoted to the claims of our Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 9.6; 1 Pet. 3.15a).

Communion of the Holy Spirit (13.14). What a lovely benediction comes at the end of this severe letter. Truly, "his heart is enlarged" (6.10). His love embraced them all and he desires the richest blessing to be experienced by

“all.” His detractors, critics, and the unrepentant need the blessing of the Triune God.

The order is experimental, for it is only through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we come to know the love of God and the benefits of redemption brought to us by the Holy Spirit.

Note the full title sets forth the majesty of our Mediator. “Lord”—His essential Deity, “Jesus”—His true humanity, “Christ”—the Messiah who brought us redemption. The love of God, traces the channel to its source, and the participation of the Holy Spirit is the inward result of grace and love, the means by which they become practically known to us. Here is God with us, God for us, and God in us for daily living.

The Holy Spirit is the common possession of all the children of God, uniting all in one. It is upon His gracious work that the individual and corporate spiritual life of believers entirely depends. May we daily enjoy the grace of the Lord Jesus, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Talks to Young Believers

by JOHN RITCHIE

THE BIBLE

Its Divine Inspiration, Absolute Purity, and Supreme Authority.

The Book that we call the Bible was believed by our fathers to be the Word of God, the Divine Oracles. They accepted its teachings, were warned by its threats, reposed on its promises, and submitted to its supreme authority. Its Gospel brought them salvation, its Truth sanctified them, its Glories severed them from the world, and set their affections on things above. Mere hereditary faith is not enough: second-hand knowledge of things Divine lacks unction; nor does it bear the stress and strain of days of battle. We must each buy the truth, and know it for ourselves. One of the momentous questions of our time is—Is the Book that we call the Bible the Word of God? Is it

a Revelation from God to man? Can we be certain that the Book came from God at the first, that He Himself is its Author, and, if so, has it come down through the ages to us, unaltered and uncorrupted by men? These are momentous questions, affecting the vitals of Christianity and the foundations of our faith. They therefore demand definite and decided answers. Nothing short of *certainty* will suffice on a subject so fraught with eternal issues; to a truly exercised soul doubt is intolerable, in the things of God and eternity.

Divine Inspiration

The testimony given concerning the authorship of the Bible is, that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim 3.16). The five English words, "*given by inspiration of God,*" represent one word in Greek, and that word, *Theopneustos*, means "*God-breathed.*" Here we have the Origin and the Authorship of the Holy Scriptures. They are the breathings of the Eternal God. He who breathed into Adam's lifeless clay the breath of life, has breathed out the words of Holy Scripture, and these holy writings are therefore God's words — perfect, unchangeable, and eternal. The Spirit of God was the speaker, and He used the tongue of chosen instruments (see 2 Sam. 23.2; Psa. 45.1). Holy men spake from God, moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1.21). (See also Acts 1.16; 4.25; 28.25).

The inspiration of the Scriptures is now denied, as has been said, in "its Existence, its Universality, and its Plenitude," not only by avowed infidels, but by professing Christians, many of them ministers of churches and Professors in universities, who have openly violated their ordination vows in their crusade against the Bible. They assume that God is unknown, and that He is unknowable. Such a God is inconceivable. He is not the God of love who sent His Son, in whom the Father was declared (John 1.18). Some deny the *existence* of inspiration: they do not believe that the Book came from God at all. If they admit "inspiration," it is in the same sense as they do in the works of Shakespeare and Burns. But this is not what is claimed for "the Oracles of God." With such men, all is chaos and uncertainty. They are Agnostics — they know nothing, profess nothing.

Others allow that *parts* of the Bible are inspired, but that other parts are the work of men, and consequently open to doubt. To deal with the Bible thus, is like using a purse in which gold and counterfeit sovereigns are mixed, to be used at random, which would make faith impossible, and pave the way to open infidelity. The position of this party is untenable, inasmuch as the Bible claims for itself to be one united whole, and "the Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10.35). A *third* class say that the *thoughts* of the Bible were given by God to the various writers, but that they were allowed to choose their own words, which, in some cases, are misleading and contradictory of each other.

Verbal Inspiration

Others claim that the very *words* of Scripture are God's words (see 1 Cor. 2.13), and that the entire Book is God-breathed. This latter is Divine Inspiration, and nothing else is. The writers—of whom there were many—were "holy men of God." They did not speak or write from memory, but as they were "taught by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. 1.21). Who but God could tell the events of Gen. 1 in the past, or who else could foretell the events of Rev. 22 in the future? Moses wrote the Book of Genesis on the Plains of Moab, and John the Book of Revelation in the Isle of Patmos, both at the dictation of God. Although the instruments were human, the words were given by the Holy Spirit, and absolutely warranted. When this is grasped—that God spake to Moses and Isaiah and John at "sundry times and in divers manners" (Heb. 1.1) what He wanted them to write, that this they did write, and that these writings are "the Holy Scripture—then we shall not be puzzled by sceptical references to the "mistakes of Moses" or the "contradictions of the evangelists."

Fulfilment of Prophecy.

There are many proofs in the world around, in the heavens above, and in the earth beneath, that the Book is God's Book. Its prophecies concerning Christ have been fulfilled. He was to be the Woman's Seed (Gen. 3.15; Matt. 1.18; Gal. 4.3), the Virgin's Child (Isa. 7.14, with Luke 1.27-35), of the line of Abraham (Gen. 22.18, with Matt. 1.1), of the family of David (Jer. 23. 5, 6, with Luke 2.4). His betrayal (Zech. 11.12), His death (Isa. 53), His pierced hands

and feet (Psa. 22.16), His tomb (Isa. 53.9), His exaltation (Isa. 52.13), and His coming again (Zech. 14) were all foretold, and are fulfilled, or to be, to the very letter.

The Lord's Acceptance of Scripture

When the Lord Jesus was here on earth, it was "His custom" to read a certain Book (Luke 4.16). He called it "the Scriptures" (John 5.39). He quoted from each of its parts. To Him it was the final appeal, to fulfil it was His mission, to honour its teachings His delight. From this Book He preached to men (Luke 17.26-29), expounded to His disciples (Luke 24.27), and from it He chose His weapons wherewith He defeated the devil (Matt. 4.7). He called the Book, as it was, "the Scriptures," although it was only a copy and a translation of the original writings. He acknowledged it to be "the Word of God" (Mark 7.13). He authenticated the books of the Old Testament; He owned them as they stood, bearing the names of their acknowledged writers, and divided into parts as we now have them (see Luke 24.44). Would the Son of God have sanctioned a Book in which there were "cunningly devised fables"? Would He have designated an ill-assorted mixture of God His Father's commandments and man's traditions, "the Word of God," as He did? Who will dare to charge Him with thus deceiving mankind? The Book that was in current use in His day was only a copy of the original Hebrew Scriptures, handed down through the ages, but this did not hinder Him from accepting and authenticating it as "the Word of God," owning its supreme authority in all things, and claiming that not a "jot" or a "tittle" of it would be unfulfilled.

Pseudo-critics—men who boast of their superior wisdom—who, under the plea of expunging from the Bible parts which they say are contrary to reason, "to win the educated classes to religion"—have played into the hands of Rationalists, and, in the process, have become infidels. The written Word is now receiving the same treatment at the hands of sceptical professors as the living Word received at the hands of the Jewish leaders of His time, who were neither ignorant nor irreligious. Nevertheless, they rejected God's Christ, and "crucified the Lord of Glory." A recent writer of the Critic school says — "Both Christ and the apostles or writers of the New Testament held the current

Jewish notions respecting the Divine authority and revelation of the Old Testament," which simply means, the Lord believed the Bible as it then was, because He knew no better, and this we are told because He had "emptied Himself" (Phil 2.7, R.V.), and knew no more than His contemporaries, and less than the "scholars" who are now engaged in hacking the Bible to pieces. This is blasphemy against the Son of God. To speak of Him to Whom God gave not the Spirit "by measure," Who ever spake "the Words of God" (John 2.34), Who said, "The words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself" (John 14.10), Whose words will stand, though "heaven and earth shall pass away" (Luke 21.33), as being unable to discern the integrity of the Scriptures, is to reject the Christ of God who avowed His faith in the Divine inspiration of the Old Testament Scriptures, and so taught His disciples before and after His resurrection (Luke 24. 27,44,45). Here is our authority for accepting and regarding our Bible to be the very Word of God. The second proof is a very simple one. We know the Book to be true, because we have the proof in ourselves. It told us, as sinners, to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and we would be saved (Acts 16.31). We did believe; we were saved (2 Tim 1.9,10; 1 Cor 15.3). God fulfilled the promise: the promise was therefore true. We claim, therefore, for the Bible that it is the eternal Word of Almighty God; that it was inspired by Him; that its words, yea, even its very letters (see Gal. 3.16, where the presence of an "s" is used to prove Christ the Seed of Abraham), are from Him, and of Him, and it is perfect. The Holy Scriptures as we have them, notwithstanding minor errors in transcription and variations in translation, are God's Word. There is nothing to be taken from it, because nothing is superfluous; nothing to be added to it, because nothing is wanting (Deut. 4.2; Prov. 30.5-6). Its authority, sufficiency, and supremacy abide, in spite of infidel attacks, open or disguised, and all its commands and precepts, the least and the greatest alike, are to be honoured and obeyed by God's people, always and everywhere, in every department of their lives, in the family, the business, the church, and the world

Questions and Answers.

1.—Did the writers of the Scriptures understand all that

they wrote?—1 Peter 1.10, shows they did not. They wrote what God gave them, then “inquired and searched diligently” to know its meaning. This disposes of the objection that “unlearned and ignorant men” could not have used such language as is found in the writings attributed to them. But if God gave them the words to speak and write, as He did (see Isa. 55.11; 2 Sam. 23.2), then the case is closed.

2.—Can it be shown, as is often alleged, that men of learning and ability reject the Bible as fully reliable?—The late Bishop Ryle well says—“I believe the inspired writers were guided by the Holy Ghost alike in their selection of matter and their choice of words”; and Dean Burgon adds—“Every book of it, every chapter of it, every verse of it, every syllable of it, every letter of it, is the direct utterance of the Most High.” Earl Cairns, twice Lord Chancellor of Great Britain, was an ardent believer in the inspiration of the Bible, and found therein “the foundation of all law and all morality.” Sir Matthew Hale says— “There is no book like the Bible for excellent learning, wisdom, and use.” W. E. Gladstone called it “the Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture,” and Sir Isaac Newton “the most sublime philosophy.” Faith requires no such assurances from man, but they at least rebut the popular fallacy, that “all learned men reject the Bible as being Divinely inspired.”

3.—It is said that we accept the Bible as the Word of God because “the Church” accredits it. Is this a sound argument?—Very far from it. It is Rome’s favourite nevertheless, and “the Church” in this view means the priest or the Pope. “The Bible,” say they, “is not of itself infallible, but the Church is, and therefore we accept the Bible, because the Church tell us to do so.” The facts are, that “the Church,” guided by the canons of the Council of Nice, puts Scripture and Tradition on the same basis, accepting both as having the same authority. But the simple Christian who makes his Bible his constant companion, does not require “the Church” or any human authority whatever to intervene. He knows the Shepherd’s voice when he hears it in his soul. He knows the Bible is the Word of his God, because it brings him to His presence. And he does not judge the Bible and its utterances by the Church, but, on the contrary, he tests the Church and its teachings by the Bible.

“O, THE DEEP, DEEP LOVE OF JESUS!”

SAMUEL TREVOR FRANCIS (1834—1925)

Samuel Trevor Francis was born in Cheshunt in Hertfordshire on November 19th, 1834. Like the boy Timothy, he was privileged to have a godly mother and a godly grandmother. He recalls the impressions of those early childhood days, of a grandmother who taught him his letters using the scriptures as her textbook and of a mother whose prayer life he could never forget. “One of my earliest recollections” he recounts, “is going with my eldest brother into my mother’s room and made to kneel with her, while she poured out her soul in earnest supplication that her boys might grow up to be God-fearing men,” and God heard and abundantly answered that mother’s prayer.

Much of his early life was spent in the city of Hull. As a boy, he demonstrated a propensity to write poetry and compiled a volume of poems in his own handwriting. His elder brother teased and taunted the youthful poet about these compositions to the extent that, in a fit of temper, the young Samuel Trevor tore them up and sadly these have been forever lost. In his early years he also demonstrated a love for music and at the age of nine joined himself to the choir of Hull Parish Church. Two meetings which Samuel Trevor attended as a youth in Hull city left life-long impressions with him. The first was when Mr. Akester, a chemist in the city, had asked him “if he would like to see a man buried alive.” He said that he would and observed as Mr. Andrew Jukes baptized by immersion a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. The second was when he witnessed for the first time a company of believers gather in simplicity to remember the Lord Jesus.

In his late teen’s, Samuel Trevor Francis moved to London with a view to studying medicine but upon the death of his father 12 months later, he relinquished all prospects of such a career. He then took up work in London and, at that time, God through His Spirit wrought a work of grace in his heart. His spiritual need became a heavy burden to him and he spent hours in prayer crying to God for mercy but let S. T. Francis tell, in his own words of that great experience which brought peace to his troubled heart. “I was on my way home from work and had to cross Hungerford Bridge to the South of the Thames. It was a winter’s night of wind and rain and in the loneliness of that walk I cried to God to have mercy upon me. Staying for a moment to look at the dark waters flowing under the bridge, the temptation was whispered to me, Make an end of all this misery.”

I drew back from the evil thought, and suddenly a message was borne into my very soul, "You do believe in the Lord Jesus Christ?" I at once answered, "I do believe" and I put my whole trust in Him as my Saviour. Instantly there came the reply,, "Then you are saved" and with a thrill of joy I ran across the bridge, burst through the turnstile and pursued my way home, repeating the words again and again, "Then I am saved! Then I am saved!"

Soon after conversion, S. T. Francis identified himself with an assembly of believers meeting at Kennington, and there he continued for all the years that followed. He engaged in the preaching of the gospel, both indoor and in the open-air and through his ministry, many were converted to the Lord; the years that followed on the 1859 Revival were particularly fruitful. When Moody and Sanky visited London in 1873/1874, Francis identified himself with that mission, at times deputizing for Mr. Sankey and leading the praise. In his labours, he travelled widely, visiting Canada, Australia, Palestine and North Africa. Seventy three years were spent devotedly in the service of the Lord and on December 28th, 1925, in the 92nd year of his life, he passed away peacefully into the presence of his Lord.

The deep gratitude that flooded the soul of S. T. Francis on conversion's day ever remained with him through life and often found expression in poetry and in song.

"Let me sing—for the glory of heaven
Like a sunbeam has swept o'er my heart;
I would praise Thee for sins all forgiven,
For Thy love, which shall never depart.

A song of a sinner forgiven,
And a song that is music to Thee;
A song of a pilgrim to heaven,
Yes, a song from a sinner like me!"

The compositions coming from his pen were many and the subject matter diverse but all stemmed from a deep devotion to his Lord and Saviour. Many of them first appeared in various papers and magazines and at the close of life, the author collected some 151 into one volume of "Select Poems." While engaged in this work, he was stricken by partial blindness but through the kindness and help of friends, the volume was published. In its preface, the author stated that the book was not written in the interest of any party or school of thought, but for all who "love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth."

Several of the hymns of S. T. Francis have found a worthy place in the hymnals and within the hearts of the Lord's people. The words of his, "Adoring Jesus" (Jesus, we remember Thee') is very often the language of redeemed hearts gathered at the

Lord's table on the first day of the week. Its companion hymn ('Gracious God, we worship Thee'), in adoration of the Father, is perhaps less well known. In both of these adoration hymns, a recurring phrase is found which gives emphasis to the hymn's great central theme. His advent hymn, "I am waiting for the dawning" is another favourite; its language is truly that of an anticipating and expectant heart awaiting the coming again of the Lord Jesus.

The love of Christ was, however, the writer's grandest theme of all; in its atmosphere he loved to dwell, bathing in the warmth of its sunshine and drinking deeply of its stream. Then from his soul, thereby refreshed and satisfied, he poured forth the treasures of his lovely hymn, "O, the deep, deep love of Jesus."

"O, the deep, deep love of Jesus,
Vast, unmeasured, boundless, free;
Rolling as a mighty ocean
In its fullness over me.
Underneath me, all around me,
Is the current of Thy love,
Leading onward, leading homeward,
To my glorious rest above.

O, the deep, deep love of Jesus,
None can tell the reason why
He descended from His glory,
Came to earth to bleed and die;
I, a wrecked and ruined creature,
Sinful, helpless, all defiled;
But the love of God in Jesus
Made me God's beloved child.

O, the deep, deep love of Jesus,
Spread His praise from shore to shore,
How He loveth, ever loveth,
Changeth never, never more;
How He watches o'er His loved ones,
Died to call them all His own,
How for them He intercedeth,
Watcheth o'er them from the Throne.

O, the deep, deep love of Jesus,
Love of every love the best,
'Tis an ocean vast of blessing,
'Tis a haven sweet of rest;
Though polluted, sinful, wretched
Yet He calleth me "His own;"
He will lift me to the grandeur
Of His everlasting Throne."

The completed hymn, "Love of Jesus" by S. T. Francis contained in all eight verses; it is the first four verses of the original hymn that are given here. Like Samuel Rutherford, S. T. Francis discovered that the Saviour's love "hath neither brim nor bottom" and that "there are infinite plies to His love that the saints will never win to unfold." However, in the verses here given, S. T. Francis has unfolded for us some of the plies of that Divine love—first, that it is **boundless** ("vast, unmeasured, boundless, free")—second, that it is **causeless** ("none can tell the reason why")—third, that it is **changeless** ("changeth never, never more")—fourth, that it is **matchless** ("love of every love the best"). Each ply of the love of Christ has its own peculiar features and each displays its own exquisite beauty; nor will we ever come to the last ply for there are infinite plies in that deep, deep love.

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

STUDIES IN JOHN'S GOSPEL

by Wm. Hoste

FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTALS

by J. B. Hewitt

CHRIST IN THE APOCALYPSE

by J. B. D. Page

TALKS TO YOUNG BELIEVERS

by J. Ritchie

ON HIS WAY REJOICING

by D. Roberts

OUTLINES

by N. McDonald

HYMNS AND THEIR WRITERS

by J. Strahan

I THANK THEE

11.11.11.11.

Tune : Clarendon Street.

I thank Thee, O Lord, Thou didst come from above,
A distance unmeasured except by Thy love,
Assuming true manhood, a child here to be,
From love for the Father, love also for me.

I thank Thee, O Lord, for Thy walk here below;
The Father's own heart in Thy life Thou didst show,
All in and from Thee with His mind did accord,
And infinite pleasure to Him did afford.

I thank Thee, Lord Jesus, for dying for me,
For bearing God's wrath, my desert, on the tree,
The only and precious Redeemer art Thou;
In mem'ry of Thee, Lord, in worship I bow.

I thank Thee, O Lord, Thou art ever the same,
So kind and so patient, how wondrous Thy Name!
I thank Thee, O Lord, for Thy goodness to me;
Thy voice I shall hear, and Thy face I shall see.

I thank Thee, O Lord, Thou wilt soon come again;
With all Thy redeemed Thou wilt come here to reign.
I joy, Lord, to know that where Thou wast disowned
With glory and honour wilt Thou be entroned.

—*Harold Butcher.*

STUDIES IN JOHN'S GOSPEL

(Christ, the Interpreter of the Father)

by WM. HOSTE

6—IN A SCENE OF “CONTRADICTION” (John 7 and 8)

The apostle exhorted the Hebrew believers, “Consider Him who endured such *contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.” The most weighty authorities have here “against themselves,” as though the “contradiction” carried with it its own condemnation, and reacted against the contradictors, as no doubt it did. Certainly the purpose of His coming “to seek and to save,” and the character of His life, “going about doing good,” should have ensured Him a welcome everywhere. The reverse proved how “lost” men were. Thirty years of perfect life did not induce “His brethren” to believe on Him. Were Christians more like Christ in life and testimony, the world, we are told, would treat them right royally; in reality it would treat them more like their Master. His holiness only served to bring out their unholiness; His testimony, their hatred. It is at Jerusalem that this “contradiction” was most marked, and it is John who chiefly presents our Lord’s ministry there. Nowhere does the moral glory of the Lord shine more brightly than in this Gospel; nowhere is the hatred of man more manifest. Indeed, John begins, as we have before remarked, with rejection (v. 5), “The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not,” man in his love of sin, “having his understanding darkened.” Again, v. 10, “He was in the world and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not,” man in his ignorance, “alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them,” and then v. 11, “He came unto His own (*idia*—His own things according to the Levitical order, priesthood—temple—sacrifice: but His own *idioti*—His own people) received Him not.” “Only man is vile”—and especially religious man—“blinded by the god of this world.” But (and here comes in the blessed contrast which grace makes), “As many as received Him,

* The word for “contradiction” is translated sometimes “gainsaying,” that is “against-saying,” e.g., “The gainsaying of Core.”

to them gave He power to become children of God." The greater part of John's Gospel is taken up with the visits of our Lord to Jerusalem, on the occasion of the annual feasts—(1) chaps. 2.13, 3.21, for the first Passover; (2) chap. 5, feast not specified; (3) chap. 7.10, for the feast of tabernacles; then (4) chap. 10. 22-39, two months later in the ninth month (Chisleu), at the feast of the dedication; and lastly (5) chap 12.22, for the last Passover.

In chapter 2, the Lord, as the obedient Servant "made under law," comes up to Jerusalem for the Passover. If heaven must be put away out from all houses in Israel (Exod. 12.15), how much more from the Father's house? There, judgment must begin; His holiness must be vindicated. The Father will not share His temple with Mammon. The zeal of the perfect Servant, interprets the Father's holy claims. He would restore that which He took not away—even the glory of the Father's house (Psa. 69. 5,9). But His right to do so is challenged by the religious world. They demand a sign. He offers what is virtually the "sign of the prophet Jonas." There was another "temple of God," which they could not defile, but might destroy. He would raise it up in three days. Hitherto the word for temple has been "*hieron*," the sacred enclosure. Here, the Lord uses another word, "*naos*," the inner shrine. The raising up of this "holy temple" would introduce that new order of things, of which He speaks to the woman of Samaria. As she is outside the ordinary channels of His Kingdom ministry, He passes in silence over the true condition of the temple at Jerusalem. It was not for her to know this. It was still the Father's house, though defiled by covetousness. How often has this principle been forgotten by elders or parents, in detailing the failures of "the House of God," before those young in years, or the faith. Little wonder if the tender consciences of such have been stumbled or defiled, and their feet taught to run in other paths than "the ways that be in Christ." The temple at Jerusalem was to be superseded by yet another "House," in which the true worshippers should worship the Father, in spirit and in truth. That House would be a temple in which "every one doth speak of His glory" (Psa. 29.9), because every stone is a living worshipper, redeemed with precious blood. Already were some of these stones gathered out to Him, who was to be its Foundation

and chief Cornerstone. Is the responsibility any less to-day, to put away leaven, and not to defile the temple of the Holy Spirit? "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God defile" (1 Cor. 3.17; 5.8).

