



ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY



Contents

- TALKS TO YOUNG BELIEVERS**
by John Ritchie
- DOCTRINAL AND/OR EXPERIMENTAL**
by E. Robinson
- CHRIST IN THE APOCALYPSE**
by John B. D. Page
- FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTALS**
by J. B. Hewitt
- THE GREAT TRIBULATION** by Ernest Barker
- THE NUMBER FOUR IN PROPHECY**
by James Scott
- JOSEPH—A TYPE OF CHRIST**
by T. Cornforth Taws
- ISAIAH'S PORTRAITS OF CHRIST**
by J. Flanigan
- SUGGESTIVE BIBLE STUDIES**
- THE DOCTRINE OF HUMILITY**
by J. E. Todd
- COMMITTEE NOTES**
- THOUGHTS OF CHRIST**
by Eric G. Parmenter
- HYMNS AND THEIR WRITERS**
by Jack Strahan

A Spiritual House

A thousand pebbles on the beach
And never two the same
There is a difference in each
Of shape and size and name.
Each has its own identity.
A texture of its own.
An individual history.
All on the beach were thrown.

The saints of God are on the shore.
Secured by Jesus' blood.
Sheltered by Him for evermore.
Safe from the raging flood.
Each have a personality
And different background too.
A gift of varied quality.
A special work to do.

The Master-builder sees each stone
Which has passed through the sea.
He has a place for every one
Where He would have them be.
A glorious dwelling place today,
Where each His Lordship owns,
And truth and righteousness display.
Composed of living stones.

(Selected)

Talks to Young Believers

by JOHN RITCHIE

WORLDLY CHRISTIANS

It is often remarked that "so-and-so *professes* to be converted, but those who have the best opportunity of judging by his life and walk, have *doubt* about it." This is a sad testimony, and I hope none of us who are really the Lord's are living in such a manner that anybody, either saint or sinner, could say so truthfully about any one of us. 'Alas! it is too true of many. It might be profitable for our souls to enquire what some of the *causes* of this "crooked" living among those who profess to be the Lord's are. Of course we must always remember that not every one who *says* "Lord, Lord," is a genuine child of God. Mere lip profession is very cheap, and in our days it is respectable to be called a Christian after some sort. There are plenty of people, old and young, who *say* that they have been converted, and so far as their tongues are concerned it seems feasible, for they can *speak* about the Lord quite fluently, but, for all that they are only hypocrites. Their *lives* belie their *words*, and it is by their "fruits" and not by their words, that the Lord Jesus says we may "*know them*" (Matt. 7. 20). Many of this class know quite well that they are not born again, still they keep up their profession, as long as it will keep, for the purpose of deception. Then there are others, who honestly think for a time that they have been converted, because somebody told them so, or because "a change came over them," and such like. In times of awakening and revival, there is generally a number of such cases, which through time like the stony-ground bearers, "fall away," and go back to the world. It is easy enough accounting for these two classes being "crooked," to those who have spiritual discernment, and it is a mercy for themselves and for all concerned, when they come out in their true colours. But there are others, truly converted, yet whose testimony has not the clear ring about. The Galatian converts were of this sort, and the apostles had to write concerning them—"I stand in *doubt* of you" (Gal. 4. 20). Why was this? Once they were bright enough, as long as the Apostle was with them. But they had been "bewitched" (chap. 3.1) by somebody coming after, and preaching legality and worldliness to them, and this soon led them into "Doubting Castle," and to crookedness to walk. Beware, dear young saints, of this kind of preach-