Three things characterize "religious" people as a class—attachment to sacred buildings, observance of holy days, and ignorance of the grace of God. All these marked the Jews of our Lord's day. We have seen how His own words in chapter 2 were misinterpreted, as derogatory to the Temple. How could He rebuild in three days what thousands had toiled 46 years to build? Truly He was greater than the Temple, though He did not say so here. These words were never forgotten till the day of His trial before Caiaphas. To-day, to hint that religious buildings of bricks and mortar are in no sense "churches," or "houses of God," but that to form such, "living stones" are needed (1 Pet. 2.5), gives great offence. Here, in chapter 5, the observance of the Sabbath is in question. They would slay "the Lord of the Sabbath" for doing good on His own day. His answer in effect was, The Father is not keeping Sabbath, nor is the Son either. "My Father worketh hitherto and I work." This dates from Eden, when sin broke in on creation rest—the first Sabbath. How could God rest in the presence of sin? Then the Father began to work to recover man from the effects of the transgression, and continued down the ages toward patriarchs, Israel, and the nations, to the very ministry of Christ. In all this, the Son bore His part. "And I work," not only in Divine unison with the Father, but as the Interpreter and Executor of His purposes. Such a statement only fanned their murderous fury. It was an unmistakeable claim to equality with God. That our Lord did not deny, but accepted the inference, is a sufficient answer, among many other such to the Sadducees of our day, who deny that our Lord ever claimed to be more than a mere man like ourselves. Such a statement can only bespeak Egyptian darkness as to His teachings, or a Satanic malignity against His Person, which refuses the plainest evidence. However, we may "possess our souls in patience." Modernists cannot dethrone the Christ of God—the Divine Son—with their petty negations. So our Lord accepts their inference, but while doing so reveals Himself as the dependent One. "The Son can do nothing of Himself,

but what He seeth the Father do." As the visible works of creation make manifest the invisible things of the Creator, so the visible works of the Son reflect the invisible things of the Father—His grace, His truth, His love and that completely and faithfully. "What things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise," withholding nothing, interpolating nothing. This perfect exchange of fellowship, denoting the essential equality of being of the Son with the Father is shown in at least seven ways in this passage.

(1) **In the result of the Father's love** (v. 20), the communication of all things to the Son (v. 20). Perfect love has no secrets, and no reserves (chap. 3.35).

(2) **In the possession by Him of resurrection power** (v.21), in exactly the same way as the Father possesses it. The same voice that now raises dead souls will one day raise "all that are in the graves," a general description of those who have died, in whatever way their bodies have been disposed of, whether by burial, cremation, etc.—the saints first, for the resurrection of life, the wicked a millennium later—for the resurrection of judgment (Rev. 20. 5-12).

(3) **In the bestowal of the right of judgment** (v. 22), supreme recognition of His omniscience and omnipotence, Divine attributes essential to one who would exercise universal judgment.

(4) **In the honours paid** (v. 23). Equal honour is to be ascribed to the Son as to the Father. All honour, not equally paid to the Son, is refused by the Father (v. 23). With this we may compare 1 John 2.23, "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father; he that confesseth the Son hath the Father also." It is of interest to note, that the latter member of the verse has been restored to the text by R.V., on overwhelming authority. Modernists and Unitarians, in denying the Son, are altogether "without God" (*atheoi*, Eph. 2.12). They speak of a god and father, "the God of Jesus," but he is an altogether different person to "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (*cf.* John 8.44; 2 Cor. 4.4).

(5) **In the authority of the Word** (v. 24). — The Word of the Son is equivalent to the revelation of the Father, and

communicates to him who hears and believes it, eternal life, etc.

(6) **In the essential possession of life** (v. 26).—This explains the life-conveying voice of the Son. He has life in Himself. This is much more than merely “having life;” just as “alone having immortality” is far greater than merely “being immortal.” For if only God be immortal, then we must deny immortality even to the “elect angels” and to believers, whereas it is the property of all God’s moral creatures. The living believer will put on *bodily* immortality when the Lord returns (1 Cor. xv. 53). He, in common with all men and angels, has immortality in His spiritual nature as a derived gift. God only possesses it inherently. This is the essential attribute of Him who, “in the beginning, was the Word” (John 1.1).

(7) **In the power to execute judgment** (v. 27).—Not only to pass sentence, as above (3), but to carry it into effect. One who is truly man is to execute judgment on man. But even in this, the Lord disclaims independence of the Father. All His judgments will interpret the Father’s will (v. 20). Nor is His witness merely personal. He can cite as witness John, “that burning and shining light,” and greater witness still, the works the Father had given Him to do, nay, the Father Himself and the Holy Scriptures, which they professed to honour. All bore testimony that He had come from the Father. But how could His enemies believe this testimony while receiving honour one of another? No doubt the same tendency is a hindrance to faith today. May we rather seek the honour that cometh from God only!

The lying accusation of violating the Sabbath, followed the Lord with a threat on His life. So He “walked in Galilee, for He would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill Him” (chap. 7.1). There seems an intimate and inherent connection between lies and murder. The liar is a potential murderer. He who would slay the truth, would slay all else. The devil, the Lord tells us, “was a murderer from the beginning (*i.e.*, of his fall), and abode not in the truth” (chap. 8.44), as though the two sins synchronised. He became a murderer, the moment he departed from the truth. The first man born in the world was, as we know,

a liar and a murderer. Sin was born full-grown. In the first sin, every sin existed in embryo.

Because the Lord was delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God," some would condone the guilt of man at the Cross. But the Spirit testifies that the hands that slew Him were "wicked hands" (Acts 2.23). We know from the Gospels how often before, they would have slain Him, but His hour was not yet come (John 7.20). It was not the will, but the power they lacked. But everything must be done in the Father's time, even as to going up to the Feast of Tabernacles. To Him, "made under law" (Gal. 4.41), this was a direct call, but *when* to go was in the Father's hand. His brethren knew nothing of the Father's will, or the Father's time. Personal choice and policy alone entered into their conception of things. But with the Lord it was far otherwise: He did the Father's will, at the Father's call.

"Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world" (Acts 15.18), and also the moment of their accomplishment. It was "when *the fulness of the time* was come, that God sent forth His Son" (Gal. 4.4), not a moment too soon, nor a moment late. "*In due time*, Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. v. 6), and also "*in due time*" God will exalt those who humble themselves under His mighty hand (1 Pet. v. 6).

Rest in the Lord and wait for Him;
But wait thou with a patient mind;
God never hastes before His time,
Nor doth He ever lag behind.

It was only when His brethren had gone up, that God's hour struck for Him to go also, and half the feast had passed ("lost time," the carnal would say) e'er the moment arrived for him to go up to the temple to teach. In these days of hustle and hurry and multiple "engagements" and of "bookings up" months and sometimes years ahead, of precipitate decisions and of "cut and dried" arrangements, do we not need to be solemnly reminded of the possibility of doing the right thing at the wrong time, or the wrong thing with possibly the right motive? It is to be feared that with many, there is not that continued "waiting upon" God, that once was known among those who serve. In-

stead of enquiring His mind, we "make up *our* minds," and then pray for God's blessing. Instead of following the Lamb whithersoever He goeth, we too often ask Him to follow us.

But Jesus followeth not, He only leads.

The result is, we often sow much and bring in little ; we eat but we have not enough (Hag. 1.6).

To return to our Lord in the temple. Such teaching could only call forth the wonder of the Jews. How could one not "of the schools" teach thus? "My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me, was the reply; "if anyone is willing to do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God or whether I speak from Myself." "He that speaketh from himself (that is, out of his own head, on his own initiative), seeketh his own glory; but he that seeketh His glory that sent him (by only speaking His message) is true, and no unrighteousness is in him." The Lord thus disclaimed all originality in His teachings. They were the words of the Father, of which He was the mouthpiece. He was the interpreter of Divine words, inaudible to all but Himself. He spake the Word of God in the very words of God. No wonder unprejudiced men, even officially His enemies, testified, "Never man spake like this Man" (chap. 7.46). We do not remember such a testimony being ever rendered to any of the "modern critics" even by their own friends. And yet they presume to criticise our Lord, and talk of their own superior attainments and "scholarship." We can imagine someone saying of them, "Never man boasted like these men." But though the Lord spake only the Words of God, the Father delighted to reveal Him and so gave Him to testify of Himself. "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink." "I am the light of the world; he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." He speaks of Himself and of the Father in one breath, "I and the Father that sent Me." "If ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also:" and of His pre-existence, "Before Abraham was, I am" (chap. 7.37; 8.12,16,19,58). Could any mere man nourish such astounding pretensions? Would He not shock the confidence even of His disciples? And yet our Lord in making these transcendent claims, is not challenged by His critics to-day on the ground of vanity, or even of a lack of sobriety

FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTALS

by J. B. HEWITT, Chesterfield

(38) THE HOLY SPIRIT IN GALATIANS

Galatians is an exposition of Paul's great watchword:—"Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom" (2 Cor. 3.17). When Paul wrote this letter both he and his gospel were under attack. Here is Christ the Liberator and the Holy Spirit the Sanctifier. There is freedom from the curse of the Law (3.10-14). Freedom from its endless regulations, from external obligations to internal discipline (5.16,17). Freedom from the flesh (2.20; 5.24); spiritual freedom from the present evil eye (1.4; 4.3,9; 6.14). Liberated from the fear and flattery of men (1.10-12; 5.1-7, 10-12).

The Promise Realised (3.2,14). These saints seemed like those hypnotized by some malignant spell. Christ crucified was the grand object set forth to their view at the first. Paul preached Christ crucified so vividly that it seemed to these Galatians as though the whole thing had been enacted before their eyes. Justification by faith in Christ alone is proved by their past experience. By faith they had received the Holy Spirit (v. 2). They had become children of God through the miracle of the new birth and the reception of the Spirit (v. 21).

The Law had been satisfied, its claims met in the death of Christ (v. 13). The purpose of God was the extension of blessing to Gentiles, and the giving of the Spirit to those who embraced the Saviour. The Law given could not set at nought or nullify the Promise (v. 15, 16). The promise of the Spirit means a totally new indwelling life-principle.

The Provision of the Spirit Enjoyed (3.3-5). They had become children of God through the new birth and the reception of the Holy Spirit (v. 2,3). Sanctification, no less than regeneration, is the work of the Holy Spirit, conditioned by faith. What has been implanted by the Spirit must be unfolded in the Spirit. Spiritual life that came to them through the Spirit's gift will only reach maturity

through the Spirit's continued giving. The Spirit is the great giver and worker in Christian experience. Nothing can be achieved by the Judaizing doctrine of works. The Holy Spirit never came by the preaching of circumcision, of sacraments and ceremonies and efforts and fastings. He came by the hearing of faith (v. 3c). The tragedy of the Galatians was that, having begun well, they were now going so badly wrong. That can still happen.

The Presence of the Spirit Expressed (4.6). With the coming of the Lord through the Spirit into their lives all is changed. We pass from religious bondage to Christian liberty (5.1). A great price has been paid for our freedom (v. 5). Our relation to God is no longer servile but FILIAL. No longer sinners crying for mercy (Luke 18.13). We have boldness of access with confidence, we draw near in full assurance of faith (Rom. 8.15).

We are "begotten of God" because we have a new nature, which owns God as its source and responds to Him as its Father (John 1.12,13; 1 John 5.12,13).

What a privilege we have, brought into the family circle of God as sons (v.6). We have been given this status by adoption (v. 5).

It is the Spirit who cries, a sharp, piercing and overcoming cry (Rom. 8.26). "The Spirit helpeth our infirmities." Being sons and daughters entitles us to the inheritance. This is the legacy of sons (v. 7).

The Prospect that Energizes (5.5). While the righteousness obtained through justification by faith is a present possession, its future fruition is an object of energizing and directive hope (Col. 1.5; 2 Tim. 4.8; 1 Pet. 1.3).

Faith is in the understanding; hope in the affections and will. Hope then desires and expects. The hope begun here will be completed hereafter (Tit. 2.13). The Christians faith is founded on a person; its dynamic is not obedience to any law, but love to the Lord Jesus Christ. Righteousness is the link between our faith and the Spirit who prompts our hope.

The Power of the Spirit Exhibited (5.16,17). Here in sharp contrast are the two natures in the believer. There is continual strife going on, conflict in the believer's heart (v. 17). The old nature is not eradicated.

We must follow the leading of the Spirit and fight the lusts of the flesh; this remedy must be applied (v. 16). The Spirit is the counter-agent to overcome sinful lusts. The Christian's life is under the Spirit, the atmosphere he breathes is spiritual. The struggle of the two natures is the common experience of all saints. To walk in the Spirit implies power of choice on our part, it is a voluntary matter.

The Product of the Spirit Exemplified (5.22,23). The total harvest of the Spirit-filled life is described in nine of the loveliest graces of Christian living. How refreshing just to contrast these Christian graces with the vices of the flesh. The word "fruit" is singular as against "works." Fruit is an outward expression of inward life and power. The fruit is ninefold, not separate fruits. They hold together like the Beatitudes (Matt. 5.3-11). They should ALL be seen on ALL Christians at ALL times. These virtues, three Godward, three manward, and three selfward found their perfect expression in the Man Christ Jesus. Our freedom in the Spirit who indwells us produces the kind of christian qualities we could never generate. Fruitage in the Spirit requires rootage in the Spirit. There are three clusters in the ninefold fruit, with three in each.

(1) My Personal Life—Godward. "Love" — not "eros," nor "philia," but "agape"—unconquerable benevolence. An outgoing concern for the highest welfare of others. "Joy"—which flows from a deep, rich and sweet communion with our Lord (Phil. 1.25-31). "Peace"—the mark of the Spirit's presence. The inward calm of those who are "guarded by the peace of God" (Phil. 4.7).

(2) My Public Life—Manward. "Longsuffering"—endurance of wrong, slow to anger being patient putting up with people. "Gentleness"—graciousness or kindness. Mellowing all that would otherwise be harsh and austere. "Goodness" is active beneficence. Generosity in things material and things spiritual.

(3) My Private Life—Selfward. "Faithfulness" or dependability in dealings with men. Loyalty and trustfulness as opposed to unreliability. "Meekness"—a self-effacing humility. A sense of quiet submissiveness to God mild equanimity. "Temperance" — self-control in the broadest and

fullest sense of the term. Holding all the passions and all the appetites in perfect control. It has been said that these are varied expressions of Love. "Joy, is love exulting; Peace, is love resting; Longsuffering is love reacting patiently; Gentleness is love in society; Goodness is love in action; Faith is love being steadfast, consistent; Meekness is love at school and temperance is love in discipline and training." Author Unknown.

"Against such there is no law." While law must condemn the works of the flesh, all these graces are condemned by no law.

The Prescribed Course for Unity (5.25). Positionally we died to sin with Christ on the Cross (v.24; 2.20). The word "walk" means "to march in rank, or keep in step with." If we walk in the Spirit, no Assembly disharmony will be possible (5.15). There must be compliance with the will of the Spirit as well as reliance on the grace of the Spirit. The subjugation of our sinful nature is possible as we allow the Spirit to govern all our actions. The Spirit of life refreshes through the Word (Psa. 1.3).

The Practical Expression of Sympathy (6.1). The spiritual man is one led by the Holy Spirit and only such can qualify for this delicate work. The word "restore" means to "set in joint," as a dislocated bone. A moral slip-up does not always mean a deliberate sin. The best of men slip up. We are exhorted to deal gently, meekly and delicately with the erring brother (v. 1). Just as an injured limb is sensitive to the touch of another, so the erring brother is difficult to deal with.

We should remember my brother fell today, I may fall tomorrow. (1 Cor. 10.12).

A Principle to Remember (6.8b). What a blessed contrast, "shall reap life everlasting" (Rom. 8.11). Sowing to the Spirit is following His guidance and working out His purposes in our lives. In this verse Paul teaches that the consequences of actions and therefore their moral worth are determined by their aim.

We should continue witnessing, working, praying and giving (v. 9). The harvest will come just as certainly as the Lord Himself shall come (Rev. 22.12).

CHRIST IN THE APOCALYPSE (12)

by JOHN B. D. PAGE

THE DIVINE REAPER

Reading : Revelation 14.14-16.

Once again, John sees in a vision "the Son of Man" in a capacity so different from that in chapter 1, for here He is not the Priest but the Reaper, seated upon a cloud, supervising the harvest of the earth.

"I looked, and behold . . .," says the seer, by which he means that he is about to perceive something of great importance. These opening words, he first used of the open door in heaven (ch. 4.1), through which he peered into the celestial sanctuary. Gazing heavenwards again, his attention is now fixed upon "a white cloud," upon which One sat. The word "white" (*leukos*, Gr.), describing the cloud is also used descriptively of our Lord's raiment when He was transfigured, as recorded by the three synoptists. This is worth noting, because the transfiguration of Christ was a pre-view of His subsequent manifest glory as seen now by John. Upon the holy mount, His raiment became "white as the light" (Matt. 17.2), and as "white as snow" (Mark 9.2), even "white and glistening" (Luke 9.29). What impressive similes to describe the dazzling whiteness of His garments! The same word describes the "white" throne for the post-millennial judgment of the dead (ch. 20.11). The thought conveyed in these references is the intensity and brilliance of the whiteness. We may well deduce that the cloud, seen by John, was an equally intense and brilliant white, unequalled by a natural cloud of mist and in keeping with the unstained glory of the One seated upon it.

John then observed: ". . . and upon the cloud One sat . . ." Already, he had beheld the same Person, in the guise of a mighty Angel, "clothed with a cloud" (ch. 10.1), but now in Human form He is seated upon a cloud, and so the cloud that was His garment is now His seat.

When Christ ascended from Olivet into heaven, "a cloud received Him (Acts 1.9). For His return in power and glory

to the Mount of Olives (Zech. 14.4), He will be “coming in a cloud” (Luke 21.27). Opinions differ about the nature of the cloud at His ascension and His coming again, but surely that Blessed Person is worthy of nothing less than the shekinah cloud! His coming with power and glory will be also “in the clouds” (Mark 13.26), which is not contradictory but complementary to Luke’s statement. These two scriptures describe different facets of the same event. According to Luke, Christ will come again to the earth in the shekinah cloud, whilst Mark describes Him coming at the head of clouds of saints following Him.

The Occupant of the cloud-seat is now identified as being “like unto the Son of Man . . . ,” and the same phrase occurs in ch. 1.13. The words “like unto” do not mean that this Divine Figure was merely a resemblance of the Son of Man, and they convey no suggestion of uncertainty about His identity. Such words serve to distinguish Him as seen in His glory and majesty in contrast to the days of His humiliation. Now that this majestic Person is named “the Son of Man,” His title is worthy of consideration in some depth.

Clearly, the title, “the Son of Man,” is Messianic, indicating more than Messiahship. Basically, it stresses the Manhood of Christ, Whose Humanity is unique in comparison with that of other men, for there never has been, or will be, a man like this Man. In His Manhood, He is truly the acme of perfection. He is not “the Son of Man” by human generation, as the scriptures clearly indicate. The title was adopted by Christ Himself in the days of His flesh. Essentially, it is a Hebrew idiom signifying that Christ has partaken of all the characteristics, sin apart, of manhood as belonging to men, which is also borne out by the omission of the definite article in the title in the original text both here and in ch. 1.13. Other Hebrew idioms are found in the scriptures. For instance, Christ is said to be “a Man of sorrows” (Isa. 53.3), which means that sorrow was a predominant characteristic of His life on earth. Turning to non-messianic idioms, “a man of knowledge” (Prov. 24.5) describes a man in whom wisdom is the paramount feature, and “son of peace” (Luke 10.6) is one in whom peace predominates. After the Church has been caught up, there will appear “the man of sin” (or, lawlessness, RV.) (II Thess.

2.3), and lawlessness will be the principal characteristic of this Satanically energized man.

By looking at the use of the title, "the Son of Man," we find it is used of Christ no less than 84 times in the four gospels, namely, 32 in Matthew, 14 in Mark, 26 in Luke, and 12 in John. Even this distribution of the title is interesting. The two highest numbers of occurrences, both of which are close to one another, are found in Matthew and Luke, whilst the two lowest with little difference between them are in Mark and John.

Primarily, the designation portrays the dignity of His Person, such as His earthly dominion and sovereignty, for which we turn to Matthew's gospel where He is set forth as King and, in this regal office, He will be the Ideal Man, as described by Luke. Taken together, Luke sets forth the impeccable character of the Man Who will one day be King, exercising absolute power, as foreseen in Matthew's gospel.

In a secondary way, the title is associated with His humiliation and rejection, and so He is the humble Servant in Mark whilst He is rejected owing to His claim to Deity in John.

"The Son of Man" as a title of Christ occurs only once in Acts (7.56), not at all in the epistles, and only twice in Revelation, one of which we considered in ch. 1.13, and the other is here (14.14).

Unlike the title, "the Son of God," which is sometimes abbreviated to "the Son" or "His Son," the designation, "the Son of Man," is never shortened but it is always used in full.

The use and significance of the title, "the Son of Man," in both the Old and New Testaments, is probably best explained by T. B. Baines, who says, "This is the title in which Christ takes the kingdom from God (Dan. 7.13f), intervenes for Israel (Luke 21.27f, Psa. 80.17f), and exercises absolute dominion (Psa. 8.4-6, Heb. 2.5,8)." Hence, in the light of this statement supported by the scriptures, this title is not associated with the Church but Israel, it is not connected with the present day of grace but with the coming age of righteousness, and it is related not to the Lordship of Christ over the local church but to Christ's ultimate world dominion. Such global sovereignty is clearly

foretold and associated with "the Son of Man" where the title is first used of Christ in the Old Testament (Psa. 8.4-8).

The law of first mention and that of last mention, if applied to this appellation in the New Testament, is instructive. For the first mention of "the Son of Man," we turn to Matthew 8.20, where Christ, applying the title to Himself, says, "the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." What an expression of His abject poverty and depth of humiliation! The last mention of the title is in Revelation 14.14, the scripture under consideration, where John observed "the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown . . ." In this description of Him, the seer gives expression to One in exaltation. He, Who had formerly no pillow for His head, has now a crown upon it, and so 'from poverty to sovereignty' is the thought in these two scriptures.

The word "crown" (*stephanos*, Gr.) does not mean a monarchical crown but a victor's 'garland' like that mentioned in 1 Corinthians 9.25, and elsewhere. Being of gold, this Victor's garland is imperishable, unlike the garlands of myrtle, parsley and oak leaves for the Greek games in John's day which perished. This golden garland is in keeping with the nature of His being, upon Whose head it was placed, for "His flesh did not see corruption" (Acts 2.31) at the time of His death, and now He has a "body of glory" (Phil. 3.21, RV). The glory and honour, with which He is crowned and symbolized by His golden garland, are not temporal but perpetual. In the ancient world a garland, although perishable, was reserved for a victor, and so the Son of Man, having defeated man's arch-enemy at the cross, is now potentially the Victor but His victory will be manifest when Satan will be bound, sin restrained and His enemies subdued for one thousand years.

Of the Son of Man seated upon the white cloud, John saw that "in His hand (was) a sharp sickle." This is a pictorial description of Christ as the Dispenser of divine judgment but from a different aspect of the Warrior wielding a sword as in chapter 19.

John was one of the "holy men of God (who) spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (II Pet. 1.21), and so it was not accidental but intentional that Christ is here depicted not as 'the Son of God' but as "the Son of Man"

which is explained in a reasoned statement made by our Lord Himself: "the Father . . . hath committed all judgment unto the Son, . . . and hath given Him authority to execute judgment because He is the Son of Man" (John 5.22,27). The purpose of His Manhood was not only to bear vicariously the judgment of sin as demanded by a righteous God, as shown by other scriptures, but also to be able to judge with a full and experimental understanding of human conditions. Therefore, in exercising judgment in a coming day, this righteous Judge will share the humanity, sin apart, of those whom He will judge.

To the Son of Man seated upon the cloud, an angel appeared and, with a loud commanding voice, he said, "Thrust in Thy sickle and reap, . . . for the harvest of the earth is ripe," which He did (14.15f). By linking this scene with the parable of the wheat and tares, Walter Scott points out that "The Son of Man does not Himself personally reap. He superintends. Instrumentally He reaps. The actual reapers are the angels (Matt. 13.39)." The angel also said to the Son of Man "the time is come for Thee to reap." The time for reaping "the harvest (will be) the end of the age" (Matt. 13.39f, lit.). This refers not to the end of the present age of grace but to that of law which will be resumed for a seven year period of tribulation after the capture of the Church.

At the end of the tribulation, the Divine Reaper will reap the harvest by separating the wheat from the tares, of which there is no specific mention here (14.15f).

The Apocalyptic verses are concerned with "the harvest of the earth" (v. 15) whilst the remaining verses of the chapter (14.17-20) deal with "the vine of the earth" (v. 18), and it should be remembered that there is a difference between the harvest and vintage not only here but in the scriptures too. As John A. Savage rightly says, "We have two distinct thoughts in the harvest and vintage—in the first, *separation*; and in the second *destruction*. And when we compare the prophecies of our Lord with what we find in the Revelation relating specially to this judgment, we see these two thoughts fully borne out, together with the results that follow in each case."

It is, therefore, apparent that the Divine Reaper of the harvest will function as the discriminating Judge separating

the righteous from the wicked, which is implicit in the fact that He Himself holds the sickle. In consequence of the separating process at the harvest judgment, the wicked will be dealt with at the vintage judgment whilst the righteous will enter into, and become the inhabitants of, the restored millennial earth.

Talks to Young Believers

by JOHN RITCHIE

The Triune God : Father, Son and Holy Ghost

In a day when the foundations of our most holy faith are being attacked on all sides, and errors destructive of the very fundamentals of Christianity are boldly proclaimed, it becomes all who love the Lord and reverence His Word to be diligently "building themselves up," and so assuring themselves of the "things which they have learned" as to "continue in them" (2 Tim. 3.14), and be able to lend a helping hand to others in danger of being led astray with "the error of the wicked" (2 Pet. 3.17). Second-hand knowledge is of little value in a day of stress. The enemy can easily wrest from us any truth held on mere traditional authority. Only that which we have learned from God, and hold in faith and love, in the communion of the Holy Ghost (2 Tim. 1.13,14) strengthens the inner man, and becomes shield and sword (Eph. 6.16,17) to the warrior in the day of battle.

"The fool hath said in his heart there is *no God*" (Psa. 14.1). *Atheism* denies His existence. *Deism* admits an original Cause, but denies His Sovereignty. *Agnosticism* says He is unknown and unknowable. *Pantheism* makes God part of existing things, as in Brahminism and other idolatrous systems. *Revelation* makes known a Living and True God, His character, His works, and His ways, and "the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple" (Psa. 19.7). To the Book of God, the only safe guide in things Divine and Eternal, let us reverently turn.

One True God

"There is one God" (1 Tim. 2.4), and "there is none other

but He" (Mark 12.32). His glory He "will not give unto another" (Isa. 42.8). The Creator and Cause of all existence, material and spiritual, formed for Himself and His pleasure (Rev. 4.11), He requires and claims its allegiance. Eternal, Infinite, Omnipotent, Omniscient; God of Light and Love; in Him "we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17.28). Yet is He unknown and unknowable, alike in His mode of existence, His character, and His ways, save as He is pleased to reveal Himself to man. Concerning Him, the question may still be asked as of old, "Canst thou by searching find out God?" (Job 11.7). "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork" (Psalm 19.1); but it is in His Son (John 1.18), and through His Word, that God has been pleased to reveal Himself. "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent" (John 17.3).

One God in Three Persons.

God is revealed in the Scriptures as one God in three Persons, each Divine equally God, eternally one in Being: not three Gods, but three Persons— Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the Triune God whose nature and whose name is Love. This great truth was well expressed by Athanasius, a noble witness for God and the faith in the early Church, at a time when Arian and Sabellian errors were turning many away from the truth. He says: "There is one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity, neither confounding the persons nor dividing the substance; for there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost is all one, the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal."

The English word "Trinity," which means "three-foldness," is not found in Scripture, yet it expresses more accurately than any other single English word this great Scripture truth of three Persons yet one God, a truth which is announced and in part revealed in the Old Testament, but fully developed and demonstrated in the New, by the Incarnation, Death, and Glorification of the Son, and the advent and work of the Spirit. Far beyond man's finite reason to grasp, it belongs to the Infinite and Eternal, a stumbling-stone to the worldly-wise, while faith receives

and enjoys its truth. "No man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son" (Matt. 11.27), and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him. What "flesh and blood" could never make known of the Son, the Father reveals (Matt. 16.17). Such knowledge is now imparted by the Spirit (1 Cor. 2 10-13) through the Word (2 Cor. 3.17-18). Scripture reveals all that God has seen good for us to know, in our present state, concerning this truth, and beyond that we are not wise to pry.

Illustrations of this great truth may be seen in the sun's light, which is white but which, when passed through a prism, divides itself into the three primary colours—blue, red, and yellow; in man, formed in the image of God, composed of spirit, soul, and body; and in other things, all of which, while bearing witness to the Triune God, their Maker, need to be used with reverent care.

When Patrick went to preach to the unlettered pagans in Ireland, he found great difficulty in making clear to them the truth of the Trinity. "Are there three Gods or one?" they asked. Perplexed, he looked on the ground, picked up a shamrock growing at his feet, and holding it up, said: "As there are three in one and one in three in this little plant, so is God." A very few steps in the quest of such knowledge bring us to the verge of the Infinite and Unknowable, where, not in irreverent speculation or unholy scepticism such as the baffled man of reason at this point becomes the victim of, but in adoring worship of the All-wise and All-good God, who thus reveals yet hides Himself, the devout and longing soul exclaims: "Lo, these are part of His ways; but how little a portion is heard of Him" (Job 26.14).

Trinity Acting in Unity.

IN CREATION.—"In (the) beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. 1.1). The word "God" is *Elohim*, the plural of "Eloah," the object of worship—"created," brought into existence, out of nothing, "the heaven and the earth." Thus, in the eternal past, "in beginning," long before the clock of time was set agoing, the Eternal, Triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—co-existed and acted in unity in the work of creation. Such is the first sentence of the Book of God: the truth it teaches runs through it to the end.

In the Word, the original creation is attributed alike to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (see Rev. 4.11; John 1.3; Psa. 104.30). It is *of* the Father, *through* the Son, *by* the Spirit. Originated with the Father, accomplished through the Son effected by the Spirit, each acting unitedly and harmoniously. Thus the Divine purpose and way is perfect, as is its execution. In verse 3, where reconstruction of the ruined earth as an abode for man is in view, the Spirit personally is seen moving (see Deut. 32.11 for same word), or fluttering over the dark, chaotic mass, foreshadowing His work of awakening, conviction, and regeneration in fallen man, while light and life are produced through the Word (2 Cor. 4.6). Although not distinctively the subject of Old Testament revelation, the Personality and operations of the Son (see Num. 22.32; Isa. 63.9; Mal. 3.1) and the Spirit are fully recognised (Isa. 48.16; 61.1), while in the New Testament the full manifestations, inter-relations, harmonious actings, and dispensational workings of Father, Son, and Spirit are clearly announced and distinguished.

In the Baptismal formula of Matt. 28.19, "baptising them in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost;" in the Apostolic benediction of 2 Cor. 13.14; and the Apocalyptic greeting of Revelation 1.4-6, the Triune God in all diversity, equality, and Deity is fully recognised—Divine honour and Deity being here, as elsewhere, ascribed to each (Rom. 9.5; Heb. 1.8; Acts 5. 3,4). The Son claims equality and unity (John 10.30) with the Father (John 5.20), and the Word proclaims (John 1.1) His eternity, equality, and Divine Personality. Yet, in relation, the Son is Filial as well as Divine. Eternally the Son, before all worlds, co-existent with the Father (John 17. 5,24; with Prov. 8. 22-31), His "well beloved" (Mark 12.6), in whom He was "well pleased" (Matt. 3.17). He who did not "become," but eternally WAS the only begotten in the bosom of the Father (John 1.18), was "sent forth" (Gal. 4.4) to do the Father's will (John 4.34), not less Divine, yet subordinate to Him, doing nothing of Himself (John 5.19). In this respect alone is the Father said to be "greater" than the Son (John 14.28), and the Son "subject to the Father" (1 Cor. 15. 24,28), not in essential, but in economic, filial, and dispensational relations.

IN INCARNATION, Trinity is seen again acting in unity.

“God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son” (John 3.16), and He, who ever was in “the form of God,” of His own will took upon Him the bondservant’s form, saying, “Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God” (Heb. 10.9). In a body “prepared” by the Father, and by the Spirit formed (Luke 1.35), “God sent forth His Son, made of a woman” (Gal. 4.4), in His Divine Personality, the Son of God, ever God and Man, two natures in one Person, always Divine, yet ever perfect Man.

IN SERVICE.—At His baptism in Jordan, the Son obeys, the Father speaks from the open heavens, and the Spirit in dove-like form descends (Matt. 3. 16-17); while throughout His public ministry the Son ever had the Father with Him (John 8.29), and did all His mighty works by the Spirit (Matt. 12.28).

IN REDEMPTION.—God, the Father, is said to be the Originator of the scheme of redemption, the Giver and Sender of the Son; the Son accomplishes, as Sacrifice, Redeemer, Saviour; and the Spirit bears witness to (Heb. 10.17) the completeness of that work. The three Persons of the Godhead, in one sublime statement of the Sacred Word—Heb. 9.14—are each mentioned as present at and sharing in the great work of Calvary, when “He (the Son), through the Eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God.”

IN SALVATION, the election, choice, and call of the saved is ascribed to God the Father (Eph. 1.4; 1 Pet. 1.2; Rom. 7.28); their redemption, justification, and peace to the work of the Son (Eph. 1.7; Acts 13.39; Eph. 2.13); their regeneration, sanctification, and transformation to the Holy Spirit (John 3.5; 1 Pet. 1.2; 2 Cor. 3.17,18). The three-fold parable of Luke 15, in which the shepherd goes after the wandering sheep, the woman searches for the lost silver, and the father welcomes the repentant and returning prodigal, may surely further tell of the activities of the Triune God in the sinner’s salvation.

IN COMMUNION, access (Eph. 2.18) and worship (Heb. 10.19-21; Phil. 3.3, R.V.), the believer knows and proves the efficacy of the way opened, the ministry of the living High Priest, and the Spirit-given strength and competency to “draw near,” to abide in the light, and to walk through

life with God. Divine love, manifested in the gift of the Father (1 John 4.9) and the death of the Son (Gal. 2.20), is "shed abroad" (Rom. 5.5) in the heart of the believer by the Holy Ghost, to be enjoyed experimentally by him.

IN THE CHURCH, as the House of God (1 Tim. 3.15) over which the Son is set (Heb. 3.6, R.V.) and in which the Spirit dwells (Eph. 2.22), all administration and operation for godly order and edification is undertaken by and wrought out under the supreme control of the Three-one God (1 Cor. 12. 3-5) through men, but not of them; and where the Divine pattern is conformed to and room left for the Divine power to operate, now as of old, some will have to confess, "God is in you of a truth" (1 Cor. 14.25).

IN GLORY.—On the coming resurrection morning, the Spirit quickens (Rom. 8.11), the Son receives the raised and transformed saints (John 14.3), and presents them to the Father with exceeding joy (Jude 24). In the Eternal state, God Himself shall be with His people (Rev. 21.3); they shall see the face of the Son, and serve Him (Rev. 22. 3,4); while from the throne of God and the Lamb, the water of life, like a river—emblem of the Spirit's fulness (see John 7. 38,39)—will flow on for ever.

All the Father's counsels claiming
Equal honour to the Son;
All the Son's effulgence beaming
Makes the Father's glories known:
By the Spirit all-pervading,
Hosts unnumbered round the Lamb,
Ceaseless love and praise unfailing
Claiming for the Great I AM:
Father, Son, and Spirit known,
Heaven's Eternal Three in One.

Questions and Answers.

1.—In Deut. 6.4, it is said: "The Lord our God is one Lord." How does this accord with a Three-one God?—There are two words in the Hebrew language translated "one." The first means absolutely and essentially one; the second, one in combination. The second is the word here used, and expresses the same great truth as the Lord Himself uttered when He said, "I and My Father are *one*" (John 10.30).

2.—In Gen. 1.1, we read: “In the beginning GOD created;” and in John 1.3, Col. 1.16, creation is attributed to Christ. How are these statements reconciled?—Easily. The word “God” in Gen. 1.1 is *Elohim*, a plural word, the Eternal Triune God, who afterwards said, “Let *us* make men in our image” (ver. 26). The verb “created” is in the singular, expressing Trinity acting in Unity, which is elsewhere abundantly shown. Creation was equally the work of Father, Son, and Spirit. (See Eph. 3.9; Rev. 4.11; Job 26.13).

3.—It is said—“No man hath seen God at any time” (John 1.18). What does this mean, and how does it accord with Exod. 24.10, where it is said, “They saw the God of Israel”?—God as God, in the plenitude of His character as God of Light and Love, was unknown in Old Testament times, and until He was “declared” by the Son. “At sundry times and in divers manners” (Heb. 1.1) He had manifested Himself in angelic and other forms, but it was not until the Son came forth, testifying, “He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father” (John 14.9). Only in Christ, who is “the image of the invisible God” (Col. 1.15), “the brightness of His glory and the express image of His Person” (Heb. 1.3), is God fully made known.

ON HIS WAY REJOICING

by **DON ROBERTS**

A RE-EXAMINATION OF ACTS

(Chapter 8, verses 26 to 40)

The scene set here is of an Ethiopian statesman on his way home after having visited Jerusalem to worship. I would assume that whilst he was at the city that he had heard something of the recent events that had brought about the crucifixion of Christ. He was travelling in his chariot reading from his scroll in Isaiah 53. He had already realised that the chapter was referring to a man and not a nation, he believed in God and he had heard about Christ but he was, as yet, unable to put the three together. Philip was the spiritual catalyst that brought the three together, for he preached unto him, Jesus. One of the roles of the evangelist is to equate the facts, bring in the missing link and that is Christ Himself. Here was fertile soil and the seed was at home and fruit was to come.

By inference, part of Philip's talk included obedience in baptism and this was a feature of the early apostolic preaching and should be restated today. The net result was that the statesman was saved and baptised; and what I find most remarkable was that he went on his way rejoicing. I could forgive the man for looking back at Philip in regret as the latter went back to his other work for the Lord, for here was a man, alone, about to return to darkest Africa, with nothing but a scroll of Isaiah, Christ in his heart, no gospels or epistles to learn from, no one to lean upon, no follow up work, nothing. But here was a man that went on his way rejoicing, with no regrets—how did he learn? What could account for his assumed spiritual progress and growth of the church in Africa? Nothing but the work of the Spirit of God. He was taught by the Spirit who revealed to the man the beauties and the glories of Christ.

The Spirit is the **TEACHER** for our ignorance.

John 16.13 states: 'Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come.'

The ministry of the Spirit is inclusive because He teaches **ALL** truth and it is also exclusive because it is **ONLY** the truth and nothing else.

The Spirit is the **COMPANION** in our solitude.

John 14.16 states: 'And I will pray the Father, and He shall give another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever.'

The original word suggests one that is called alongside to help and the book of Acts is full from beginning to end of the work and influence of the Spirit. Ministry on the Person and the work of the Spirit is sadly missing today and yet He is our companion, our help and guide.

The Spirit is our **JOY** in our sorrow.

John 16.6 and 7 state: 'But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you: but if I depart, I will send Him unto you.'

How often has the Spirit filled the aching void in our

lives that circumstances have engineered and brought us joy when we thought it was out of our reach.

Even if the Ethiopian had only Isaiah 53 and not a chapter more, there was the doctrine of the death of Christ, which seed was to blossom into fruit eternal. But what things can we learn from this chapter alone by the Spirit of God?

1. The meaning of faith. Verse 1 states 'Who hath believed our report' and shows that saving faith is the simple belief in a record, a testimony, a proclamation, news or good tidings.

2. The doctrine of sin. Verse 5 suggests the root definition of sin in the word 'transgression' as lawlessness, disobedience and stepping over the line. The same verse also implies the fruit of sin i.e. guilt and defilement and hence the need for justification and sanctification respectively. We can see the germ of these important doctrines here.

3. The necessity for guidance. The picture of the sheep going astray is a sufficient hint to bring home the importance of daily guidance in our actions, our speech and our general behaviour.

4. Christian behaviour. The example of Christ is here in verse 7, when He opened not His mouth. It takes more strength and courage to keep our peace than to do otherwise, for there is an inborn tendency to justify ourselves at the expense of others.

5. The sovereignty of God. Verse 10 hints at this in revealing that it was the purpose of God that Christ should die. Here is a doctrine, coupled with the Lordship of Christ that is also sadly neglected today and there is a great need to emphasise the fundamental and redemption truths.

6. The glory of Christ. The division of the spoil with the strong in verse 12 suggests the victory of Calvary emphasising the glory that awaits us and the ultimate defeat of the enemies of God.

7. The priesthood of Christ. The word 'intercession' in verse 12 hints at this ministry of Christ which is very much amplified in the epistle to the Hebrews, a ministry of succour and help when we are tempted, He being qualified so to do because of His suffering.

Thus we see the germ truths relative to Christ that can blossom into fruit in the believer's life no less than in the life of this Ethiopian statesman that found Christ on that lonely road.

O cross that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to fly from thee;
I lay in dust life's glory dead,
And from the ground there blossoms red,
Life that shall endless be.

Outlines

by NELSON McDONALD (Scotland)

(6) HE IS ABOVE ALL (John 3.31)

He is Purer than the Purest—	Heb. 4.15; 1 John 3.3,5; 2 Cor. 5.21; 1 Pet. 2.22.
He is Lower than the Lowest—	Ps. 22.6-8; Matt. 11.29; 17.27.
He is Fairer than the Fairest—	Ps. 45.2; Song of Sol. 5.9-16.
He is Sweeter than the Sweetest—	Song of Sol. 1.3; Psalm 104.34.
He is Lovelier than the Loveliest—	Song of Sol. 5.16; 1 Sam. 16.12.
He is Dearer than the Dearest—	1 Pet. 2.7; Prov. 17.17; 18.24; John 15.14.
He is Nearer than the Nearest—	Matt. 28.20; Heb. 13.5; Isa. 42.6.
He is Mightier than the Mightiest—	Rev. 19.11-16; John 1.51; Acts 7.56.
He is Greater than the Greatest—	Matt. 12.6,8,15,22,29, 41,42.
He is Better than the Best—	Heb. 1.4; 7.22; 10.12.
He is Higher than the Highest—	Isa. 52.13; Ps. 89.27; Heb. 7.26; Phil 2.9-11.
He is Worthier than the Worthiest—	Rev. 5.9-12.

“FROM GREENLAND’S ICY MOUNTAINS”

REGINALD HEBER (1783—1826)

This great missionary hymn was written by Reginald Heber in the year 1819. Heber was born on April 21st, 1783, into a wealthy and cultured family at Malpas in Cheshire, England. There his father was a clergyman in the Church of England. From childhood, Reginald demonstrated a great love for books and an aptitude for writing verse; indeed his elder brother once remarked, “Reginald doesn’t read books, he devours them.” After early education at Whitchurch grammar school and Neasden, Reginald entered Brasenose College, Oxford, at the age of 17. There he followed a very distinguished literary career. Besides numerous prizes, he carried off what was, at that time, the most coveted award in English literature (the Newdigate Prize) with his famous poem, “Palestine.” A Fellowship from the college enabled him, over the next two years, to travel widely throughout Scandinavia, Eastern Europe and Russia. On his return, he entered the ministry of the Church of England.

Heber began to preach in Hodnet in 1807 and there in that little Shropshire village, he exercised a diligent and devoted ministry which lasted for 16 years. No less a person than Thackeray has paid fitting tribute to those Hodnet years, “. . . counselling the people in their troubles, advising them in their difficulties, comforting them in their distress, kneeling often at their sick beds at the hazard of his own health, exhorting, encouraging where there was need; where there was strife, the peace-maker; where there was want, the free-giver,” and yet throughout all of those demanding and busy years, there burned within Heber’s heart a very deep interest in overseas missionary work. In early youth, his soul had been fired by the reading of, “The Life of Henry Martyn.” Martyn’s heroic labours throughout India, his undaunted zeal and martyr’s death, had kindled within him an inextinguishable flame, a flame that soon was to consume all his soul’s energies.

In the year 1823, the bishopric of Calcutta was offered to Heber with a charge of responsibility, not only for the whole of India, but also for Ceylon and the most of the South Pacific. Though this appeared as the fulfilment of a life-long desire, Heber only accepted the charge after deep exercise of heart. “I prayed to God to show me the path of duty and to give me grace to follow it; and the tranquility of mind which I now feel induces me to hope that I have His blessing and approbation.” His acceptance opened to him a completely new sphere of service and he was then 40 years of age. As aforetime, he gave himself unstintedly

to the work—to the preaching of the gospel, the teaching of new converts and the founding of schools throughout that great sub-continent. God blessed bountifully and when fruit appeared Heber's heart rejoiced. At a Tamil service in Tangore, which was attended by 1300 native Christians, he was greatly moved as he heard so many, but lately rescued from the pollution of their heathen idolatry, join to sing the praises of their Redeemer. "For the last ten years, I have longed to witness a scene like this, but the reality exceeds all my expectation. Gladly would I exchange years of common life for one such day as this." Thus it was to be and after only three years of engagement for God in that difficult tropical climate, Heber laid down his sword. On the evening of April 3rd, 1826, having addressed a large company of new converts at Trichinopoly in which he spoke to them of the evils of the caste system, he was suddenly and unexpectedly called to his rest. Thus closed the brief but unforgettable missionary ministry of Reginald Heber concerning which Dr. John Julian has commented, "no memory of Indian annals is holier than that of the three years of ceaseless travel, splendid administration and saintly enthusiasm."