ing. There are lots of it all around you. Men are preaching up human nature, which God has condemned: preaching up the world, and trying to make it comfortable quarters for saints. They are saying by word and example, that the world is just the right place for a Christian, and there is no harm in this, that, and the other thing. But yon Cross has settled our account with the world, for ever. We are "crucified" (Gal. 6.14), and no longer "of it" (John 17.16). Demas and Lot were of the crooked class, and just from the same cause. Lot eyed the plains of Sodom for his cattle; he set his heart on being rich, and in the race for gold he got drawn nearer the city, next he sat at its gate, and latterly he had a "house" in it (see Gen. 19). O beware young saints, of setting forth on this dangerous path, where the world will draw you like a magnet into its embrace, and leave you where it left Lot, a "doubtful" in his testimony, and a backslider in his soul, and not a bit the richer either, for he was dragged out empty-handed. How sweet to turn to the history of one who says he was "well-known" (2 Cor. 6.9). There was no mistaking of Paul. Even the demons had to say—"Paul I *know*" (Acts 19.15). There was no mistaking on whose side he was. Christ was everything to him: he counted the world dung, and flung it behind him, pressing on to know Him more. His was a happy path. Even in his chains he was "always rejoicing" (2 Cor. 6.10), and at the end of the journey, he was as true and bright as at the beginning. Dear young saints, this is the happy path: the path of decision for Christ. There are no "doubtful Christians" there, all "well-known" on earth, in heaven, and in hell. And when yon judgement seat is set, and the Master gives His *prizes*, their's will be the "well-done," and their's the crown.

DOCTRINAL AND/OR EXPERIMENTAL

by E. ROBINSON (Exmouth)

There are a number of matters dealt with in the Scriptures so profound and far-reaching that we feel often only to have touched the fringe. Especially is this true of the writings, for instance, of John, as we continue to discover and wonder. Sometimes such are encountered, not as the main theme of the writer, as with Paul as well as with John, but inserted almost casually as an aside. So we find Paul, speaking of the Lord (J. N. D. says of **God**, agreeable with the context) 'For in Him we live and move and have our being, as certain also of your own poets have said, for we are also His offspring! (Acts 17.28). This verse alone is worthy of long

consideration as we ask ourselves to what extent has it engaged our hearts and mind and become practical reality in our lives?

Paul's use of the term 'In Him' (not by Him), is found also elsewhere, and is most intriguing: how closely linked and identified are we with the Christ? Do we not at times fail to lay hold of its deep significance. Peter and John were an example and a testimony of it: it is recorded of them that others 'took knowledge of them that they had been ('were,' J. N. D.) with Jesus.' (Acts 4.13). Again, Paul records (Rom. 8.1). 'There is, therefore now no condemnation to them that are **in** Christ Jesus.' (note the title used 'Christ Jesus,' not Jesus Christ), referring to the Man in the glory. He says also, 'Therefore, if any man be **in** Christ, there is a new creation.' (2 Cor. 5.17, J. N. D.). In this same scripture, Paul expands on the truth of reconciliation, even using the expression 'God was **in** Christ'; not, of course, using the expression in the sense of our relationship thus in Christ, but rather indicating that God was operating in and through Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. (v. 19).

Not surprisingly, perhaps the deepest of these thoughts is on the whole in the writings of John. In general, Paul writes concerning church principles and of how we are to conduct ourselves as moving together with one another as members of the body of Christ, his doctrine not just information but formation. John, on the other hand, has his own unique of ministry, quite distinct from the other three Gospels. Often did we but note them, he introduces thoughts maybe in a single sentence which could engage our minds for a very long time, almost inexhaustibly. Let us take an instance, taking it out of context (inexcusably), in his first Epistle (4 .17) the verse, 'As He is, so are we in this world.' Repeat this, pause, and repeat it again. We might have expected it to read 'As He **was**, or again to read, 'so shall we be.' But no: it has no future implication, it is 'in this world,' not in the world to come. It is not a prophetic word, but typically, John writes of the present time, sometimes giving present power to what is actually future.

We mentioned context and it is not without importance that in the past doctrinal error has been known to creep in by its disregard in dealing fully with scriptural passages. However, in our consideration of this verse (1st John 4.17), there is no question of being led astray, as John says 'that we may have **boldness** in the day of judgement: because as He is, so are we in this world.' How vast the contrast between one subject to judgement in that great and terrible

day, and the blessedness of one being ‘as He is, in this world.’ We are here surely on such ground that passes well beyond our capacity of comprehension, though thankfully not of some understanding and appreciation by the Spirit. We can well understand that in the purpose of God heaven is to be peopled by those ‘as He is,’ but that it be ‘in this world,’ under the eye of God and before men constitutes a challenge and exercise of heart and mind. Nevertheless, our response to God and Christ by the Spirit may well be greatly enlarged by the contemplation of divine intent.