As a hymnwriter, Reginald Heber has gained a place of honour. He composed some 57 hymns and these all were written during the Hodnet period of his ministry. Heber, being a man of rare refinement and deep spirituality, desired that hymns sung in church be worthy of Divine service. A need for such hymns existed and he set to work. His compositions soon began to appear in the 'Christian Observer.' He compiled a manuscript collection of these together with some by his close friend, Professor H. H. Milman, and others with a view to introducing them into the regular services of the Church of England. His exercise, however, was thwarted by the hierarchy of the church and not until after his death did the content of his manuscript collection receive publication ("Hymns written and adapted for the Weekly Church Service of the Year"—1827).

There are two of Reginald Heber's compositions that will never die—his majestic adoration hymn, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty" and his great missionary hymn, "From Greenland's Icy Mountains." The latter was written by Heber four years prior to his call to Calcutta and the circumstances of its writing are most interesting. On the Saturday morning preceding Whit Sunday, 1819, he was gathered with some friends around the table in the library of Wrexham vicarage, the home of his father-in-law, Dr. Shipley. Dr. Shipley, at that time Rector of Wrexham and Dean of St. Asaph's, was nominated to preach a sermon the following morning in the parish church in aid of the "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts." The Dean requested of Heber, his son-in-law, that he "write something for

us to sing at the morning service." Heber thereupon retired from the table to a quiet corner of the library. After a short time, Shipley enquired "and what have you written?" to which Heber responded,

"From Greenland's icy mountains,
From India's coral strand,
Where Afric's sunny fountains
Roll down their golden sand;
From many an ancient river,
From many a palmy plain,
They call us to deliver
Their land from error's chain.

What though the spicy breezes
Blow soft o'er Ceylon's isle ;
Though ever prospect pleases,
And only man is vile ;
In vain with lavish kindness
The gifts of God are strown;
The heathen, in his blindness,
Bows down to wood and stonel

Can we, whose souls are lighted
With wisdom from on high,—
Can we, to men benighted
The lamp of life deny?
Salvation! yea, salvation!
The joyful sound proclaim,
Till each remotest nation
Has learned Messiah's name!"

"There, that will do," exclaimed Shipley. "No, no," remarked Heber, "the sense is not complete," and went on to add a fourth verse,

"Waft, waft, ye winds, His story;
And you, ye waters roll,
Till, like a sea of glory,
It spreads from pole to pole!
Till o'er our ransomed nature,
The Lamb for sinners slain,
Redeemer, King, Creator,
In bliss returns to reign!"

In all, the composition took about twenty minutes and though written on the inspiration of the moment, he did not alter it in any way except for a single word change in verse two from "savage" to "heathen." On the next morning, Whit Sunday, 1819, it was sung for the first time by the congregation of Wrexham Parish Church to an old ballad tune suggested by Heber himself.

Its present tune, "Missionary Hymn" was composed just a few years later by Lowell Mason in Savannah, Georgia, U.S.A. and like the writing of the hymn, this fitting tune was also composed on impulse and completed in thirty minutes.

Heber's great missionary hymn makes an arresting appeal to our hearts. Its language is vivid, its scenes so rapidly changing. In every clime and nation we can see the heathen, enslaved in their idolatry, bow down to wood and stone. We can hear them as they call, "come over . . . and help us." (Acts 16.9). Their call is not merely that of slaves in their chains, nor of the hungry in their distress, nor even of the sick and suffering in their physical need. It is the call of lost souls, the cry from hearts wrung by the tyranny of sin. It is incessant—it can not be stifled—it will not go away!

"Can we, whose souls are lighted
With wisdom from on high,—
Can we, to men benighted
The lamp of life deny?"

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

STUDIES IN JOHN'S GOSPEL

by Wm. Hoste

FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTALS

by J. B. Hewitt

CHRIST IN THE APOCALYPSE

by J. B. D. Page

Review—WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES—Vol. 3

TALKS TO YOUNG BELIEVERS

by J. Ritchie

ENOCH WALKED WITH GOD

by C. Jones

OUTLINES by N. McDonald

THE LORD'S QUESTION by J. E. Todd

SOME THOUGHTS AS WE JOURNEY HOME

by W. Stirrup

YE ARE COMPLETE

by D. N. Martin

HYMNS AND THEIR WRITERS

by J. Strahan

Tune . . . Jesus Thy Dying I Own 8.8.8.8.

Gathered around our blessed Lord
With heart and voice in one accord,
Afresh we view the mystery,
The Christ of God nailed to the tree.

O was there ever such a sight?
The noonday sun with-holds its light,
Earth trembles at His parting cry,
But sinners sit and watch Him die.

And can it be with heart unmoved
We scan that love wherewith He loved?
Be this the burden of our sighs
That we are here with tearless eyes.

Sweet this memorial bread we eat
With heart all prostrate at His feet,
And with what joy we take the cup
From Him Who drank our sorrows up.

Lord write Thy love upon each heart
That we might know some feeble part
Of that eternal, sovereign grace
Which stooped to take a sinner's place.

O blessed Lord, our hearts would bow
In silent adoration now,
Henceforth declare with every breath
The saving worth of such a death.

STUDIES IN JOHN'S GOSPEL

(Christ, the Interpreter of the Father)

by WM. HOSTE

7—IN A SCENE OF MOURNING (John 11)

We have already seen our Lord at Cana, in the house of feasting. We are now to see Him interpreting the Father in the house of mourning. There "He rejoices with them that do rejoice," here, He "weeps with them that weep." "It is better," the Preacher tells us, "to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting, for that is the end of all men, and the living will lay it to heart." And "the heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, but the heart of fools in the house of mirth" (Eccl. 7.2,4). The world's feasts must sooner or later turn to mourning, and that often very suddenly. "Their laughter is like the crackling of thorns under a pot," but for a moment. But who but Christ can turn the house of mourning into a house of feasting? This is what we see at Bethany. The Comforter of chap 11 becomes the Guest of chap 12. "There they made Him a feast," and the mourners of yesterday serve and adore. Thus will it be for every Christian mourner. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning" (Psa. 30.5). "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted" (Matt. 5.4). "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (Rev. 21.4).

The sisters of Bethany knew to whom to turn in their sorrow. "A brother is born for adversity," but their brother was sick unto death. They knew the "Friend that sticketh closer than a brother." They had received Him into their house, He had supped with them, and where He sups, He sympathises too. They were so sure of His readiness to come to their help, they had but to mention the need. "Lord, he whom Thou lovest, is sick." The word here for love, **Philein*, is not as weighty as that used in verse 5, *Agapan*. Though in a sense it is *strong*, it is not so *deep*. *Philein* implies a more passionate warmth of affection, but *Agapan* a love of more reasoned, deliberate choice. *Philein* knows to the full, how well it loves; *Agapan* can tell you why it loves. Yes, the Lord did love with the love of special

* See Trench's Synonyms of N.T., p. 41.

friendship, and thus only displayed the perfection of His true humanity. But it was without prejudice to the fact that He loved all His disciples. No doubt John was one of His special friends, as were the three mentioned here. Those who insist on our Lord's Deity (and thank God for all such!), must not do so at the expense of His true Humanity, or they seriously err from the faith, and disparage the glory of His Person Abraham and Moses were "friends of God," and no doubt the capacity for such friendship was originally one of the beautiful qualities of unfallen humanity, and now is restored in part to believers. Should we not expect to find it in fullest measure in the Perfect Man? The command to love all the brethren, does not mean by making all our special friends. For to "love" and to "like" are not the same. The latter term implies a certain similarity of tastes, disposition, and ways. When the Lord received the message of His friends at Bethany, He "abode two days in the place where He was." This delay may throw light on mysteries, that cross our own path, unexplained trials, apparently fruitless prayers, permissions of God's providence, that seem to lend themselves to misunderstandings. "Thy way is in the sea, and Thy path in the great waters, and Thy footsteps are not known" (Psa. 77.19), and by man cannot be, save in "the sanctuary of God" (Psa. 73.17). So the Lord says, "What I do thou knowest not *now*; but thou shalt know hereafter" (John 13.7).

The Lord might have saved Lazarus from dying, as He had the nobleman's son (chap 4.50), and the centurion's servant (Matt. 8.13), but here things must be allowed to go to the very worst. To save him "out of death" would be the greater deliverance. Nature says, "While there is life there is hope," and the sisters could not then see further than that, but faith must learn that "while there is Christ there is hope." There is for us all in trial, a bigger question even than "*How* to get out of it?" and that is, "*What* to get out of it?"

Another reason for the delay, which is sometimes overlooked, was that the Lord knew that, travelling at the ordinary pace of men, He and His disciples would have arrived too late, even had they started to Bethany without delay. His failure to arrive in time would then have been gloated over by His enemies of to-day as a proof He pos-

essed no real claim to omniscience. As it was, there was no haste, no hurry, and when they arrived, after a delay of only two days, they found Lazarus had been in the grave "four days already." Indeed, e'er our Lord started on His journey, He knew that His friend was already dead. But when He arrives, He brings present deliverance. As in the case of Jairus' daughter and the widow's son, so here. There was no need for Martha to wait for "the resurrection of the last day." The very Son of God, whose voice will then wake the dead, was present in all His resurrection power. So He said, "I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and he that liveth and believeth in Me, shall never die." These words seem to rise prophetically far above that dispensation. The mystery of the coming of the Lord to raise the dead and change the living (1 Cor. 15; 1 Thess. 4.15) had not then been unfolded. Yet we see it enfolded in these words of our Lord, to Martha. To those who vainly seek to find opposition between the teachings of the apostle Paul and His Master, and whose parrot and, we fear, hypocritical cry is, "Back to Christ," to escape "the pricks" of apostolic doctrine, we reply, there is not a truth found in the Epistles, that was not already *latent* in our Lord's teaching. Both are equally the fruit of "the Holy Spirit's teaching." Now, the Lord is about to display His power over death, as the Son of God. Will this hinder the deep outflow of His tender compassions as Son of Man, towards the mourners in their sorrow? No, indeed. In His groaning—for "He groaned in the spirit" (v. 43)—we hear the beating of the heart of God.

In the trouble of soul which the Lord manifested at the sorrow of those whom He loved—for "He troubled Himself" (v. 33, marg.)—we learn the practical workings of the Divine sympathies. In His tears—for "Jesus wept"—we behold the tender mercies of our God. Whoever else may be indifferent to the sorrows of His people, it certainly is not He. For truly, "in all their affliction He is afflicted." It is a fact, that may well arrest our thoughts, that we have in this scene, not merely the display of Divine power in the raising of Lazarus, wonderful though that be, but in the expression of His sympathy with the sorrow that death had wrought, we learn the affections of Him, of whom He

was "the express image," "the Father of Mercies, and the God of all Comfort." Not only then were the sisters comforted by the Lord's real human sympathy, but in God's time and way, their prayer was granted by His Divine power. This was, as God loves to answer, in a better way than they asked or thought. They received their brother back, not from a dying bed, but from the tomb. But would not the other have been better? How much anguish it would have spared them! Yes, but what lessons they would have missed! What are usually called "wonderful answers" to prayer, are those received with the least possible delay, and in striking coincidence with the request. Such are certainly very blessed, and call for heartfelt praise. But often more wonderful still are the prayers answered in God's better time and way. The answers we *insist* on, may prove anything but blessings in disguise, and ensue in leanness of soul. Hezekiah's added 15 years (2 Kings 20.6) saw his failure before the King of Babylon (v. 12), the birth of Manasseh (chap. 21. 1 and 2), and only one act which the Spirit of God has seen fit to leave for our instruction: "He made a pool and conduit and brought water into the city" (chap. 20. 20), a record of service much below the level of those first fruitful years of his reign, his originally allotted span.

Cases are not unknown to-day of lives prolonged in answer to insistent prayer, which have wasted out in backsliding and dishonour to the Lord. The Lord's people may always count on His tender sympathy as they minister at a sick bed, but even when restoration is withheld, they can await a better answer, on the resurrection morn. The Lord was summoned once, we know, to another house of mourning, but here there was no delay in His response, for, as far as we know, Jairus was not a disciple, and what faith he had was only in the bud, and must not be nipped, as had been the case had "Jesus abode still in the place where He was." The delay caused by the healing of the sick woman, was no doubt providentially permitted to allow things to get beyond the hope of man. Trying, no doubt, was the crisis, but it elicited those four cheering words, "Fear not, only believe" (Mark v. 31), which we may well cherish. Here the Lord found the house full of the world's mourners, well-meaning persons enough, but representing

that official unbelief which would sooner see the dead girl buried "decently and in order," than raised from her bed by any unorthodox methods. Then let them go bag and baggage, with their commonsense unbelief, and only those remain worth training in the ways of God, or whose spark of faith may thus be fanned into a flame! Let these "see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living;" the others counted not, for they were very blind. This incident forms the link between the raising of Lazarus and that of the son of the widow of Nain (Luke 7.12). Here, there was no request to the Lord for help. Neither was the miracle done in private, like the last. "Many of His disciples went with Him and much people," and they met the crowded funeral procession—the widowed mother and "much people of the city who went with her." One would judge she was a person beloved, and of some position in the city. It was the most public occasion possible. The Lord manifested forth His glory before many witnesses. The widow made no appeal to Him, as Jairus or the sisters of Bethany; but he could not be indifferent in the presence of her tears. "And when He saw her, He had compassion on her and said unto her, Weep not," thus once more interpreting the heart of Him whose "tender mercies are over all His works." Then He gave life to the dead, and delivered him to his mother, perhaps in such a case the only practical way of drying her tears. We do not see the dead raised to-day. These miracles are now in abeyance. But a miracle of miracles is still to take place at the return of "this same Jesus." The dead in Christ shall rise first, the living in Christ shall be changed, and both together caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord (1 Thess. 4.16-18). This is the Divine consolation to-day for believers, mourning the loss of their fellow-saints. "Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

FROM THE DESK OF DR. NATE TAYLOR—This is to inform you that some of the works of our late, and esteemed brother, C. H. Mackintosh are now available on cassette tapes. There is no charge for these tapes but fellowship to cover cost of tape and mailing would be appreciated. Please make this matter known in your Assembly and encourage younger brethren to avail themselves of this opportunity. The readings are professionally produced on reasonably good tape for many hours of use. — CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATED PROJECTS, Inc. Skyview, Cottdale, Alabama 35453

FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTALS

by J. B. HEWITT, Chesterfield

(39) THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

The Fact of His Coming. Introduction.

The Bible reveals the second Coming of Christ as the most majestic and stupendous event towards which all the ages move. His first Advent is now a matter of history, and the second still a matter of prophecy.

We are to "take heed" in our hearts to the prophetic Word (2 Pet. 1.19). God's word deals with three classes, namely the Jew, the Gentile and the Church (1 Cor. 10.32). The latter are taken out of Israel and the Nations (Acts 15.14). The Church "which is his body" has a unique place in the ways of God (Eph. 1.22,23). The doctrine of the body of Christ is N.T. teaching and peculiar to the apostle Paul; no other Bible writer mentions it (Rom. 16.25,26; Eph. 3.4,8-11).

The truth of the coming again of our Lord is revealed and unchangeable. Our theories of the fact are NOT inspired, and we should endeavour to adopt an objective approach. Pray that the Holy Spirit may enlighten our minds, and encourage our hearts. Our consideration of this great theme demands, modesty, humility and abundant charity. It is essential to distinguish between the TWO STAGES of the Lord's second coming.

(1) His coming to the AIR, to catch up the Church, called the RAPTURE (1 Thess. 4.13-18; 2 Thess. 2.1; 1 Cor. 15.51,52).

(2) His coming to the earth, called the REVELATION (1 Cor. 1.7; 2 Thess. 1.7-9; 2.8; Matt. 24.30).

The first is his coming as the Son of God, the second as the Son of Man, a title always linked with the earth (Zech. 14.1-3).

(a) **Propheesied in the Old Testament.** Most of the references are associated with "that day" — "the day of the Lord." The Lord Jesus is the promised King (Gen. 49.10;

Isa. 32.1; Jer. 23.5; Ezek. 37.22; Zech. 14.9; Rev. 19.16). Compare references to "THE BRANCH" (Isa. 4.2; 11.1-9; Zech. 3.8; 6.12,13). These mean that Jesus will reign as King over the whole earth. He is coming to set up a Kingdom (Dan. 2.34,44,45, 7.13,14; Psalms 2, 24, 72). His Kingdom will fill the whole earth. The prophetic word will be verified.

(b) Promised by the Lord Himself. (i) In plain language (John 14.1-3; Matt. 16.27; 24.27-31; 25.31-34; 26.64).

(ii) In parables (Matt. 24.30-35; 25.1-13; 25.14-30 with Luke 19.11-27). All these refer to His coming as the Son of Man to earth except (John 14.1-3). His promises are sure (John 14.2; 2 Cor. 1.18,20).

(c) Proclaimed by Angels. (Acts 1.10-11; Rev. 11.15-17). Acts 1.11 is clear. He is coming as He went. Literal, personal, visible, in the clouds of heaven. Coming to the same spot (Zech. 14.4). Coming in glory and power.

(d) Preached by the Apostles. PETER in Acts 3.19-21, the hope of Israel. Until the restoration (v.21). Meditate on these "UNTIL'S" (Isa. 6.11-13; Dan. 7.22-25 RV; 9.27 RV; Jer. 30.24 RV; Ezek. 21.27; Luke 21.24; Rom. 11.25 RV). In 1 Pet. 5.4; 2 Pet. 1.16,21; 3.1-15, a subject for scoffers in the last days.

By Paul. He writes about Baptism 13 times, but about the return of Christ, 50 times (1 Cor. 15.51,52; Phil. 3.20,21; 1 Thess. 1.10; 2.19; 3.13; 4.13,18). The second Coming of the Lord is the one hope of the Christian, and the sure hope of the Church (Eph. 5.25-32; Col. 1.22).

Study the passages on "the Day of Christ," a subject of New Testament revelation.

By John (See 1 John 2.28; 3.2; Rev. 3.11; 19.11-16; 22.7,12,20).

(e) Published by Others. In James 5.7,8 patience in service. Jude 14 the "day of the Lord." A subject of O.T. Prophecy, it is a time of judgment. (Joel 2.18-32 RV). In Hebrews 9. 24-28 we see three positions in which we behold the blessed Lord Jesus Christ, viewed as a man. His three appearings. In verse 26 a Propitiating Saviour, with Titus 3.4. In v. 24 a Priestly Saviour, with Titus 1.3. In verse 28 a Powerful Saviour, to save us from the presence of sin, with Titus 2.13. R. A. Torrey writes, "The second coming

of the Lord is mentioned 318 times in the 260 chapters of the New Testament." All the Gospels, the Acts, every epistle of Paul (except Galatians and Philemon), James, Peter, Jude, John (except his two minor epistles; yet hinted at in 2 John 8;) and the Revelation.

Are we living in the light of this glorious event? May we worship anticipatively (1 Cor. 11.26). Walk consistently and circumspectively (Rom. 13.12,13); witness carefully (1 Cor. 9.24-27); weep hopefully (1 Cor. 15.54; 1 Thess. 4.13); warn faithfully (1 Cor. 16.22); and wait expectantly (1 Thess. 1.10).

He is coming, PERHAPS TODAY. These precious words ought to thrill our hearts. May our response be, "Even so Come Lord Jesus."

CHRIST IN THE APOCALYPSE (13)

by JOHN B. D. PAGE

THE ANGEL AVENGER

Reading : Revelation 18.1.

"After these things . . .," says John for the third time (cp. 4.1, RV, & 7.9, RV), referring to the downfall of a luxuriously arrayed harlot, who had upon her forehead a name, "Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth" (17.4f), just as other prostitutes of Bible times displayed their name upon their brow, the seer saw another angel. At this angel's descent from heaven, the earth was lit up with his glory (18.1).

By describing him as "another angel," John differentiates him from the angel-speaker, who was one of seven with vials (17.1). In identifying him, Dr. F. A. Tatford says, "the angel is none other than our Lord Himself," whilst Philip Mauro writes, "The angel having great power, by whose glory the earth is illuminated, can be none other than Christ." Characteristics of this angel confirm that these writers are undoubtedly correct, and this is the third time that John saw Christ in the guise of an Angel.

Before proceeding with the activity of this Angel, we shall remind ourselves of a few facts about angels. Like men,

angels are created beings (Col. 1.16), but, unlike men, they are spirits (Heb 1.7), who are invisible to humans (Col. 1.16).

Broadly speaking, angels may be arranged into two groups, viz., fallen and unfallen angels. All fallen angels give their allegiance to Satan, who is himself a fallen cherub (Ezek. 28.14-17). Fallen angels are divided into two groups, for some are free and others fettered. The abode of fallen and yet free angels is the atmospheric heaven, and their sphere of activity is amongst men to work out their evil designs (Eph. 2.2, 1 Pet. 5.8). Fallen angels, who are fettered, are destined to remain bound and incarcerated in the underworld until the day of judgment (1 Pet. 3.19, 2 Pet. 2.4, Jude 6). Unlike fallen men, all fallen angels are outside the scope of redemption.

Turning to unfallen angels, heaven is their realm where they stand "before God" (Rev. 8.2). As supernatural beings, angels "excel in strength" (Psa. 103.20; 2 Pet. 2.11), and yet they are the servants of God always ready to be "sent forth for service" (Heb. 1.14, Wigram), to "do His commandments" (Psa. 103.20). Therefore, essentially, they are servants, and they neither rise above that status nor desire to do so.

For the miracle of the incarnation, Christ was "made a little lower than the angels" (Heb. 2.9) who are the highest of created beings. But now "angels and authorities and powers (are) made subject to Him" (1 Pet. 3.22), for God has exalted Christ far above all angelic hierarchies (Eph. 1.21).

Equality amongst angels is unknown. Their powers are varied as the terms "thrones" and "dominions" denote, and their ranks and orders differ as the words "principalities" and "powers" indicate (Col. 1.16). Although angels may be great, Christ is greater than angels both in His Person and power. Angels owe their existence to Christ, because they were created by Him. As "the Head of all principality and power" (Col. 2.10), Christ is not only superior to, but supreme over, both fallen and unfallen angels.

This is the Person, Whom John saw in the guise of an Angel. Of Him, the seer says He had "come down from heaven," or was "descending from out of heaven" (RV), which is the same phrase used to describe the descent of the mighty Angel in ch. 10.1. Obviously, this is another

cameo of the second coming of Christ to this earth.

“Having great power” is a descriptive phrase of the power vested in Christ in His Angel guise. The immensity of this exceeding great power was demonstrated when God raised Christ from the dead (Eph. 1.19f), and such divine power will be displayed when Christ comes again to the earth (Luke 21.27).

The Revisers adopt the alternative rendering, “having great authority,” which is not contradictory of, but complementary to, the other. For the effective exercise of power, there must be authority. Where angels display power, it is conferred upon them to act for God, and their authority is confined to within set bounds. But this Angel whom John saw, was vested with absolute authority and in possession of unlimited power in the spheres of both heaven and earth (Matt. 28.18).

As this all-powerful Angel descended from heaven, “the earth was lightened with His glory.” For this global illumination, the Son of Man will come again in a cloud not only with power but “with great glory” (Matt. 21.27), and it is John who foresees in this vision the earth ablaze with Messiah’s great glory at His coming again.

As so much of the Apocalyptic text is interwoven with quotations from the Old Testament without introducing such citations with words such as ‘It is written,’ we should not be surprised to find that the seer is undoubtedly quoting here from Ezekiel 43.2, “. . . and the earth shined with His glory.” With Solomon’s temple destroyed and the glory of the Lord departed from it, this exiled prophet had a God-given vision of a re-built temple in a coming day and he saw the return of the glory to the millennial temple. In watching its return, the prophet said, “the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east” (Ezek. 43.2), indicating that the glory will come from Olivet, “the mountain on the east side of the city” whence it departed (Ezek. 11.23; cp. 9.3, 10.4,18). Before passing through the courts and entering into the temple (Ezek. 43.4f), “the earth was lit up with His glory,” as J. N. Darby translates Ezekiel’s statement.

In Solomon’s day the glory was a symbol of the divine presence, but in the millennial era the glory will be a

Person, which is clear from Isaiah 40.5, "And the glory of the Lord shall reveal Himself . . ." (lit.). Already, the glory is embodied in the glorified Christ "and all flesh shall see Him," so Isaiah adds, in the age to come. In view of this, Ezekiel's phrase "the glory of the God of Israel" is applied apparently to the glorified Christ Himself, so that it may be considered as a title of His.

Furthermore, for the first occurrence of the divine name "God of Israel," we turn to Jacob who built an altar and called it "El-elohe-Israel" which means 'God, the God of Israel,' although he added the prefix 'El,' and abbreviated form of 'Elohim' (Gen. 33.20). The last mention of this title, "the Lord, the God of Israel" or 'Jehovah-elohe-Israel,' which includes the prefix 'Jehovah,' is used of the glorified Christ passing through the east gate of the outer court into the millennial temple, as foreseen in a vision by Ezekiel (44.1f). Surely, it is not by accident but rather by design that the first and last occurrences of this divine title are connected with a patriarchal altar and the millennial temple respectively directing our thoughts to "the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow" (1 Pet 1.11).

Returning to the title "the God of Israel" in Ezekiel 43.2, it is without either an Elohist or a Jehovistic prefix, but it is connected with the glory of Christ, Whose Person will be so radiant with glory that the earth will be aglow with it, as He proceeds to enter the millennial temple.

This provides the background of the Patmos seer's thinking in his vision when he too, like Ezekiel in exile, saw, after the Angel's descent, "the earth was lightened with His glory" (ch. 18.1). One writer says, "He, by Whose glory the whole earth is illuminated, can be no other than the Lord of the earth." The seer saw the "earth" (*ge*, Gr.), meaning 'land as distinct from water,' was lit up by the glory of the Angel. Concerning the phrase, "with His glory," the preposition "with" does not convey the thought of 'glory associated with Him,' but the word is literally 'out of' (*ek*, Gr.), signifying 'glory proceeding out of Him.' Therefore, the glory was not reflected from the Angel as the moon reflects the light of the sun, but the glory was shining forth from out of the Angel, and so He was the Source of the glory as the sun is of natural light. Surely, this only confirms that Christ was seen in the guise of an Angel.

Such truth is in keeping with "the Son . . . , being the brightness of His glory" (Heb. 1.1f). The word "brightness" (*apaugasma*, Gr.) occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, and W. E. Vine explains in his *Expository Dictionary* that it means " 'a shining forth' of a light coming from a luminous body," indicating that His glory is not merely a reflection from another source but, being the embodiment of the glory, His whole Person is luminous and radiant with glory.

In the day of our redemption, we shall be partakers of His glory (1 Pet. 5.1) when we shall be changed for meeting the Lord in the air. Also, we shall accompany Him in the day of His manifestation when the earth will be lit up with His glory. What a blessed hope is ours!

Review

Third Volume !

WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES

(General Editors : T. Wilson, K. Stapley)

Another excellent addition to this valuable series of Expositions by well-known present day teachers. This volume deals with

- 1 Thessalonians by T. E. Wilson.
- 2 Thessalonians by T. W. Smith.
- 1 Timothy by J. Allen.
- 2 Timothy by J. R. Baker.
- Titus by D. E. West.

The matter in this excellent book is of the same high standard as the two volumes already published. Careful, painstaking, verse by verse exposition. More important still the teaching is accurate, scriptural and will have the effect of building up saints as individuals and members of assemblies. All readers of "Assembly Testimony" should read these expositions with great care, and see to it that they are brought to the attention of young believers in the assembly. If you have the first two volumes you will want to obtain this one (if you have none of them order the whole three at once).

Obtained from John Ritchie Ltd., Kilmarnock, or your local bookseller. VOLUME 3 by Post, £9.50 (Vols. 1, 2, 3, £25).

THESE BOOKS ARE SOUND !

Talks to Young Believers

by JOHN RITCHIE

MAN : A TRIUNE BEING.

Spirit and Soul and Body.

The rapid spread of Materialist views, which declare that the body alone is the man, and of Annihilationist doctrine, which insists that at death the human organism is dissolved, and the man ceases to be—*i.e.*, becomes extinct in his entire being—is a cause of sorrow to all who love the truth. There is a certain plausibility and cunning in man's way of stating these errors, which tends to carry conviction to minds untaught in the truth of Scripture, and thus they are led into the by-paths of error. By the truth alone shall we be preserved—therefore, it should be earnestly sought for as hid treasure, and, when found, held fast in faith and love for our own preservation and edification, then held forth for the help and blessing of others

Man's Triunity.

Man, as created by God, and living on earth in mortal flesh, is a triune being, composed of "spirit and soul and body" (1 Thess. v. 23). These three parts constitute the man. He may be, and is, in the language of Scripture, identified with either, according to the line of truth being revealed. He usually is so with the "body" when his relation to others is in view, and with the "soul and spirit" when his attitude toward God is under consideration. It is the possession of "spirit" which makes man a moral and accountable being, fitted for acquaintance and intercourse with God, and which links him, in his hopes or fears, with a life and a world beyond the present.

The Creation of Man.

The words in Genesis 1.26,27, "Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness : and let them have dominion," are peculiar to man's creation. Other forms of life had already been brought forth, by the "waters" and the "earth" (vv. 20,24), but in man's creation, Elohim — the Triune God—acts directly and deliberately. Genesis 2, 7-25, gives

the details of his creation in the concrete, as the earlier mention of it does in the abstract—not two events, but the same in different aspects. This record of man's creation is neither mythical nor parabolic, but literal. It is assumed as historic fact by the Lord (Matt. 19. 4-6) and the inspired Apostle (1 Tim. 2.13,14), and is fundamental to revealed truth concerning man in his present condition (Rom. 5. 12-19) and future state (1 Cor. 15.12-19). Evolution, in its modern aspects, virtually denies this record, although it is endorsed by the Son of God (Matt. 15.6), who in Scripture is honoured and owned as man's Creator (John 1.3).

The Body of Man.

“The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.” There was first the figure of clay, formed of the dust, concerning which it is written—“Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return” (Gen. 3.19). Into this lifeless form, God inbreathed “the breath of life.” The body is spoken of in Scripture as man's “tabernacle,” which he may “put off” (2 Pet. 1.14), in which he may be “at home” (2 Cor. 5.6), or from which he may be “absent” (ver. 8). It is said to be “mortal” (Rom. 8.11), that is, subject to death as a result of the fall. Men may kill it (Matt. 10.28), and it may see corruption (Acts 13.36), from which it will be delivered at resurrection (John 5.28, 29). Materialists say the body is the man, ignoring spirit and soul as Scripture describes them and their functions, and denying consciousness or any survival after death. With Annihilationists, death is the “extinction” of man's being.

The Soul of Man.

Derived, as Genesis 2.7, informs us from the breathing of the Creator, which raises him far above the beasts, which are said to have “soul” (Gen 1.30, margin), man is the offspring of God (Acts 17.28), formed to have dominion, in the image and glory of God (1 Cor. 11.7), even though now fallen from his first estate. Man is linked with the inferior creatures by being, as they are, “a living soul,” and distinguished from angels, who are only “spirits” (Heb. 1. 7, 14), but not “souls.” While man is alive in the body, he is a “soul” (see Ezek. 18.20; Lev. 5. 2,4; 7.20, where the person—the individual—is clearly meant); when out of the body, he is then called a “spirit” (Heb. 12.23). It is the

intermediate link between spirit and body, and the life of the latter. To it are ascribed the functions of loving (1 Sam. 18.1), hating (2 Sam. 5.8), desiring (Job 23.13), longing (Psa. 84.2). Affections, appetites, desires belong to the soul. The soul is said to be the seat or spring of sin—"the sin of the soul" (Mic. 6.7)—for it atonement is said to be made (Lev. 17.11), and as it is by the soul needed, so by it is it made, as we read, "When Thou shalt make His *soul* an offering for sin, He shall see His seed. He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied" (Isa 53.10, 11).

The Spirit of Man.

"The spirit of man which is in him" (1 Cor. 2.11), "formed within him" (Zech. 12.1), a separate entity in each individual, his highest part, linking him with God, who is the "Father of spirits" (Heb. 12.9), and the "God of the spirits of all flesh" (Num. 16.22; 22.16), which is equivalent to saying, of all men (see Gen. 6.12; Luke 3.6), saved and unsaved. This "spirit" which animates and controls the bodily organism is from God Himself, and without it the body is "dead" (James 2.26). At death it returns to God who gave it (Eccl. 12.7). In the case of the believer, it is received by the Lord Jesus (Acts 7.59), and exists in consciousness apart from the body (Heb. 12.23). To the spirit is ascribed the functions of intelligence, understanding, and judgment. It can "know" (1 Cor. 2.11), be "stirred" (Acts 17.16), be "provoked" (Psa. 106.33), while by it moral and spiritual qualities may be developed, such as a "right spirit" (Psa. 51.10), a "meek and quiet spirit" (1 Pet. 3.4). "My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour" (Luke 1.47) tells of its capability of spiritual joy, while the Spirit of God bearing witness "with our spirit" (Rom. 8.16) tells of its capability for intercourse with the Divine.

In Life and Death.

While spirit, soul, and body continue in the harmonious relations to each which constitute the man, he is in LIFE, as that word is ordinarily used. When the triunity breaks up—when the soul and spirit leave the body—the condition is reached which is called DEATH. Neither of the three component parts becomes extinct, but their disruption breaks up the man—the *man* dies. The body returns to dust; the spirit to God who gave it. The former we know by sight; the latter comes to us as a revelation from God (Eccl. 12.7).

Death is separation : never extinction. Even Annihilationists are compelled to admit that something survives, in which the identity of the man is preserved till resurrection and judgment (John 5.28,29; Rev. 20.12). This "something," Scripture informs us, is the disembodied spirit, which, liberated from its tenement, continues to exist. The question remains—Where ?

The Unclothed State.

At death, the tenant leaves the "earthly house" in which through life he had dwelt (2 Cor. v.1). The spirit "puts off" the tabernacle, in which it had sojourned through earthly years (2 Pet. 1.13,14). In the case of the Christian—the man who has been born of God (John 1.12,13), who has become a possessor of eternal life (1 John 5.13), and on whom as a seal the Spirit of God rests until the day of redemption (Eph. 4.30), the redemption of the body (Rom. 8.23)—the emancipated spirit "departs to be with Christ" (Phil. 1.23). When Stephen was being stoned to death, he said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" (Acts 7.59). It is there, absent from the body, and at home with the Lord (2 Cor. 5.8 R.V.) in conscious blessedness—"very far better" (Phil. 1.23, RV) than it ever could be in mortal flesh. Thus, the ransomed spirit of the saint awaits the coming hour of resurrection, when it will be re-united with a spiritual body, fitted to its new conditions, and capable of heavenly and eternal glory.

The unbelieving and unsaved sinner passes at death from his present condition of spiritual death (Eph. 2.1), and alienation from God because of sin (Eph. 4.18), to Hades, there to consciously suffer torment while the body is in the grave, (and surviving brothers living in sin on earth, where the Bible is known (Luke 16.23-31)), reserved under punishment to the day of judgment (2 Pet. 2.9, RV), when "death" shall deliver up their bodies, and "Hades" their souls, to be re-united, and the man re-constituted for judgment (Rev. 20.13), followed by the final doom, the second death, the damnation of the entire person in Gehenna (Mark 9. 43-49; Rev. 10.15; 21.8).

Scriptural Definitions.

The current use of certain popular theological but unscriptural phrases in this connection, has done much to give the enemies of the truth a foothold, which they are

not slow to use in making their onslaughts. "Immortal soul," "never-dying soul," "sudden death is sudden glory," and other similar expressions, are not Scripture nor does Scripture teaching warrant their use. They are sentiment and excrescence, arising from erroneous views or interpretations read into God's Word. Immortality is a word which only applies to the resurrection body, yet to be put on (1 Cor. 15.54), which no man yet possesses, notwithstanding the phraseology of religious newspaper obituaries and tombstones, where someone is said to have "departed this life, and entered upon a glorious immortality." The Apostle's injunction—"Hold fast the form of sound words" (2 Tim. 1.13)—is nowhere more needful than in the consideration and discussion of subjects which are matters of controversy, and concerning which we have nothing save the words of Divine revelation to guide and assure us Man's present tripartite nature, his dissolution, his ultimate destiny, and his endless being, are pre-eminent among such, and we do well to abide by and cleave to the inspired words of Holy Scripture in seeking light for ourselves and giving instruction to others, on a subject of so vast and transcendent importance.

Questions and Answers.

1.—Does death, in Ezekiel 18.20, where the words are, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die," mean extinction?—No; neither there nor anywhere else, where it is used in Scripture. Annihilationists say that the judgment of sin is the death of the *soul*. But Scripture never so speaks. Nor does it speak of the death of the *body*. It is the man who dies, not his body or his soul. The word in Ezekiel 18.20, is the person—the individual—not the father for the son, but the person who sins, he shall die. The word "soul" is so used in 1 Pet. 3.20; 4.19.

2.—What do the words, "shall not see life," in John 3.36, mean?—If he never sees life, must he not be exterminated? Existence and life are not synonymous. All have the former—saint and sinner alike; only the former have "life," as the word is here and elsewhere used. (See John 17. 3; Rom. 6.23). Eternal life is the possession of the believer now, and in the future. The unbeliever "hath not life" (1 John 5.12) now; and of him it is said that he "shall not see life" hereafter. Yet he exists without it, as we know. That he

shall continue to exist while never seeing it, is equally sure, as the closing words of the verse, "The wrath of God *abideth* on him," solemnly tell. Wrath cannot "abide" upon a nonentity. Endless existence is common to all men and angels; eternal life is the present possession of believers only (John 5.24). Immortality, which applies to a condition of life in the future, they look for (Rom. 2.7), and will "put on" (1 Cor. 15.53) at the coming of the Lord.

3.—How was the word spoken to Adam, in Genesis 2.17, "Thou shalt surely die," fulfilled?—Not by natural death, for he lived 930 years. Nor was it "extinction of his being," as Annihilationists say, for neither "in the day" Adam ate of the tree did his being become extinct, nor is it now. Nor did the promise of redemption suspend or postpone the sentence. When Adam sinned, the threatened death came upon him that day. His near relationship to God was broken. He was severed from His presence by sin; such is death in its deepest sense (see Eph. 2.1; 4.18). Yet he existed, as sinners still exist "without God;" so Rom. 5.12,13, clearly tells us. And if, while now without life in Christ, fallen angels and sinful men exist, so, in the disembodied and the eternal states, they shall exist, as Scripture fully shows (see 2 Pet. 2.4; Rev. 20.10; Luke 16.23; Rev. 20.15).

". . . ENOCH WALKED WITH GOD"

by **CLIFF JONES**

The references to Enoch in the Word of God are few and brief. In Genesis 5.22 and 5.24 we are told that ". . . Enoch walked with God." In Jude 14 we learn that he prophesied and in Hebrews 11.5 we read that "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God."

Chapter 4 of Genesis traces the posterity of Adam through Cain to Lamech. Chapter 5 traces the posterity of Adam through Seth to Noah who was the great grandson of Enoch and who also walked with God (Gen. 6.9).

Enoch, whose name means 'dedicated' or 'initiated' was ". . . . the seventh from Adam" (Jude 14) and his life can be contrasted with that of Lamech. We learn in Genesis 4 that Lamech was boastful, a bigamist and a murderer, and the contrast between the lives of Lamech and Enoch

is only exceeded by the contrast in the ways in which they ended their lives.

Man had believed the devil when he said “. . . Ye shall not surely die” (Gen. 3.4) and yet eight times in Genesis 5 we read the words “and he died” proving the devil to be a liar (John 8.44). Enoch, however, is an exception for of him we read “. . . and he was not; for God took him” (Gen. 5.24).

Enoch exercised faith in God and by his life witnessed against the increasing wickedness in the world in which he lived. He prophesied of judgment when he stated that the Lord would come to judge the ungodly with myriads of His holy ones (Jude 14,15) and he was taken from the world before the terrible judgment of the Flood came.

Conversion

Enoch had the most outstanding testimony of those listed in Genesis 5 and lived for the shortest time. We are told that “Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years” (Gen. 5.22). Enoch lived for three hundred and sixty-five years (Gen. 5.23) and therefore we can calculate that he was converted when he was sixty-five years old. Bearing in mind the length of his life we can say that Enoch was converted at a comparatively early age. For three hundred years he walked with God, making spiritual progress, witnessing and moving continually against the rising tide of evil around him.

We might well wonder what conditions were like in society in the period during which Enoch walked with God. The conditions described in Genesis 6 would suggest that as things got worse and worse during the period before the Flood, evil abounded on every hand.

The conditions in which Enoch lived and witnessed would seem to be very similar to those in which we live. Enoch lived in a period which preceded the pouring out of judgment by a sin hating God, and likewise we live in a period which precedes the revealing of the wrath of God and His judgment on all who have not repented of their sins and accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as their own personal Lord and Saviour.

We are not given any details of Enoch's life and yet the words “And Enoch walked with God . . .” (Gen. 5.22)

have arrested the attention of generations of God's people. The words make us stop and consider their meaning and the man himself.

Enoch was not a fool: he acknowledged that God exists (Psa. 14.1; 53.1) and he came to God who is not far from every one of us (Acts 17.27). He walked with God who waits to save us (Rom. 10.13), orders all things for our good (Rom. 8.28) and who rewards those who seek Him diligently (Heb. 11.6).

We read in Genesis 5.21 that Enoch named his son Methuselah. This name means "his death will bring it" or "when he is dead it will be sent." It is noteworthy that **death** is in the name of the man who lived longer than any other.

It would appear that Enoch was aware of the inevitable judgment of God on sin. Enoch knew that judgment was coming at the end of Methuselah's life and he concentrated his mind on what mattered—he walked with God. We too know that time is short and we should face reality and appreciate the wisdom of walking with God in this world.

Methuselah lived nine hundred and sixty-nine years and during that time, due to the longsuffering, grace and mercy of God, no judgment came. In the year that Methuselah died, however, God sent the Flood.

Enoch's conversion was not an easy, unreal profession of faith. He knew the holiness of God and the consequential judgment of sin. Enoch had the promise of Genesis 3.15 to rely on and his faith was entirely in God. He walked with God and two cannot walk together if they are not in agreement (Amos 3.3). Enoch led a separated life, witnessing and communicating to others the truth he received from God. Here we find lessons for ourselves in the very difficult days in which we live. If we are to walk with God we must be separated from the world and to Him (2 Cor. 6.14,17). If we are to walk with God and please Him we must know His will and do it. The only way to know His will is to set aside time to read His Word and meditate therein. This involves sacrifice, time and effort. If we are thinking about some aspects of the cost to us of walking with God let us also remind ourselves of the cost of our redemption, for we were bought with a price (1 Cor. 6.20; 7.23). We have been redeemed with the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ

(1 Pet. 1.18,19). Let us also consider the love of God to us, and the fact that He is for us and spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us (Rom. 8.31,32).

We have been left in this world to serve the Lord. Without Him we can do nothing (John 15.5). We are not left to our own devices or wisdom. We have the Word of God and the Holy Spirit to teach us and reveal to us the things concerning the Lord (John 16.13,14). Only when taught by the Holy Spirit from the Word of God and led and empowered by Him can we lead victorious, consecrated lives which exalt and glorify the Lord Jesus Christ.

Enoch's witness was good because of his consistent walk with God. So it must be today. If our way of life is not consistent with what we say we believe, that is if we do not walk with God through this life, then no one will listen to us and God will not be honoured by our lives.

Prophet

Enoch witnessed and he prophesied. He warned of wrath and judgment to come. He prophesied at a time when sin and ungodliness were rampant and the world was heading for the judgment of the Flood.

The prophecy in Jude 14,15 tells of the time when “. . . the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment . . .” These words are words of warning but how sad it is when people so often ignore God's message and His messengers. It has always been so, in that the majority have always ignored the truths God has revealed. God is long-suffering (2 Pet. 3.9), and yet so few are saved. Noah was a preacher of righteousness (2 Pet. 2.5) and yet only eight souls were saved (1 Pet. 3.20).

Enoch's prophecy was the first ever given through a man and is concerned with the second coming of the Lord to execute judgment.

Translated

Like Elijah (2 Kings 2.11), Enoch did not pass through death because God took him.

Enoch's translation prefigures the return of the Lord for the saved. Christians who are alive at the coming of the Lord will be taken away and will not be found for God will have taken them. Enoch is a type of those saints who will be raptured before the great tribulation to meet the

Lord in the air (1 Thess. 4.15-17). Noah and those with him in the ark were preserved during the Flood and are a type of the Jewish Remnant who will be preserved during the tribulation.

Enoch's faith is mentioned in Hebrews 11. Without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11.6). Enoch had faith and by faith he pleased God (Heb. 11.5). His faith produced works and witness, and if we are to please God we must have a faith, like Enoch's, which produces good works and a consistent witness.

Outlines

by NELSON McDONALD (Scotland)

(7) HIS TOUCH

There are no touches in the gospel of John. There the Lord is the Voice and He speaks, 7.46.

Matt. 8.15. He touched the woman and the **fever** of sin was calmed—Mk. 1.31; Lk. 13.13; Psa. 107.29; Isa. 57.20.

Matt. 9.29. He touched the eyes and the **darkness** of sin was cleared—John 9.6; 2 Cor. 4.3,4.

Mark 1.41. He touched the leper and the **filth** of sin was cleansed—1 John 1.7; Lev. 13.3,20,25,30,45,46; 1 Pet. 1.18.

Luke 22.51. He touched the ear and the **hardness** of sin was cured—Heb. 3.7,15; 4.7; Prov. 27.1; Matt. 7.24; John 5.24.

Luke 7.14. He touched the bier and the **wages** of sin was conquered—John 11.25; Rom. 6.23; Eph. 2.1,5; John 5.25.

Death was obedient to Him here, Lk. 8.54,55; Jhn 11.44, and yet the Lord in obedience went into death, Phil. 2.8.

He also could be touched, Matt. 14.36, and even when pressed and pushed by the jostling throng, Lk. 8.45. Just a touch and the weak was strong.

He can still be touched! Heb. 4.15.