CHRIST IN THE APOCALYPSE (21)

by JOHN B. D. PAGE

THE CELESTIAL CITY (2)

The City’s Light (ii)

Reading : Revelation 21 : 9 to 22 : 5.

The divine glory was not apparently the sole means of lighting the city, because the seer’s attention was turned to an unusual “light” (21.11). In his other writings, John has more to say about the subject of light than other New Testament writers but, for describing this unique “light,” he uses a different Greek word, *phoster*, which means not only ‘light’ but also ‘light-giver’ and ‘luminary,’ and it is clearly figurative of Christ radiant with glory. Think of it! For this heavenly city, Christ is its ‘Light’; Christ is its ‘Light-giver’; Christ is its ‘Luminary’. This indicates that Christ is the Light that shone throughout its translucent structure of pure gold, being reflected in the many precious stones of its foundations and rebounding upon the huge pearls of its gates.

Digressing for a moment, it is only in Revelation that this word “light” (*phoster*, Greek) is used of Christ, whilst its only other occurrence is in the plural number where it is applied to Christians in Philippians 2.15, “. . . in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.” Like the stars shining on a dark, moonless night (Gen. 1.16), believers should shine as luminaries in the moral darkness of this wicked world.

Having not seen a similar light before, the seer says the “light was like unto a stone most precious.” This may be an echo of Isaiah (28.16), who foresaw the preciousness of Christ as a Stone. “Unto you therefore which believe He is precious,” says Peter (1 Pet. 2.7). We may ask ourselves, ‘Is Christ more precious to us now than a

year ago or ten years ago?’ Continuing with the similarity of the “light” to a precious stone, the seer says “even like a jasper stone, clear as a crystal,” indicating that the light was not opaque but crystal clear in shining. Of the many precious stones, the Light resembled a jasper. This is interesting, not only because the One sitting upon the throne in the heavenly sanctuary is likened to a jasper (4.3) but the surrounding wall of the city was of jasper, whilst the city’s first foundation was adorned with a jasper (21.18ff). Such prominence given to the jasper above all other precious stones is significant. A jasper was one of the twelve precious stones set in the high priest’s breastplate, part of his garments for glory and for beauty (Exod. 28.21 ff), and these stones were engraved with the names of Israel’s twelve tribes. Being the twelfth stone in the breastplate, the jasper was inscribed with the twelfth tribe’s name, Benjamin, if taken according to age. On her death-bed, Rachel gave birth to her second child, Jacob’s twelfth son, and she named him Ben-oni, indicating ‘The son of my sorrow,’ but her husband called him Benjamin which denotes ‘The son of my right hand’ (Gen. 35.18). Such meanings direct one’s thoughts to Christ, first to His humiliation as ‘Man of sorrows’ (Isa. 53.3) and then to His exaltation. At His ascension, Christ was told, “Sit Thou on My right hand” by Jehovah for His present session in heaven, because it is the highest place of honour that could be bestowed upon Him (Acts 2 : 33-35; cf. Heb. 1.3), which was recognised by orientals even as Solomon told his mother to sit on his right hand (1 Kings 2.19; cf. Psa. 45.9). Christ, being likened to a jasper stone as the “Light” of the city, is seen in His exaltation. For illuminating the city, this exalted Man is radiant, and even luminous, with the brightness of the glory that God *gave* Him at His resurrection (1 Peter 1.21; John 17.24 as distinct from the glory that He *had* with God before the world was created (John 17.5), and the saints will be partakers of that God-given glory when it is unveiled to them at the Lord’s coming to the air for them (1 Peter 5.1).

In choosing this Greek word, *phoster*, with its several shades of meaning, John’s mind may have gone back to the Septuagint Version of Genesis 1.14,16, where the same word is used of ‘lights’ and ‘the two great lights’ for describing respectively the stars, and the sun and moon that God made on the fourth day of creation-week. Reflecting upon the necessity of these heavenly bodies as ‘lights’,

'light-givers' and 'luminaries' set in the expanse of heaven "to give light upon the earth," the seer sees that in contrast "the city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine upon it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the lamp thereof is the Lamb" (21.23, R.V.). Unlike this terrestrial ball which depends upon the sun and moon for light, the celestial city had no need of them because the Lamb is its "lamp," not meaning the provision of artificial light for a short time but in the sense of an independent Source of light. Obviously, only the Lamb, embodying the brightness of divine glory (Heb. 1.3) and Himself being radiant with incomparable light, could illumine this vast city.