THE LORD'S QUESTION

By J. E. TODD, Chesterfield

The disciples were troubled. They had embarked upon a voyage with the Lord, thirteen persons in all, and with only one loaf of bread between them (Mark 8.14-21). Their concern did not evoke sympathy from the Lord, but rather rebuke in the form of a barrage of nine questions. The final question being, "How is it that ye do not understand?" (v.21)

These men had seen with their own eyes the Lord feed five thousand with five loaves and then have twelve full baskets over. These men had seen with their own eyes the Lord feed four thousand with seven loaves and then have seven full baskets over. Now they were concerned lest he could not feed thirteen with one loaf! Well may our Lord ask the question, "How is it that ye do not understand?"

The Carefree Christian

'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth' (Genesis 1.1). The psalmist explains to us the significance of the creation in Psalm 19, verses 1 to 4. The wonders of the universe around us, which we see with our own eyes, the summer flowers and the starry skies, speak to us. There is no audible voice, but the message is continuously and clearly expressed in every language, "God is glorious, glorious in power, wisdom and ability." "How is it that ye do not understand?" Our Lord has to spell out to us, as He did to the disciples of old, the spiritual significance of the things we see with our own eyes. This He does in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6.24-33). "'Take no thought for your life . . . Behold the fowls of the air . . . Consider the lilies of the field . . . O ye of little faith . . . Therefore take no thought . . . your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.'" If God could create and maintain a universe, can He not care for His own people? Anxiety is due to lack of spiritual perception. "How is it that ye do not understand?"

The Confident Christian

Again, we read in scripture, 'And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.' (Matthew 26.27-28). When we gather to break bread and see with our own eyes

the bread and the wine, the symbols of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, are we ever guilty of the lack of spiritual perception?

“How is it that ye do not understand?” ‘He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? . . . Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord’ (Romans 8.32 and 39). If while we were sinners, God’s love for us was so great that He would sacrifice His Son for us; now we are His own children, is there anything His love would withhold from us? Eternal salvation is ours! ‘“I give them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand”’ (John 10. 28-29). To doubt our eternal salvation in any way and for any reason is lack of spiritual perception. “How is it that ye do not understand?”

The Conquering Christian

Christians sometimes excuse their behaviour by blaming the weakness of the flesh, the power of temptation and the attractions of the world. “How is it that ye do not understand?” We constantly read in the Gospels with our own eyes of the sinless and perfect life of our Lord Jesus Christ, undeviated by temptation or the world or Satan. The life which led to the cross did not end at the cross, He rose again and is the ever living One.

‘Strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith’ (Ephesians 3. 16-17). If the risen, living, sinless Son of God dwells within us by the Holy Spirit, then what endless possibilities of holy living open up before us! “How is it that ye do not understand?” What matters is not our weakness, but His strength, ‘My strength is made perfect in weakness’ (2 Cor. 12.9).

Our Lord as the true vine has bidden us to abide in Him (John 15.1-8), that is to continually look to Him to provide both the desire and the power to live a holy life. ‘“He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing”’ (v. 5). The Christian who produces this fruit, ‘The fruit of the Spirit is

love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance (Galatians 5.22-23), need never excuse himself. 'Against such there is no law' (v. 23)!

'That ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us' (Ephesians 3.19-20). "How is it that ye do not understand?" 'We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us' (Romans 8.37).

SOME THOUGHTS AS WE JOURNEY HOME

If our salvation depended upon our walk, we would never be saved.

We tell unsaved one that he may be sincere in what he does, though wrong. And a Christian may be sincere in what he does, and be far from the mind of God.

The moment we start a friendship with the world, that moment begins the weakening of our friendship for the Lord Jesus Christ.
Victoria, B.C. William Stirrup.

YE ARE COMPLETE

by DAVID N. MARTIN

The Church's relationship with Christ is founded upon blood, and the manifestation of the power of that relationship will, necessarily involve death to nature, "And ye are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power; in whom also ye are circumcised in the circumcision made without hands in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: buried with Him in baptism, wherein ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead." (Col. 2.10-12). Such is the doctrine as to the Body's place with Christ—a doctrine filled with the richest privileges for the Body, and each member thereof. Everything, in short, is involved; the perfect remission of sins, divine righteousness, complete acceptance, everlasting security, full fellowship with Christ in all His glory. "Ye are COMPLETE in Him." This surely comprehends everything. What could be added to one who is "Complete"? Could philosophy, the tradition of men, the rudiments of the world,

meats, drinks, holy days, new moons or sabbaths? Touch not this, taste not that, handle not other things, the commandments and doctrines of men, days, months and times, and years, could any of these things, or all of them together, add a single jot or tittle to one whom God has pronounced "Complete?" We might just as well enquire if man could have gone forth upon the fair creation of God, at the close of the six days work, to give the finishing touch to that which God had pronounced "very good!" Neither is this completeness to be, by any means viewed as a matter of attainment, some point which we have not yet reached, but after which we must diligently strive, and of the possession of which we cannot be sure until we lie upon a bed of death, or stand before a throne of judgement. It is the portion of the feeblest, the most inexperienced, the most unlettered child of God. The very weakest saint is included in the apostolic "YE" all the people of God "are complete in Christ" He does not say "ye will be" "ye may be" "hope that ye may be" "pray that ye may be," NO, He, by the HOLY SPIRIT, states, in the most absolute and emphatic way, that "YE ARE COMPLETE." This is the true Christian starting-post, and for man to make the goal of that which God makes the starting-post, is to upset everything But, then, some will ask, have we no sin, no failure, no imperfection? Most certainly we have. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us (1 John 1.8). We have sin IN us, but no sin ON us. Moreover our standing is not in SELF, but in Christ. It is IN HIM we "are complete" God sees the believer in Christ, with Christ, and as Christ. This is His unchanging condition, His eternal standing. "The body of the sins of the flesh," is "put off by the circumcision of Christ." The believer is not in the flesh, although the flesh is in him. He is united to Christ in the power of a new and eternal life, and that life is inseparably connected with divine righteousness in which the believer stands before God. The Lord Jesus has put away everything that was against the believer, and He has brought him nigh unto God, in the self-same favour as that which He Himself enjoys. In a word Christ is his righteousness. This settles every question, answers every objection, silences every doubt, Both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified, are all of one! (Heb. 2.11). F. B. Meyer makes a thought provoking com-

ment on this Colossian reference. "To believers being like Lazarus, "risen from the dead, but still wearing the grave clothes, instead of arraying themselves in the radiant beauty of the risen Lord, which is the common heritage whatever their rank or nationality of all who believe in Him."

HYMNS AND THEIR WRITERS (35), by Jack Strahan, Enniskillen

"COME HEAR THE GOSPEL SOUND"

GEORGE WEST FRAZER (1840—1896)

The birth of this widely known gospel hymn is very intimately connected with the conversion of its author, George West Frazer. Frazer, an Irishman, was led to Christ at the age of 20, in the city of Dublin during the great revival of 1859/60. He had been born in the West of Ireland in the year 1840, the third son in the family of ten children of William Potter and Matilda Eleanor Frazer. His father was an Inspector of the Royal Irish Constabulary and had come to Ireland from Inverness in the north of Scotland.

The first step in George West Frazer's conversion was his spiritual awakening caused by the death of a young brother. His older brother William had been converted to Christ and requested of George that he would accompany him to the "Rotunda" in Dublin to hear Dr. H. Grattan Guinness preach the gospel. Large crowds were attending those meetings and there was much blessing. George consented to go and one evening when the two brothers arrived at the "Rotunda" they found the building full to overflowing and large numbers crowded the entrance. George determined, however, that at least he would see the preacher and so by climbing up an outside waterpipe he reached a second-storey window and from there he surveyed a sea of faces below. The preacher's voice came floating through the open window as he set to work upon his text for that meeting, "Yet there is room" (Luke 14.22). George West Frazer listened attentively as he heard the gospel preached with power; indeed, he heard the voice of God to his own soul and was troubled. Fourteen days and fourteen nights of deep anxiety followed during which he sought salvation but could not find it. At last he resolved to seek it no longer but have his 'fling' in the world. However, the contemplation of such a thought caused him to shudder, for he knew that in the end he would have to meet God.

"If I must perish," he cried, "I am resolved to perish at His feet," and he cast himself at the Saviour's feet for mercy. The words of 1 Tim. 1.15 brought peace and assurance to his troubled heart, "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Those words were sufficient to quell his fears and that

night he slept like a little child. Next morning he woke early to bear the news to his brother, but when about to leave he wondered, "what shall I tell him?"; the joy of the previous night had disappeared, his assurance of salvation gone. Then, in a moment, he recalled again the words of 1 Tim. 1.15, "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." That was the word that had first brought him peace and that word had not changed! George West Frazer in that moment perceived that the assurance of his salvation rested not upon his own feelings but upon the unchanging word of God.

Frazer thereupon confessed Christ, first to his brother, then to his family and afterwards to a wider circle of friends. God acknowledged the faithfulness of His servant and blessing attended his witness. He was employed at that time as a clerk in Close's Bank in the city of Dublin and such was his godly testimony there that he commanded the respect and later the close friendship of his employing banker, Mr Farnham Close. He severed his links with the Church of Ireland and met simply with like-minded believers in assembly fellowship; that step was taken at no small cost for the Frazer family had had long-standing links with the established church and nine of his own cousins were at that time clergy in its ministry.

Times of close communion with God marked those early years in the city of Dublin. His days were happy but extremely busy. The preaching of the gospel, both indoor and in the open-air, occupied more and more of his time until at last he decided to leave the bank and give all of his time to the work of the Lord. His early ministry centred around Dublin city but later he moved to England and lived in Cheltenham. In that Gloucestershire town he enjoyed and appreciated close fellowship with C. H. Mackintosh, the latter oft referring to him as his "son by adoption." E. E. Cornwall who knew and often heard Frazer in those days of his Cheltenham ministry wrote of, "his freshness of spirit and evident enjoyment of that whereof he spake. He delighted in the company of saints, and gave himself to their service: the meeting-room was to him a hallowed place."

Devotion to the Lord and obedience to His word were ever the hallmarks of Mr. Frazer's service. However, at the early age of 56, his days of service were complete and he entered into the presence of his Lord. His last testimony was both triumphant and blessed, "I grieve to leave my work for the Master . . . and all whom I love but it is infinitely more precious to me to be with Christ than all beside." It is indeed fitting that these lofty sentiments, expressed in lines from his own pen, should conclude the epitaph upon his tombstone in Cheltenham cemetery.

In loving memory of
GEORGE WEST FRAZER
Departed to be with Christ
January 24, 1896, Aged 56
"THOU REMAINEST" (Heb. 1.11)

His spirit now has winged its way
To those bright realms of cloudless day ;
Then, mourner, cease to weep ;
For better is it thus to be
From self, the world, and Satan free,
By Jesus put to sleep.

George West Frazer throughout life composed many hymns and these he published in three volumes—"Mid-night Praises," "Day-Dawn Praises," and "The Day-Spring." Though most of his hymns have now fallen into disuse, a few remain and are treasured. Perhaps, of all his compositions none is more widely known or better loved than his gospel hymn, "Come, hear the gospel sound."

"Come! hear the gospel sound—

"Yet there is room!"

It tells to all around—

"Yet there is room!"

Though guilty, now draw near,
Though vile, you need not fear,
With joy you now may hear—

"Yet there is room!"

God's love in Christ we see—

"Yet there is room!"

Greater it could not be—

"Yet there is room!"

His only Son He gave,
He's righteous now to save
All who on Him believe—

"Yet there is room!"

"All things are ready: come!"

"Yet there is room!"

Christ everything hath done—

"Yet there is room!"

The work is now complete,
"Before the mercy-seat,"

A Saviour you shall meet—

"Yet there is room!"

God's house is filling fast—

"Yet there is room!"

Some soul will be the last—

"Yet there is room!"

Yes, soon Salvation's day
From you will pass away,
Then grace no more will say—
"Yet there is room!"

Throughout this present dispensation God in grace is inviting sinners to Himself. In the gospel He announces to men and women the sufficiency of His provision to meet their every need and bids them to "come." The gospel's mighty message once came to the heart of George West Frazer in the Spirit's power; the memories of its coming and that eventful night in the city of Dublin ever lingered in his heart—his late arrival, the crowded building, his place upon the window-sill, the preacher's fervour and most of all the arresting text and message of grace that reached his sinful heart. Ever afterward Frazer longed that others be enlightened and in this, his much-loved hymn, he clearly presents the truth of the glorious gospel, both in its blessed rich appeal and in its solemn warning note.

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

STUDIES IN JOHN'S GOSPEL

by Wm. Hoste

FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTALS

by J. B. Hewitt

CHRIST IN THE APOCALYPSE

by J. B. D. Page

OUTLINES

by N. McDonald

TALKS TO YOUNG BELIEVERS

by J. Ritchie

IN MY NAME

by Edward Robinson

DIFFERENCES SUBMERGED

by W. W. Fereday

HYMNS AND THEIR WRITERS

by J. Strahan

"I KNOW WHOM I HAVE CHOSEN"

John 13-18

Chosen not for love to Thee, O Lord
For I had none,
I, lost in sin and full of guilt, O Lord
What hast Thou done ?
Chosen me before the world's foundation laid,
Came as human babe, sinless offering made,
The Father's heart of love, made known by Thee,
And I have Thy salvation, full and free.

What purpose in choosing me, O Lord ?
I am so unworthy,
Thou hast chosen me to serve Thee, Lord
And I must faithful be—
In telling of Thy love and holy word
In giving praise and worship so deserved
I would extol Thy precious name
For I was chosen Thee to serve.

Some have been chosen, Lord
To dwell in the shadows,
Unseen by the many, but precious to Thee,
Though some may suffer each day in the body
Yet we are told this glorifies Thee,
Such light afflictions are but for a moment
The exceeding weight of glory
Throughout eternal ages we shall share.

Chosen by Thee for heaven Lord,
Chosen to dwell with Thee,
Chosen to give eternal praise,
Chosen for endless days,
Chosen to behold Thy glory Lord,
And there will always be—
The question throughout eternity
Why hast Thou chosen ME ?

—S. H. Chapple, Birkenhead, 1986.

STUDIES IN JOHN'S GOSPEL

(Christ, the Interpreter of the Father)

by WM. HOSTE

8—IN THE MIDST OF HIS OWN (John 13).

Our Lord's farewell discourse must always hold a peculiar place in the hearts of His people. He was about "to depart out of the world unto the Father," and that by the way of Golgotha. But, "having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end." He was more occupied with their troubles, needs, and fears, than with His own sorrows. And even the great episode of His passion is hardly alluded to, except indirectly, as a passing interlude—"A little while ye shall not see Me (while He lay in the tomb), and again a little while and ye shall see Me (during the subsequent forty days), because I go to the Father." How does He provide for the needs of those He was leaving? He reveals to them the Father's Name, and commits them to the Father's care.

All last farewells are touching, and memorable. We see things then in their true relation. Hence we treasure parting words, and respect last wishes. How much more when great spiritual truths are involved, and it is the Lord who is saying farewell! The farewells of Scripture would form a profitable study. Those of Jacob, Moses, Paul, contain important teachings, but our Lord's parting words of grace and truth transcend them all. Like Ezekiel's river, healing and life-giving, they deepen as they flow, and become "waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over" (Ezek. 47.5). Jacob and Moses spoke as men about to die, our Lord as one about to pass into the realms of life eternal. The thought of death is bridged; ascension alone is in view. He was going to God, "to the Father," to "Him that sent Him."

Chapter 13 is introductory, and divides itself into three sections.

- (a) The washing of the bathed ones (vv. 1-17).
- (b) The elimination of the unbathed one (vv. 18-30).
- (c) The comfort of the cleansed ones (ver. 31, and on into chap. 14).

Feet-washing at meal time, was a common eastern custom. The disciples knew it must be done. But who was to do it? Some post of honour they would have filled, but such a menial service could bring no credit. Perhaps Peter hoped John would do it; Thomas, Philip. Why should not James the less? would say to himself, that other James. "Simon Zelotes, thou hast much 'zeal' for many things, why not for this?" But none moved, and then behold a sight to make the angels wonder and saints blush for themselves, and then adore: the Lord of Glory stooping before twelve failing creatures of the dust, and washing their feet! At Calvary, we see the supreme act of obedience to the Father. Do we not see here, the lowliest act of ministry to man? By the literal act of washing, the Lord shows He really did care for the refreshment and comfort of His disciples, "leaving us an example" that we should follow His steps, as the Phebes, the Marys, and Gaius have done since (Rom. 16. 2,6; 3 John 5,6). But had that been all, He would not have said to Peter, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." Peter knew well the use of the literal washing, but he did not know the spiritual significance of the act.

Water has three principal meanings in the Word of God.

1. When it *submerges* it signifies judgment, as in the flood, Red Sea, Jordan. Those "waves and billows" of Psalm 42.7, those "deep waters" of Psalm 69. 1-2, overwhelming the Holy One, speak of the judgment of Calvary. Man cannot evade judgment. There is only one way to escape out of it, he must pass under it, linked with One who can descend into its deepest depths and emerge again. This in figure the ark (Heb. *tehvah*) did at the flood, and the ark (Heb. *ah-rohn*) of the covenant in the swellings of Jordan. There is resurrection for the believer, who is identified by faith with Christ in His death, of which identification baptism is a *figure*. But there will be no resurrection from the "baptism of fire," the holy wrath of God, which will overwhelm every sinner out of Christ.

2. When water is used *internally* it stands for the spiritual blessing of the Holy Spirit flowing from a crucified and risen Christ. "They drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ." We have the same thought in the gladdening river of Psalm 45, bringing earthly

blessings to the City of God, and in the pure river of life clear as crystal of Rev. 21 bringing heavenly blessing to a universe of bliss.

3. But when water is applied *externally* it signifies cleansing, and that in two ways : either (a) as the purification from positive defilement through contact with death, *e.g.*, “the water of purification” of Num. 19, which has its parallel in the restoration to communion of 1 John 1.9; or (b) as the cleansing of the ways through the Word of God (see Exod. 30.18, the washing of the laver). This latter, I judge, is in view here.

The Lord was about to enter into the holiest of all. His desire was, that His disciples should have “part with Him” in this. As far as we know, they were not guilty at the moment of any special sin, but their ways must be brought under the power of the Word, and cleansed thereby (Psa. 119.9). They had already passed through the complete bathing of Lev. 8.6, the initial act in the setting apart of the priests, corresponding to the once for all washing of regeneration, the fruit of faith in Christ. But they needed to be cleansed at the laver, which stood between the altar and the door of the tabernacle proper. “He that is bathed (*louesthai*) needeth not save to wash (*niptesthai*) his feet, but is clean every whit.” The washing of regeneration needs no repetition; the washing of renewal needs it constantly.

In chapter 13.13, it is really more emphatic than it is as given in our version — “Ye call Me THE Teacher (*Ho Didaskalos*) and THE Lord.” Both these titles Christ accepted, for He it was who had the wisdom to teach the truth, and the authority to command obedience to it. In v. 14, He reverses the order of these titles, as though to emphasise a fact very easily forgotten, namely, that the only way really to learn, is to obey—“A good understanding have all they that *do* His commandments” (Psa. 111.10). Let the saints then follow His example, and so wash one another’s feet. It has been said, “If we want to correct fellow-believers, we must *not* wash their feet in boiling water.” That is true. But I doubt if “feet washing” means correction, so much as a ministry of refreshment and edification. If we walked more in the Spirit, we should miss fewer opportunities in visits, at meals, in journeyings, in

the interval at conferences, for "edifying one another in love." At a large Conference lately, a local brother took my arm during an interval, and asked me to go for a short walk. No address I heard helped me more than that short spell of Christian converse. The exchange of thought and Christian experience, was truly refreshing, and when I think of the Conference, that brother's face comes always first before me. This is better than unprofitable talks on divisions of the past, or dissensions in the present, which bulk so largely, and not always necessarily, in our conversational programme, leaving the heart empty and sad.

But the disciples needed something more than the laver, they needed to be purged as a priestly company, from one who was *with* them, but not *of* them, who could not "show his register" (Ezra 1.62), who had, in fact, never been "bathed" in the waters of "regeneration," according to the priestly order referred to above. Such an one must as polluted be put from the priesthood. Judas' feet had been washed with the others, but the symbolic meaning was lacking in his case. "Ye are clean, *but not all*," said the Lord, "for He knew who should betray Him." Judas could have no part *with* Him, because he had no part *in* Him. Later, the Lord makes the same exception, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if you *do* them." "I speak not of you *all*" (verse 18). This may recall His earlier words, "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one *of you* is a devil?" "for Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray Him" (John 6.70, 64). Let us never call the unsaved "clean," or expect the dead to "do these things."

This last verse may serve among many similar passages to make it clear, that when the Lord "emptied Himself" (Phil. 2.7, R.V.), it was not of His Divine attributes, but of their independent use. "He emptied Himself," as Dr. Lightfoot puts it, "of the insignia of His Majesty," but not of what He personally was. In becoming the bond-servant of the Father, He did not know less as a Divine Person than before. He remembered a past eternity (John 17.5), and even His human consciousness went back to His birth (Psa. 22.9,10). He knew all things (John 16.30). "He knew what was in man, the prerogative of Deity" (Jer. 17, 9,10). He knew the Father, as the Father knew Him (John 10.15).

This embraces all knowledge,* so that we are not surprised that "He knew from the beginning who should betray Him." But He did not use this knowledge to expose Judas before the Father's time. But when that time arrived, He revealed unerringly — yet how painfully to His tender heart — the solemn truth to the unsuspecting disciples in a *crescendo* of unmistakable clearness. "He that eateth bread with Me, hath lifted up his heel *against* Me" (v. 12). "One of you shall betray Me" (v. 21). "He it is to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it" (v. 26). And then directly to the traitor himself, "That thou doest, do quickly" (v. 27). He could not fully teach the disciples of the Father, in the presence of the traitor. The Lord was under constraint till Judas had "gone out" into the night. But now He can speak freely, and uses to them for the first time in His ministry, the endearing name, "Little children." He looks beyond the shame of the Cross, to His own and His people's glorification, and to the glory that will accrue to God thereby, and to a further glory which He would receive. "God shall *also* glorify Him in Himself," and that straightaway. We see here how intimately the glory of the Father was bound up in the work of Christ and the glory of Christ. They could not follow Him then, they would later. A parting command He enjoins on them, that they love one another, even as He had loved them, and that not for His sake alone, but for the sake of their testimony, "that the world might know they were His disciples."

It may not be out of place here to add a few proofs that the Lord Jesus, in His interpretation of the Father was ever "the Man that was His Fellow" His Co-equal, possessing to the full His Divine attributes, and that without prejudice to the fact that "He took upon Him the form of a servant." While holding fast the true Humanity of the Lord, we must never allow it in the sense of so-called Modern teaching, which uses it as a handle to deny His Deity, or while loudly professing to hold that, virtually denies it, by depriving Him of that which is inseparable from it, His Divine attributes.

* Whatever then Mark 13.32, "neither the Son," means, it must be taken, not as an isolated passage, but in conjunction with the above passages and many others, in which the omniscience of the Lord, is set forth. See "Is God Self-Limited," a consideration of this and other Scriptures by the same Author.