"The nations shall walk by its light" (21.24, R.V.), says the seer. (N.B. For the human race to be divided into 'nations', it is the result of divine judgement, see Genesis 10, and so the setting of the city is millennial and not the eternal state when such divisions will be unknown). If the city were located upon the earth, say in Israel, then it could not operate as a light to nations in many parts of the world. Significantly, there is no mention that the city will be sited upon the earth, but the implication is that it will be located in the air, which at present is the sphere of Satanic activity (Eph. 2.2). With the city as an enormous luminary in the atmospheric heaven, then it will function as a light by which the nations will conduct themselves. This is borne out by Prof. J. D. Pentecost in *Things to Come* when he says, "Thus John sees the 'great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God'. This dwelling place remains in the air, to cast its light, which is the shining of the effulgence of the Son, on to the earth so that 'the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it'."

The city's "light," in which the nations will walk, is the Greek word *phos*, meaning 'light, which is underived and absolute', and elsewhere it is used of Christ and of God (John 1.4ff; 8.12; 1 John 1.5). Therefore, the light shining from the city originates not from itself but from the Lamb Whose abode is in the city. This perfect light, complete in itself and unaffected by the sun or moon, is essentially the exalted Christ Himself, setting the city aglow with His glory (similar to the glow of the rising sun in Jerusalem today), so that the city becomes a luminary for the nations.

This phenomenon, foreseen in a vision by John, was foretold centuries earlier by Isaiah although, of course, he makes no reference to the celestial city as John does, but this Old Testament

prophet said concerning Israel during the Messianic kingdom, "The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee; but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory, Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, . . ." (Isa. 60.19ff). The extinguishing of the sun and moon for light is unthinkable, because the certainty of the solar system is an assurance for the continuance of Israel as a nation to the end of time (Jer. 31.35ff). But Isaiah realised that during the kingdom age the Shekinah glory shining forth from Jehovah-Messiah will be brighter than the light of either the sun or moon and it will be an everlasting light to Israel. As W. E. Vine expresses it in *Isaiah*, "The sun and moon will still exist, but will not be needed, owing to the effulgence radiating from the presence of the Lord and the Church, with His uncreated Shekinah glory." In his reference to the Church here, Vine has in mind its Apocalyptic symbol as a great city radiant with the light of the Lamb. Surely, our hearts should burn within when we realise that we shall not only partake of our Lord's glory and behold His glory but also apparently reflect His glory in that day (1 Peter 5.1; John 17.24).

From these Scriptures, it would appear that the brightness of the light shining forth from the Lamb and the heavenly city will exceed that from the sun by day and the moon by night. The degree of such brilliance of light is brought out by Isaiah when he says, "The light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, . ." (Isa. 30.26). That is to say, the light reflected by the moon will equal the sun in brightness whilst the light emitted by the sun will be seven times brighter, which means that the sun's light for seven days at present will be then concentrated into one day. Consequently, the seer says there will be no night in the celestial city and no need of a lamp or the sun (22.5), which will be equally true of the millennial earth. To the finite human mind, such a brilliance of light seems impossible, but there was a faint resemblance of it when Paul, as he approached Damascus at the time of his conversion, saw a light from heaven which was brighter than the mid-day sun of the orient (Acts 26.13). The brilliant light, which was seen by Paul, emanated from the glorified Christ, but it was then local whilst it will be global during the millennium.

(ISA. 60:19) note (To be continued).

FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTALS

by J. B. HEWITT, Chesterfield

(48) RECONCILIATION

Reconciliation! What a theme for the Gospel preacher; what a glorious truth for meditation. Propitiation is the work of Christ Godward. It has in view the satisfying of the demands of divine righteousness and divine holiness. God's wrath must be appeased. It must be propitiated before God can bestow His favour and blessing (Luke 18.13; Rom. 5.10). Reconciliation is the work of Christ manward (1 John 2.2). It is for the whole world. Propitiation makes this possible (Heb. 2.17; Rom. 5.10). Reconciliation was not necessary from God's side. Man has ever been the offender and enemy (Eph. 2.15,16; Col. 1.21,22).

The Meaning. In the N.T. the word is derived from three different Greek words. The verb form means "to change from enmity to friendship." Fausset says, "the changing of places, coming over from one to the other side." The reconciling of man to God (Rom. 5.10; 2 Cor. 5.18,19,20). The noun form has four occurrences (Rom. 5.11 (RV); 11.15; 2 Cor. 5.18,19). The word "reconcile" carries with it the idea of the removal of hostilities and the establishment of a peaceful relationship (Col. 1.20,21). The word means to reconcile completely (Eph. 2.16). Man was originally in fellowship with his Creator. With the invasion of sin into his life, man was separated from God. Through the work of His Son, God provided a way for man to be brought back to his Creator in a redeeming relationship. He can be restored to full communion, fellowship, and relationship with God (Rom. 5.10).

The Means of it. (Rom. 5.10; Eph. 2.13). The Lord Jesus is the One in Whom all is accomplished. The result of His work—"having made peace" (Col. 1.20). Christ has done what was necessary to accomplish reconciliation. The little preposition "THROUGH" occurs three times in this verse. It designates Christ as the Agent of reconciliation God's holy demands are satisfied in the atonement for sin. It necessitated the personal agency of Christ at Calvary to effect our reconciliation (Heb. 9.22).

The cost involved—"the blood of His cross." His blood shed on Calvary—that bridged the gap between God and man and provided the means to bring man back into a right relationship with God.

"Unto Himself." God was not reconciled to man, man went wrong and was separated from God (Eph. 2.13). Reconciliation is a work of God for man and not a work of man for himself. By faith I rest on the work of Christ. He did it all for me at Calvary.

The Magnitude of it. Just as salvation is viewed in the N.T. in three tenses, so reconciliation by itself is presented in that way too. (a) The past provision was made by Christ in His death at Calvary (Col. 1.20). Reconciliation stands completed as a historical fact. (b) The present possession, its present acquisition, not some remotely future experience but a present reality. Distance and displacement are gone forever (v.21). This is the reach of reconciliation—"and YOU" (v.21; Rom. 5.1). (c) The prophetic announcement of eternity future—"reconcile all things." What a prospect, a reconciled earth when the Lord Jesus will be the Centre of the glory in the millennial age. These verses give us a sweeping panorama of the purpose of God for this world. The whole universe will undergo a process of re-orientation (Isa. 11; Rom. 8.19). We shall be "holy"—free from every trace and tint of sin, all defilement gone. "Unblameable" separated from former weaknesses and sinful tendencies. We shall be "unreprovable"; that is, no one, Satan, sinners other saints—will be able to successfully hurl accusations against us (Rom. 8.33).

The Ministry of it. One of the major themes of 2 Cor. is that of ministry, chapter 5 particularly deals with this subject. The word translated "ministry" is the word "deacon," service on behalf of others. It means mundane work on behalf of others. (a) The reason for this ministry (2 Cor. 5.19). The work of Christ on our behalf is the foundation for our ministry to others. Reconciliation accomplished, experienced is to be proclaimed to others. We should be willing to obey the Lord and engage in this dignified ministry (v.19). (b) The recipients of this ministry. We are the chosen vessels through whom the Lord carries out this ministry to others. We are to beseech men to change their attitude and accept the provision God has made for them

in Christ. (c) Our responsibility. It is "given" to us (2 Cor. 5.18). This is a decisive act; God has given us this responsibility and privilege of ministry.

The Message of it. This is described in verses 19,20. This is our stewardship—"committed to us." It is really His ministry and we are but stewards. (1) The announcement "God was in Christ." The sinless Saviour (v.21). His sinlessness qualified Him to be the Agent of reconciliation. The stupendous sacrifice — "sin for us." He was made sin on our behalf. The sin question was settled once for all (Rom. 4.25-5.1). The splendid standing—"made righteous"—justified freely by His grace. (2) The ambassadors (v.20). We are the personal representatives on earth of the glorified Christ in heaven. That is why we can herald this message with authority. (3) The appeal — "we beseech you." We beg or pray. Our appeal is urgent. As faithful ministers we should be earnest and sincere in our proclamation of the message. Through us it reaches others.