1. OMNISCIENCE.—“Jesus . . . knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man” (John 2.24,25). Again, “Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray Him” (chap. 6.64). And in the end, the disciples were constrained to confess, “Now are we sure that Thou *knowest all things* . . . by this we believe that Thou camest forth from the Father” (chap. 16. 20; cf. chap 21.17). He alone knows the Father absolutely (Matt. 2.27). This could not be, were He not in the fullest sense GOD, for none but God can “search the hearts” or know God.

2. OMNIPRESENCE.—It is clear that this attribute of Deity must have been more veiled than the others, but our Lord’s own testimony claims this for Himself, *e.g.*, in such expressions as “The only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father,” or “the Son of Man which is in heaven” (John 1.18; 3.13); though in bodily presence He was in Jerusalem. Certainly no one claims omnipresence for our Lord’s body even today. It is on the Throne of God, and certainly on no so-called altar or elsewhere on earth. The Lord’s well-known declaration, in connection with the gathering together of His disciples in His Name, involves the possession of this attribute, for how else could He be everywhere in the midst (Matt. 18.20). And this is no less true of the great missionary promise of chapter 28.20, “Lo, I am with you *always*,” said the risen Christ to His servants, “even unto the end of the Age.” What! Christ *at the same time* with all His servants, in all parts of His great harvest field! Then, He must be God over all; for He owns this attribute which is peculiar to God alone. And all this is true, even though as to His human body, He is now seated on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

3. OMNIPOTENCE. Since our Lord Jesus created and upholds heaven, earth, and all things, since He is able to subdue all things unto Himself (Phil. 3.21), and finally, since He is distinctly called *the Almighty* (Rev. 1.8), it is evident that this glorious attribute, also belongs to Him. The One who possesses these Divine powers cannot be a creature only: He is surely nothing less than Jehovah, equal in wisdom, love, majesty, and power, with the Father, and and the Holy Spirit.

Of all the confessions of Christ, recorded in the Gospels, that of Thomas reaches the highest watermark. When fully convinced of the reality of the Lord's resurrection, he looked up into His face and said, "MY LORD AND MY GOD." And note well—for the point is important—the Lord Jesus did not disown these titles, nor refuse the homage implied, nor did He rebuke His disciple, for so addressing Him, nor others, on similar occasions in His ministry. Yet, if He had not known Himself to be Supreme God, and had not wished His followers to believe in Him as such, and to honour Him accordingly, He would surely have set them right on such a stupendously important matter. His silent acceptance of these high titles proves, He knew Himself to be IMMANUEL, God with us.

With the scene above referred to, compare another incident preserved for us in Rev. 19.10. In the latter case, our judgment approves of the rebuke administered to John. For the one at whose feet he would have worshipped, was like himself a creature, and a servant of their common Lord. And if Christ were only a creature, although the highest, He too would surely have rebuked those who, at moments of special crises "worshipped Him," e.g. (Matt 14.33; 28.9,17), and thus would have robbed God of His Divine rights.

Angels, as well as redeemed sinners, are to worship Him. As it is written, "When He bringeth again the First-Begotten into the world He saith, And let all the angels of God worship Him" (Heb. 1.6, R.V.). In the fulness of time, it will be known that the throne of God and of the Lamb, is one and the same. Nearest to the throne, the Church, composed of redeemed sinners, will find her place. And she will join in a song, peculiar to herself as redeemed and glorified, and other circles too of the redeemed. But outside these circles, angels innumerable are to be seen. And beyond these, shall be gathered a great company composed of "every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them" saying, "*Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever*" (Rev. 5.8-13).

FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTALS

by J. B. HEWITT, Chesterfield

(40) THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

Part 2. Signs of His Imminent Return.

Many signs of the times certainly indicate the near end. We can surely see anarchy in the world, apostasy in Christendom, and apathy in the Church. Iniquity is advancing by leaps and bounds, and there is no power to effectively check it. We should not look FOR signs nor need them as a stimulus to faith. Yet signs may be looked AT. Faith does not rest on any number of signs, but on God's Word. We do not know the actual date of our Lord's return, for that is a secret locked in the bosom of the Father (Matt. 24.36; Acts 1.7). The co-incidence of certain signs intimate that His coming is at hand.

The Political Sign—"Wars and rumours of wars" (Matt. 24.6; Mark 13.7). Nations have always been hostile to other nations whom they have envied or feared. In our day America and Russia distrust each other. Danger of self-extinction of the leading civilized nations. We live in a militaristic atmosphere never before experienced by mankind, and fear is gripping the hearts of men. War has always plagued the world in spite of what men say (1 Thess. 5.3; Rev. 9.17).

The Social Sign—Days of violence, lawlessness and immorality (Matt. 24.37-39; 2 Tim. 3.1). Contempt of authority, parental and magisterial, is prevalent and a growing evil. The Lord portrayed the moral state of the world immediately prior to His coming in glory. Conditions just like the days of Noah. People today are living just as if there was no God and nothing after death (Psa. 14.1; 1 Cor. 15.32c). The nations, is clearly evident today. The spirit of combination is rife. Soon men will be denied the right to live and labour for their daily bread unless adherents of the Beast (Rev. 13.16,17). The tyranny of trade unions in their interference with the personal right and liberty of every man is with us now, there is worse to come.

The Natural Sign—"plagues and famines" (Luke 21.11).

Think of the undernourished in Ethiopia. The spectre of famine and thousands dying every week in appalling conditions. The battle to feed humanity is a real problem of our time, and all the efforts of UNO is only touching the fringe, it will never be solved.

The Moral Signs (2 Tim. 3.1-7). A picture of the dreadful corruption of the last days. These are the marks of Christendom today.

“Perilous” only occurs again in (Matt. 8,28), translated “fierce.” Self is stamped upon every term used. Corruption in personal life (3.2); in family life (v.2c,3a); in business life (v.2b); in national life (v.3a, 4a); in social life (v.4c); and in religious life (v.5). There are thirty characteristics of wicked men in (v.2-13). There is an upsurge of Satan-worship.

Religious Sign—There is widespread apostasy and departure from the faith (1 Tim. 4.1; 2 Tim. 3.5-9; 2 Thess. 2.3). Seducing spirits and doctrines of demons are rife. Apostasy is a falling away, an abandonment of faith, a desertion and forsaking of God (Matt. 24.10-13; Jude 4-19).

We are in the Laodicean condition of Christendom, a condition out of which there is no corporate recovery (Rev. ch. 2 and 3). Seven distinctive states are seen, ending with Christ outside, standing, knocking and pleading (Rev. 3.20). He appeals to the individual, recovery is not CORPORATE. Heresies and apostasies have distressed the Church from the earliest times. They will reach their climax in the great apostasy which will prepare the way for the rule of the Antichrist (2 Thess. 2.3-12).

The Economic Sign—Stored up your treasure (James 5.3). In the economic world there is no panacea for the financial woes of our day. The radio and Daily Press continually speak of “depression;” “inflation;” “recession” and “devaluation.” Bankruptcy is common, commercial systems are heading for total collapse as predicted in Rev. 18.14-18. “The merchants of the earth shall weep” (Rev. 18.11). The religious system is symbolized in Rev. 17 “the mother of harlots”; the political system is symbolized in Rev. 18 as the Babylonian monster. Both will be destroyed because of their sins.

The Jewish Sign—(Matt. 24.32; Luke 21.20,21). The fig tree is symbolic of Israel as a nation, soon it will begin to

bud and blossom. In Luke 21, Matt. 21.19, the Lord blasts the fig tree, Israel was utterly rejected. This prophecy was accurately fulfilled when Titus laid waste the city in AD70.

God will have fresh dealings with Israel, the fig tree puts forth her leaves (Matt. 24.32). Her summer is nigh, a time of restoration (Acts 3.19-21 RV). They will be vivified (Ezek. 37), because of His covenant with Abraham (Gen. 17.2-8). They are back in Palestine in unbelief, enjoying a measure of national independence. Truly, the Lord is at hand, "the time is at hand" (Rev. 1.3; 22.10). We can see the end of 'the times of the Gentiles,' is very near. These signs indicate there is no reason why the Lord should not come for His Church at any time. We should be waiting (1 Cor. 1.7; 1 Thess. 1.10); looking (Titus 2.13 RV); holding fast (Rev. 3.3); and occupying, doing business till He comes (Luke 19.13). May we pray like John Wilkinson :

"Oh gather soon the "remnant" in,
To realise forgiven sins
Through Jesu's precious blood ;
Arouse Thy Church to work and pray,
To show Thy scattered ones the way
Back home through Christ to God."

CHRIST IN THE APOCALYPSE (14)

by JOHN B. D. PAGE

THE COMING KING (i)

Reading : Revelation 19 : 11—16.

Graphically, the second coming of Christ is described in this paragraph of the Apocalypse. It is not a description of the Lord coming to the air *for* the saints, which is the subject of the New Testament, but of His coming *with* the saints to the earth to which much of the Old Testament and the synoptic gospels is devoted. The Lord Jesus is not depicted as the Bridegroom coming for His bride, but as the Executor of divine judgments and as the King to rule on the earth. Whilst this paragraph of the Apocalypse is prophetic, it is also pictorial of Christ coming again with power and glory.

When considering the coming again of Christ to the earth, there is the danger of being absorbed with politically related events, though interesting they may be, at the expense of the Person of the second advent. In a prophetic study, it is wise to remember that the manifest glory of Christ will be central at His coming again.

Commenting upon these verses, Prof. J. Heading rightly says, "We now reach the climax of the revelation of Jesus Christ." No longer is He seen through a glass darkly, as it were, but Jesus Christ is here unveiled in His majestic glory emerging from heaven as the Warrior-King going forth in battle to defeat His foes, as the victorious Monarch to reign supreme, and as the greatest Potentate that the world has seen.

In this vision, the exiled seer on the lonely isle of Patmos, says that he saw "heaven opened." With his meditative mind, he may be alluding to the prophet Ezekiel who, an exile in Babylon, saw "the heavens were opened" and had a vision of the divine glory, possessed by the pre-incarnate Christ from eternity, and such glory is not manifest to men (Ezek. 1.1,28, cf. John 17.5). John's vision, which is complementary to Ezekiel's, is of the incarnate Christ manifest in the glory that God has given Him (1 Peter 1.21, cf. John 17.24), and every eye will see this glorified Man when He appears through the open heaven.

According to the New Testament, this will be the fourth time that heaven will have been opened for Christ. In the past, twice: first, at His baptism (Matt. 3.16f) and then at Stephen's martyrdom (Acts 7.56), because His *moral* glory called for it. In the future, twice: first as foretold to Nathanael (John 1.51) and then as seen by John on Patmos (Rev. 19.11), because His *manifest* glory will demand it.

Emerging through the open heaven, the Apocalyptic seer's attention is focused upon "a white horse" and its Rider. This Horse-rider is not the same equestrian seen when the first of the seven seals was opened (ch. 6.2), as suggested by some writers. Whilst in both chapters "a white horse" is in the scene, there are differences. In chapter 6, the rider is unnamed, and he is armed with "a bow." In chapter 19, the Rider bears several names, and he is armed with "a sword." Tragically, with the former, peace is lost by war. Triumphantly, with the latter, peace is won by war.

As this divine Equestrian descends from the open heaven and heads for the Mount of Olives (Zech. 14.4), He sees Israel engulfed in a world war. It appears that "the king of the south" allied with the Libyans and Ethiopians will have initiated an attack against Israel, and so "the king of the north" will counter-attack speedily "like a whirlwind" with his cavalry and navy (Dan. 11:40,43). "The kings of the east" with an army of two hundred millions will join the onslaught upon Israel (Rev. 9.16, and 16.12, Dan. 11.44). With the battle raging in the Vale of Megiddo and Jerusalem besieged, the armed forces of the western ten-nation confederacy will apparently attempt to implement their pledge of protection for Israel (Dan. 9.27). With "all nations" besieging Jerusalem and "half of the city" captured by the enemy, Israel will face imminent defeat in this unprecedented war (Zech. 14.2). In that perilous position, nothing short of divine intervention will deliver God's chosen earthly people from defeat but, as Isaiah (31.4) says reassuringly, "the Lord of hosts shall come down to fight for Mount Zion," which must be taken literally and not be spiritualized. These and other scriptures, with which John was familiar, form the background of his vision, but he keeps his reference to this war short, as Walter Scott says, quoting Hengstenberg in a footnote, "The description of the battle is as remarkable for its brevity as that of Christ is for its length; . . ."

With "eyes . . . as a flame of fire," this mighty Warrior has penetrative vision for diagnosing the diabolical intentions of Israel's enemies who, filled with intense hatred of Israel, will have already "taken crafty counsel" amongst themselves and reached this fiendish agreement, "Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance" (Psa. 83.3f). Anti-semitism is not only anti-God but it is also anti-Christ, and so Israel's enemies are the enemies of Christ. Consequently, "in righteousness," says John referring to Psalm 9.8, "He doth judge and make war."

For this Warrior to wage war in righteousness, He Himself must be righteous. Just three scriptures, relating to the past, present and future, prove it. Although the Lord Jesus was numbered with the transgressors at Calvary, the Roman centurion said, "Certainly, this was a righteous Man"

(Luke 23.47). In this present age of grace, believers have an Advocate with the Father who is known as "Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2.1). When Christ comes again to set up His kingdom upon the earth, "this is His name whereby He shall be called, The Lord our righteousness" (Jer. 23.5f).

This mighty Warrior riding forth upon a white horse is called

Faithful and True,

which is the first of several titles ascribed to Him in this paragraph.

In his wisdom and wide experience of men, Solomon expresses the opinion that "most men will proclaim every one his own goodness," which is followed by the rhetorical question, "but a faithful man who can find?" (Prov. 20.6). Many men will make known in the course of conversation or through the media their benevolence and generosity. But a faithful man, one who is constant in character and loyal to duty, is not so common.

By scanning the pages of scripture and selecting men said to be faithful, a portrait gallery, as it were, of various men of God is soon arranged. Abraham was faithful before the Lord, according to the post-exile Levites (Neh. 9.8, cf. Gal. 3.9). Moses was faithful in the house of the Lord (Num. 12.7, cf. Heb. 3.2,5), whilst Samuel was faithful as a prophet of the Lord (1 Sam. 3.20, margin). David, before ascending the throne, was faithful as one of the king's servants (1 Sam. 22.14). Both Epaphras and Tychicus were faithful servants in their work for Christ (Col. 1.7, and 4.7). Onesimus, a sometime runaway slave, was a faithful and beloved brother, says Paul (Col. 4.9). Space forbids to mention the faithfulness of Timothy, Silas and others, or even Antipas, the Lord's faithful martyr, who is said to have been enclosed in a brazen bull which was heated red hot (1 Cor. 4.17; 1 Pet. 5.12; Rev. 2.13).

For incomparable faithfulness to God, the spotlight is focused upon the glorious Man, Jesus Christ. Looking back to the past at the time of His first advent, John sees Him as "the faithful Witness" (Rev. 1.5). The wisest of Israel's kings said, "a faithful witness will not lie: but a false witness will utter lies" (Prov. 14.5). After His arrest, the Lord Jesus stood for trial before Caiaphas the high priest when in spite of the lies of two false witnesses, the Lord Jesus,

as the faithful Witness, did not lie (Matt. 26.60f, cf. John 2.19-21).

During His present session in heaven, this same Jesus, now glorified, is "a merciful and faithful High Priest" (Heb. 2.17). His priestly title may be an allusion to a divine promise made in the days of Eli. Following the sentence pronounced upon Eli and his two sons who, through sin, had been unfaithful as priests and had failed in their priesthood to maintain the link between God and His people, the Lord said, "I will raise Me up a faithful priest," (1 Sam. 2.35). Unlike all other high priests of the past, this High Priest, who exercises a more excellent ministry than they, is merciful to men and faithful to God.

For Christ, as the mighty Warrior of the future, to be called "Faithful," John's thinking may be coloured by Jehovah's past faithfulness to Israel in times of war, and he may be alluding to a verse in Zechariah. When half of Jerusalem will have fallen to the enemy, "then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations," and the prophet adds reassuringly "as when He fought in the day of battle" (Zech. 14.3). This means that the Lord will be faithful in delivering His people from defeat in the future as He was in the past. Several military victories are attributed to the Lord, which Zechariah may have had in mind. After Pharaoh and his army in pursuit of the Israelites had been overwhelmed by the waters of the Red Sea, Moses sang exultingly, "the Lord . . . hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea. The Lord is a Man of war: . . ." (Ex. 15.1,3). In his old age, Joshua called together the leaders of the nation and, recalling mentally the vicissitudes of conquering the land, he said to them, "the Lord your God is He that hath fought for you" (Josh. 23.3). Apart from other scriptures, these two will suffice to show that God was faithful in fighting for His people who were often unfaithful to Him. Reassured from these and similar scriptures, the Apocalyptic seer sees Jehovah-Messiah as "a Man of War" who will faithfully wage war against Israel's enemies, and so "Faithful" is an appropriate title for Him. It matters not whether it was in the past, or now in the present, or still in the future, Christ is clearly incomparable as the Faithful One.

Turning now to the other part of His compound title,

John notes that this great Warrior-King is also called "True."

Surprisingly, the word "true" occurs more frequently in the Johannine writings than elsewhere in the New Testament. Three times the word is used interestingly of Christ in the fourth gospel. The Lord Jesus is said to be "the True Light" that came into the world where spiritual darkness abounded, and this is in contrast apparently to the light which came in response to the divine fiat, dispelling the darkness that was upon the earth, on the first day of the creation week (John 1.5,9, cf. Gen. 1.2f).

In contrast to the divinely provided manna for the Israelites in the wilderness, Christ claims to be "the True Bread" (John 6.31f).

After the last supper, the Lord Jesus says that He is "the True Vine" (John 15.1). Being in Jerusalem at the time, He may be contrasting Himself to the gigantic vine of pure gold, whose bunches of grapes were the height of a man, seen in the temple porch above the doors into the holy place. Referring to these three metaphors, Dr. A. Plummer says, "Christ then is the true, the genuine, 'the perfect Light,' just as He is 'the perfect Bread' and 'the perfect Vine:' not that He is the only Light, and Bread, and Vine, but that He is in reality what all others are in figure and imperfectly."

Concerning the Apocalyptic title, "True," applied to Christ, John may be alluding to several Old Testament scriptures. Many years after the death of Jeroboam who directed the people of the northern kingdom to the false worship of two golden calves, it was said that "for a long season Israel hath been without the true God" (2 Chron. 15.3). This may be a foreshadowing of Israel's spiritual state during the tribulation (Matt. 24.15, 2 Thess. 2.4). Again, when the apostates of the southern kingdom turned to false gods, Jeremiah (10.10) gave the assurance that Jehovah is "the true God, . . . and everlasting King." As Israel during the tribulation will worship a false god set up in the holy place of the temple and be ruled by a spurious and self-willed king (Matt. 24.15, Dan. 11.36), so the Apocalyptic seer sees Christ at His coming again as the True God and the True King, who alone has the right to rule in Israel.

This comparison of scriptures shows clearly that Christ is appropriately called "Faithful and True."

Outlines

by NELSON McDONALD (Scotland)

(8) MY BELOVED. Song of Solomon 5.10-16.

- V. 10 White —His Purity. 1 John 3.5; 1 Peter 1.19.
Ruddy —His Perfection. 1 Sam. 16.12; Ps. 45.2.
Chiefest —His Pre-eminence. Col. 1.18; Ecc. 5.8.
- V. 11 Head —His Prudence. John 2.24,25.
Eyes —His Passion. Jer. 31.3; Gal. 2.20.
- V. 13 Cheeks —His Perfume. John 12.3; S. of Sol. 1.3.
Lips —His Peace. John 14.27; 16.33.
- V. 14 Hands —His Provision. Ps. 145.16; Phil. 4.19.
Belly —His Preciousness. 1 Cor. 12.24;
1 Pet. 2.7.
- V. 15 Legs —His Power. Dan. 2.32; Matt. 28.18.
Countenance —His Purpose. Lk. 2.49; 9.51; Isa. 50.7.
- V. 16 Mouth —His Preaching. Lk. 3.22; John 7.46.

His speech is the Perfection of sweetness, Isa. 50.4, Lovely
His Portrait John 3.31, Himself the concentration of Loveli-
ness, Isa. 52.14.

Talks to Young Believers

by JOHN RITCHIE

THE EDEN FALL: Its Facts and its Consequences

It has become popular among a certain class of theologians and critics, to dispose of the story of the third chapter of Genesis by relegating it to that class of "allegories" which have a "moral." Some think it is "poetic," others a "legend," but all Rationalists agree that it is not historic, not literal.

The inspired Word of God assumes throughout that the facts of man's primal creation, his probation in Eden, and

his fall, are exactly as described by Moses in the book of Genesis. The Son of God, man's Creator (John 1.3, R.V.), accepted and authenticated it in His ministry (Matt. 19. 4-6), and the Holy Spirit bears witness to its facts in the records of the inspired Word (1 Tim. 2. 13,14). The doctrine of it, as set forth in Romans 5. 12-19 and 1 Cor. 15. 45-49, is fundamental and vital to the Gospel and the faith. Those who deny man's fall can have no adequate knowledge of redemption or of judgment to come. Hence, the "humanity" Gospels, while they differ on many points, are solidly agreed in this, that they have neither atonement, new birth, nor sin punishment in them. How can they? There is no need for either, if man is not ruined, if he is not a sinner.

Reviewing a popular book, whose author is a leader of the "evolutionist" school, the editor of a Christian magazine says the book has this defect—it leaves out of count "Eden and Calvary." This is fatal, for no "religion" or system of theology, which ignores man's fall and ruin, and Christ's vicarious death for his redemption, has any claim to be called Christianity: it lacks its fundamentals.

Man's Creation

The record of man's formation from the dust of the ground, the breathing into his nostrils of the breath of life by the Lord God, the building of the woman from his side for a helpmeet, the minute account of the garden and its locality in which they were placed, can only be historical and actual, and as such it is typical and figurative. Adam was a real personage as surely as Abel and Abraham; he was likewise a figure of Him that was to come (Rom. 5.14)—that is, of Christ.

"Image" and "Likeness"

"Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" (Gen. 1.26), are the words used by Elohim in man's creation. His constitution, of "spirit, soul, and body" (1 Thess. 5.23), a distinct personality, moral and responsible, unlike the beasts, possessed of mental and moral faculties, which pertain to the "spirit" or highest part of his being, by which he is linked with his Creator—God, who is a "Spirit" and the "Father of spirits" (Heb. 12.9) — embodies what is implied by "the image of God" in which man is created, a fact which abides permanent even in man fallen (see Gen.

9.6; Jas. 3.9). He is God's representative, the "image and glory of God" (1 Cor. 11.7). "Likeness" is moral and spiritual — something that can be seen in development. It may be, it has been lost through sin. "God made man upright" (Eccl. 7.29), capable of intercourse with Himself, innocent and in complete concord with His nature, the crown of all created beings, formed to have dominion, yet dependent, the subject. As such, he was "son" of God (Luke 3.38)—not in the same sense that Christ was, for He was His "only begotten" (John 3.16), or as believers now are (1 John 3.2), through redemption (Gal. 4.5) and by regeneration (John 1.12,13)—but as the direct creation of His hand, in His image and after His likeness. Adam was "son of God," as truly as Seth was "son of Adam" (Gen. 5.3).

Head and Representative

But Adam was more than an individual, he was what only one other Being ever was or ever will be, federal Head and Representative of his race—the first man, in whom all the after kind were seen, and their probation in some respects completed—a "figure," while yet in much a contrast of Him who was to come, "the second Man" and "last Adam" (1 Cor. 15.45,47)—"second Man" because there had been no other different in nature and character from the first, until Christ appeared; "last Adam" because there will be no third, none to succeed Him as head and representative of a new race.

Man's Fall

Into the fair scene of man's probation, an adversary, a real, personal Intelligence — under the form of a serpent, called in Rev. 20.2, "that old serpent the devil *and* Satan" was permitted to enter. Who this mysterious Being was, whence he came, what his character and intentions, Scripture has revealed all that an All-wise God sees fit for man in his present state to know. "Secret things belong unto the Lord" (Deut. 29.29), and much regarding the origin of evil and its entrance to Eden, remains to us insoluble. But as Coleridge well says, "This fearful mystery I pretend not to understand. But I know that it is so, and what is real must be possible."

The realm of spirits is known to God alone. He Himself,

an essentially invisible Spirit (John 4.24), is their Centre and their Sovereign Ruler. Angels are spirits (Psa. 104.4), mighty in strength, yet ever hearkening to the voice of His Word (Psa. 103.20), willing servants, ever ready to do His will (Heb. 1.14). There are "an innumerable company" of them (Heb. 12.22) of various ranks (see Eph. 3.10; Col. 1.16). Among these, there had been in the distant past a revolt, led by Satan, who is here introduced as the adversary who compassed man's fall. He beguiled by subtilty (2 Cor. 11.3) the woman, "deceiving" her (1 Tim. 2.14) by misrepresenting God, assailing His love, His wisdom, and His word. The woman, parleying, drank in the lie, and, disobeying the injunction of the Lord God regarding the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, fell. Adam was "not deceived," but with his eyes wide open to the fearful consequences, revolted from God and fell. The sceptre of authority fell from his hand; he became Satan's slave, and his sin separated him from God. The sentence, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2.17), was executed. That penalty was not, as Annihilationists say, "the loss of life or existence," for we know that, physically Adam lived 930 years. But in that dread day, the intimacy which had existed between the Creator and the creature ceased; man was severed, cut off, from God, and passed under the sway of death, which is separation from God, yet retaining his constitution as a man intact, not deprived of "spirit," as has been said, but wholly distorted from God, knowing good and evil, yet only doing the latter. Death, involving the separation of soul and spirit from the body, and after that the judgment (Heb. 9.27), which, unless sovereign mercy prevent it, issues in the "second death."

Results of the Fall

The fullest statement of the results of Adam's fall upon his posterity, is given in Rom. 5.12-21. (1) By one man "sin entered into the world," and through his disobedience "many were made sinners." (2) Death by sin passed upon all, for in Adam, their federal Head and Representative, all are reckoned to have sinned. (3) "Judgment was by one to condemnation," and that "upon all men." Thus, the sin of Adam, when he stood as our Representative in Paradise, is reckoned to all his seed, and is the ground of the judgment pronounced. As we elsewhere read, "In Adam all

die" (1 Cor. 15.22). Apart from, and before, our actual and individual transgression by breaking known commandments, "after the similitude of Adam's transgression," we were regarded in the courts of heaven as having sinned in our legal Representative, and become amenable to Divine judgment. The result and final consequence of this was, the transmission of an infected and corrupt nature to all his seed, which manifests itself in inward evil and outward development, making us transgressors. Against this the revolted heart of man rebels, and, execrating the thought that one should be charged with another's sin, it passes sentence on the ways and Word of God, some declaring the former to be unjust, others the latter to be untrue. Thus, as Levi is reckoned to have been in Abraham's loins, and paid tithes to Melchizedec before he was born (Heb. 7.9-10), so are Adam's sons reckoned in him to have sinned, and, conversely, Adam in his fallen and corrupt nature appears in them, as they appear in the world, "born in sin" (Psa. 51.5), by nature children of wrath (Eph. 2.2), their hearts deceitful above all things and desperately wicked (Jer. 17.9), alienated from God, and loving to have it so. Thus, fallen man is regarded in a threefold way to be a sinner in the sight of God. (1) By the imputation of Adam's sin. (2) In the innate corruption imparted, the penal consequence of that sin. (3) Our own personal sin and transgression. Sin is in its nature lawlessness, and man's fallen, carnal mind "is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8.7). The "flesh" is incurably bad: it can neither be reformed nor remedied, and man is unable to recover himself — he is impotent, "without strength" (Rom. 5.6). As a guilty sinner he needs Redemption, as a fallen sinner he needs Regeneration.

Man Redeemed and Renewed

In the words spoken to the serpent by the Lord God in the garden, "I will put enmity between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gen. 3.15), lie wrapt up in promise the way of man's redemption. It was to be through suffering, and by triumph over man's enemy. In the language of New Testament Scripture, "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy (undo) the works of the devil" (1 John 3.8). For this, Incarnation—the Word becoming

flesh (John 1.14), the Son of God sent forth, “made of a woman” (Gal. 4.4), in the likeness of sinful flesh (Rom. 8.3), yet sinless, the Lamb without blemish and without spot (1 Pet. 1.19)—was a necessity. His person is thus essential to His work. His vicarious sufferings, His atoning death, His accepted sacrifice as meeting the Divine claims and vanquishing man’s captor are foreshadowed in the language of the types and in the offerings of the Levitical economy, to which the Epistle to the Hebrews bears full witness. In His death, God has found satisfaction, to which He has borne witness by raising Him from the dead. In virtue thereof He is Just and the Justifier (Rom. 3.24), and Grace now proclaims forgiveness (Acts 13.38), and brings salvation (Titus 2.11) to all men. The Gospel is preached without limit (Mark 16.15) to every creature, and judgment is, during this day of grace, postponed. All who receive the message are reconciled to God (Rom. 5.10), justified from all things (Acts 13.39), and brought to God. The sin of Adam no longer stands against them for condemnation; in Christ, the Second Man, they are accounted righteous (Rom. 5.19), and accepted (Eph. 1.6). Christ is their life (Col. 3.4), and in Him they are representatively risen and “as He is” (1 John 4.17), and destined to be glorified together with Him (Rom. 8.17). Subjectively, their personal condition is no longer that of aliens and strangers, but, as receivers of Christ, they are born of God (John 1.12), even now His children (1 John 3.1,2), predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son (Rom. 8.29), after which they are even now created anew (Col. 3.10), into which, through beholding Him in glory, they are now being transformed (2 Cor. 3.17), and the full measure of which they shall attain at His coming (1 Cor. 15.48,49), awakening to be each satisfied with His likeness (Psa. 17.11), seeing Him as He is (1 John 3.3), and being like Him. The creation, which, in the fall of its first head and ruler, was subjected to vanity (Rom. 8.20-22), and groans for deliverance, shall, in virtue of the Cross and under the dominion of the Son of Man, be delivered from corruption, and share in the liberty of the glory, the curse being removed, the usurper banished (Rev. 20.3), and death itself destroyed (1 Cor 15.26). Thus God has wrought and is working, and will gloriously triumph over Satan’s apparent conquest and man’s ruin,

while the final doom of Satan (Rev. 20.10), and all who have taken sides with him, refusing the reconciliation and despising Divine mercy, is shown to be righteous and eternal (Rev. 20.15; 21.8).

Question and Answer.

1.—Is there anything in Scripture to show the origin of evil?—So far as man is concerned, Genesis 3 is the record of it, but there was a previous revolt among angelic Beings in Heaven, led by one who was the first and greatest of created intelligences, to which the “origin of evil” on earth is due. “The devil sinneth from the beginning” (1 John 3.8). “He was a murderer from the beginning, and stood not in the truth” (John 8.44, R.V.). Why did God permit sin? is a question constantly asked by sceptics. It is vain to speculate on such matters, on which Revelation is silent. One thing is clear: the Son of God on the Cross, and the blood which atones for sin, leave no doubt as to the love of God manifested toward man for his redemption from it and its effects (1 John 4.9; Tit. 2.11). The origin of evil is shrouded in gloom: the love of God is clear as the noonday. Yet men shut their eyes to the one and grope in the darkness of their own reasonings, seeking information which God has withheld on the other.

‘IN MY NAME’

by EDWARD ROBINSON, Exmouth

How often are Christians found using expressions or quoting verses of Scripture with perhaps little thought of their significance. Yet in the word of God (not surprisingly since the Holy Spirit is the divine Author) its import lies not on the surface but in its underlying depth, as Solomon says ‘It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter.’ (Prov. 25.2). Superficial reading of God’s word may sometimes yield little; hence Paul’s word to Timothy, ‘Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all (or in all things)’ (1 Tim. 4.15). In like manner we read ‘And Isaac **digged** again the wells of water which they had digged in the days of Abraham his father.’ And Isaac’s servants **digged** in the valley, and found there a well of springing water.’ (Gen. 26.18,19)—living water, suggestive

of the Holy Spirit Himself. These thoughts are suggested by the much quoted verse in Matthew's Gospel 'For where two or three are gathered together **in My Name**, there am I in the midst of them.' (18.20). A simple ground of gathering, claimed by many but perhaps the expression 'in My Name' involving much in the way of suitability to that Name of the Holy One and True and subjection to His Lordship, with obedience to His word including the absence of clericalism and features not in accord with His teaching.

These considerations as to our way of gathering and assembly procedure find reinforcement in the Old Testament, over against laxity in many places to-day and an ecumenical atmosphere around. There are more than a score of references to 'the place where the Lord thy God shall **choose** to cause His Name to be placed.' In Deuteronomy, for instance are several such references. 'Unto the place which the Lord your God **shall choose** out of all your tribes to put His Name there . . .' (12.5, also vv. 13, 14). Again in reference to the Passover (in teaching which we may apply in principle to the Lord's Supper) we read in this same book, 'Thou mayest not sacrifice the Passover within any of thy gates, which the Lord thy God giveth thee: But at the place which the Lord thy God **shall choose** to place His Name in . . . , And thou shalt roast and eat it in the place which the Lord thy God **shall choose**.' (16.5,6,7). Again, there is the warning against the spirit which is also in evidence to-day, 'Ye shall not do . . . every man that which is right in his own eyes.' (12.8), a warning repeated in days of a low state in Israel in the book of Judges (17.6 and 21.25). There is in these verses the addition of the words 'In those days there was no king in Israel,' a suggestion of the absence of authority and for us subjection to the Lordship of Christ. How much do we need to realise that from the history of Israel and God's dealing then with His people,' they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come.' (1 Cor. 10.11, J.N.D).

In the present-day proliferation of sects, systems and cults, the pathway of the Christian cannot be other than difficult. This is true both in its individual aspect and perhaps more so in the complexity of his association, practical fellowship and walk with other Christians. It is, of course,

rendered more difficult by the fact that there has taken place in what we call Christendom the development of the various sects and denominations, some larger, some smaller, since the days of the apostles and the completion of the canon of New Testament scripture. There are no apostles to-day, but we have their church teaching, especially that of Paul who himself speaks of disunity, 'I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.' (1 Cor. 1.12). Yet there were in his day identifiable local churches comprised of every Christian in the particular town or city to whom he wrote. This is not the case to-day: in other words there is not now what might be called a visible church, although under the eye of God the Church, the body of Christ, remains intact and invulnerable until the Rapture (1 Thess. 4.16,17), as the Scripture also states 'And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.' (Matt. 16.18).

We have dwelt upon the importance in the Old Testament of the stress upon 'the place which the Lord God shall **choose** to put His Name' in relation to His people's service and the sacrifices. It has been said with much truth that an understanding of the situation of the Lord's Supper in the divine economy provides a key to the understanding of the whole truth. In that connection, the circumstances surrounding the inauguration of the Lord's Supper as outlined in the section of the Gospel by Luke 22.1-20 are significant and worthy of consideration. The details are most interesting: there is nothing haphazard in the choice of the place where the Passover was to be celebrated and, more importantly for us, the Lord's Supper was to be inaugurated. The disciples were to be guided by the man bearing a pitcher of water (symbol of purity) even as we too need the mind and guidance of the Holy Spirit, not our own choice, but the Lord's. It was to a Large, Upper Room. Its largeness would eliminate the narrowness of sectarianism and its name, involving 'love to all the saints' as enjoined in both Ephesians and Colossians and maintaining all that is in keeping with being 'gathered together **in My Name.**' The idea of an UPPER room is found elsewhere also in the Scriptures; the Ark in Genesis had three stories, its outlook heavenward. Solomon built the house of the Lord with three stories and each story higher showing enlargement. It was to an upper room that the disciples

(whose names are given) resorted after witnessing the ascension of the Lord Jesus into heaven (Acts 1.13) and it was from the third story that Eutychus fell at the celebration of the Lord's Supper by Paul and others at Troas on the first day of the week. (Acts 20.7-11). There is clearly the need to-day for the preservation of the character of the upper room with its simplicity in keeping with the 'day of small things' and yet having inwardly the spiritual elevation suited to the church which is the fulness of Him Who filleth all things (Eph. 1.23).

Lest the foregoing remarks be considered merely idealistic and academic, it is as well to acknowledge with humility that the Church in its public witness and testimony has been marked from its earliest days by failure and much departure from the purpose of God. Nevertheless it is good at all times to bear in mind its origin in that purpose and its heavenly destiny. In its history there have been times of recovery and revival, some evangelistic in character, some of Church truth. An outstanding instance of the latter with lasting effect was the Reformation, a movement of the Holy Spirit for which we must give thanks to God. Here again, however, there is the necessity for a note of warning in our day. The warmth and vitality of earlier days is sadly on the wane and there is instead in high places a readiness to compromise on the part of Protestantism with affinity and affiliation with Rome which never gives up its dogma, which is often contrary to the truth of the word of God.

Whilst the great feature of the Reformation was the recovery of the truth of justification by faith alone, it fell short of dealing with clericalism and re-discovering the Scriptural truth of the priesthood of all believers. This awaited another movement of the Holy Spirit some 150 years ago when in a remarkable manner Christians came together, unknown to each other, in dependence upon the leading of the Holy Spirit without any appointed leader, in various parts of the country. At first they continued to attend the system, Anglican or other, amongst whom they had previously been in fellowship, but had begun to apprehend that gathering together in simplicity 'in the name of the Lord Jesus' was according to the scriptural pattern and previous sectarian links were broken and they 'continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in

breaking of bread and prayers.' (Acts 2.42). Again the devil attacked, not without some success, causing disruption and division over the years. He is still active especially against any who would continue with a desire to 'earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints' (Jude 3) though it may be in remnant character as was the case in the history of Israel where the fruits of this remnant are seen in the opening of Luke's Gospel, awaiting the incoming of the Messiah. So would be found in our day 'looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.' (Titus 2.13).

DIFFERENCES SUBMERGED

by W. W. FEREDAY

Sin scatters; grace gathers. This was strikingly shown on the Day of Pentecost. Jerusalem was filled with Jews, "devout men, from every nation under heaven" (Acts 2.5). "Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites," etc. What confusion! How humiliating! Israel's tribes were meant to be God's corporate witness in the earth; His witness to the nations wholly sunk in idolatry that God is one (Deut. 6.4). But alas! sin had brought down His heavy hand upon them in discipline; the land of His choice was no longer theirs; and they could only be described as "the twelve tribes scattered abroad" (James 1.1). The Pentecostal visitors no longer had a "pure language" (Zeph 3.9); they spoke the languages of the peoples amongst whom they dwelt. In like manner, many in Nehemiah's day "spoke half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews language, but according to the language of each people" (Neh. 13.24). Again we say, what confusion! How humiliating!

Suddenly the Holy Spirit descended from heaven according to the promise of the Lord Jesus to His disciples before His departure; the Gospel of divine forgiveness was preached in His name, and believed by thousands; and all these were "baptized by one Spirit into one body" (1 Cor. 12.13). A new and indestructible unity was formed in a moment by divine power and grace. Neither national nor tribal distinctions have any place in this. Every difference is submerged; the Pentecostal saints might indeed return to the lands of their birth and never meet again; but they were henceforward "all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3.28). The words of the Apostle are as true as ever, "there is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling" (Eph. 4.4). Oh, that the power of these divine realities was better known!

“FOR EVER WITH THE LORD”

JAMES MONTGOMERY (1771—1854)

James Montgomery was born in Irvine, Ayrshire, Scotland on November 4th, 1771. He was the son of a Moravian minister who had earlier been an Irish peasant and when James was five years of age, his parents moved back to Ireland to the Moravian settlement at Gracehill near to Ballymena. At the age of seven, James was sent to Fulneck Seminary near to Leeds in Yorkshire, to study for the Moravian ministry. He remained there for nine to ten years and during this period, his parents left as missionaries to the West Indies where they both died, one in Barbados and the other in Tobago. James' record at Fulneck Seminary was a great disappointment; in fact, one writer records that he was "distinguished only by indolence and melancholy." He was a day-dreamer, a visionary, more interested in making poetry than in his lessons. His school record at Fulneck concluded with the entry, "James Montgomery, notwithstanding repeated admonitions, has not been more attentive. It was resolved to put him to a business, at least for a time." So at the age of 16, he was apprenticed to a baker. In this too James showed little interest and the years that followed were marked by restlessness and frequent changes of employment throughout Yorkshire. He was a born poet and throughout these years, he continued to write verse. He sought for a publisher for his youthful compositions and with this in mind travelled as far as London, but his journey there was in vain and he returned to Yorkshire, a very disappointed young man.

When he was 21, he applied successfully for a post in Sheffield as assistant to Mr. Joseph Gales who was editor and printer of the Sheffield Register. After two years Mr. Gales was forced to leave England to avoid prosecution by the authorities for some publications in his paper which were regarded as "seditious and revolutionary." Thereupon, James Montgomery took over the newspaper, changed its name to the 'Sheffield Iris' and continued as its editor and publisher for the next 31 years. He was fined and imprisoned for "unpopular" publishing on two occasions, first for reprinting a song on "The fall of the Bastille" and the second for criticising the action of a magistrate in dispersing a riot in Sheffield. But "dungeons cannot hold the soul" and in the prison cell, Montgomery continued to write verse; ("Prison Amusements" was published in 1797).

James Montgomery never married. For many years he lived at the "Iris" office in central Sheffield, but in later life moved to the famous "Mount" at the west-end of the city and there con-

tinued to write his hymns and poems. In the public life of the city, he played a large part and was very highly respected; his fellow townsman recognized that "his life and his hymns had one music." Indeed, such was his recognized leadership in civic life that at the age of 64, he was awarded a National Pension by Sir Robert Peel. He was a pioneer in many humanitarian enterprises, an active denunciator of the slave trade and a great advocate of missionary work, the Bible Society and Sunday schools. When, at the age of 82, he passed away peacefully at the "Mount" on April 30th, 1854, he was honoured by a public funeral and in the city of Sheffield there are, to his memory, a Wesleyan Chapel, a public hall, a statue in the general cemetery and a stained glass window in the parish church.

James Montgomery was a deeply spiritual man but it was not, however, till the age of 43 that he received a definite assurance of his salvation. Until then he knew no true rest for his heart and confessed in writing to a friend, "What can I do? I am tossed to and fro on a sea of doubts and perplexities; the further I am carried from that shore where I was once happily moored, the weaker grow my hopes of ever reaching another where I may anchor in safety." On knowing the peace of assurance he joined himself to the fellowship of the Moravian brethren, though for most of his time in Sheffield he worshipped with the Methodists because there was no Moravian Church there.

James Montgomery, as a poet and hymn-writer, has outstanding merit. As a poet, Lord Byron writes of him as, "a man of considerable genius." As a hymn-writer, Hugh Martin terms him, "the layman who left an imperishable inheritance." Dr. Routley calls him, "the greatest of Christian lay-hymnwriters." Dr. Julian says of Montgomery, "the secrets of his power as a writer of hymns were manifold. His poetic genius was of a high order, higher than most who stood with him in the front rank of Christian poets. His ear for rhythm was exceedingly accurate and refined. His knowledge of holy scripture was most extensive. His religious views were broad and charitable. His devotional spirit was of the holiest type. With the faith of a strong man he united the beauty and simplicity of a child. Richly poetic without exuberance, dogmatic without uncharitableness, tender without sentimentality, elaborate without diffusiveness, richly musical without apparent effort, he has bequeathed to the Church of Christ wealth which could only have come from a true genius and a sanctified heart."

James Montgomery's hymns were, on his own confession, "the most serious work of my long life" and number about 400. Many of these are still in regular use today. His hymn, "According to thy gracious word" is among those most frequently sung by saints gathered at the Lord's supper. Of his hymn, "Prayer is the

soul's sincere desire," Montgomery in his lifetime received more messages as to its helpfulness than about anything else he had ever written. But, perhaps, one of the greatest comforts to the hearts of the Lord's people in times of bereavement has been the words of his heart-reaching hymn, "For ever with the Lord,"

"For ever with the Lord
Amen, so let it be!
Life from the dead is in that word,
'Tis immortality.

Here in the body pent,
Absent from Him I roam,
Yet nightly pitch my moving tent
A day's march nearer home.

My Father's house on high,
Home of my soul, how near
At times to faith's farseeing eye
Thy golden gates appear!

Ah! then my spirit faints
To reach the land I love
The bright inheritance of saints,
Jerusalem above.

'For ever with the Lord!
Father, if 'tis Thy will,
The promise of that faithful word
E'en here to me fulfil.

Be thou at my right hand,
Then can I never fail;
Uphold Thou me, and I shall stand;
Fight, and I must prevail.

So when my latest breath
Shall rend the veil in twain,
By death I shall escape from death
And life eternal gain.

Knowing as I am known,
How shall I love that word,
And oft repeat before the throne,
'For ever with the Lord!'"

The occasion of its writing was in the year 1835. Montgomery had just lost a very close friend in death and had followed him to the grave. Then in his mind there seemed to spring to life a seed which had been planted in childhood at Fulneck when his schoolmaster read some striking passages from 'The Grave,' a poem by Blair. "Was the grave the end?" He turned to his New Testament for consolation and for help—to 1 Thess. 4. 16,17,

"For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." "No, the grave is definitely not the end." Some days later, Montgomery wrote his great hymn of consolation and hope, "For ever with the Lord." It contained in its original 22 stanzas of four lines each and was entitled, "At home in heaven, 1 Thess. 4.17,"

"Whatever our vision of Christ now, it will then be clearer;
Whatever our knowledge of Christ now, it will then be deeper;
Whatever our experience of Christ now, it will then be richer;
Whatever our communion with Christ now, it will then be closer;
Whatever our rejoicing in Christ now, it will then be greater;
Whatever our conception of Christ now, it will then be higher."

The eternal home of the soul of the believer in Christ is to be, "for ever with the Lord." Its anticipation now is sweet! What then must its realization be?

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.