The reconciliation of Joseph and his brethren in Gen. 45 v.1-11, is a good illustration of this lesson.

It was with sadness that we learned of the homecall of our dear brother J. B. Hewitt of Chesterfield. He was a regular and valued contributor to Assembly Testimony for many years and has left us articles still to be published. Prayer would be appreciated for his widow who is not at all well.

THE GREAT TRIBULATION

Will The Church Pass Through It?

by **ERNEST BARKER**

(PART 2) A Thief in the Night.

We will now consider the opening verses of the last chapter of 1 Thessalonians, where we read these words:—"For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night." It is very necessary to distinguish between the "Coming of the Lord" in chapter 4, and the "Day of the Lord" in chapter 5. The "coming" will be an act of blessing. The "Day" will be a period of unparalleled judgement. The Apostle Peter in Acts 2.19 and 20, quoting from the prophecy of Joel, informs us that the

day of the Lord will be preceded by certain definite signs which will be seen in heaven above and in the earth beneath, blood, fire, and vapour of smoke, and then follow these words: "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, **before that great and notable day of the Lord come.**" These heavenly phenomena will occur immediately after the days of the "great tribulation" to which we have already referred. The same apostle in his second epistle, chapter 3, 10 to 12, tells us that the **Day of the Lord** will terminate with greater and more terrible disasters than those which will precede it. Here are the exact words:—"In the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat: the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up."

It is not difficult to see that the phrase "as the thief in the night" indicates that the day of the Lord will come suddenly and unexpectedly. The thief is very careful to keep his victims in ignorance of the exact time of his arrival. Indeed, he does his utmost to arrange to come when he is least expected. Similarly the arrival of the "Day of the Lord" will take by surprise those whom it will overwhelm.

Now, the "coming of the Lord," mentioned in chapter 4, will not be an unexpected event. Tens of thousands of God's beloved children are anticipating, daily and hourly, His glorious arrival, and the number of these "look-out" believers is rapidly increasing.

False Peace and Safety.

The writer then continues in this strain:—"For when **they** shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them . . . and they shall not escape" (1 Thess. 5.3). Here we see **judgment**, sudden and certain. The "Peace and Safety" mentioned in this passage are **false**. A false peace is worse than the severest storm, because in a severe storm a person realises his danger, and there may be a possibility of escape, but a false peace is altogether fatal, inasmuch as the victim thinks that all is well when all is **wrong**, and before he is aware of his danger he is engulfed in a calamity from which escape is impossible. The same applies to a false safety. The only real and abiding peace is that which the Lord Jesus made by the blood of His cross, and the only real safety is to be found in the eternal Rock of Ages.

But to whom does the pronoun "they" refer? Surely not to believers, and if not to believers it can only refer to those who are in darkness—to those who are without God and without Christ. **To such** will the "Day of the Lord" come as a thief in the night. Now let us notice carefully the following verse:—"But ye, brethren, are not in darkness that that day should overtake **you** as a thief." This most clearly indicates that the Day of the Lord has to do, not with the children of God, but with the sons of darkness. We who have been brought out of darkness into God's most wonderful light are more involved in the closing verses of chapter 4 than the opening verses of chapter 5.

The Restraining Power.

One of the most important passages which prove that the Church will never pass through the Great Tribulation is 2 Thessalonians 2.7:—"For the mystery of iniquity doth already work; only He who now letteth (or hindereth) will let, until He be taken out of the way." The Apostle distinctly informs us that the day of Christ (or, as some authorities give, the "Day of the Lord") shall not arrive, except there come first the most terrible of apostasies, culminating in the manifestation of the man of sin. **Then** the Mystery of Iniquity will reach its climax, when the enemies of truth will have their own way, and when the forces of evil will be let loose.

This profound "Mystery of Iniquity" is already working, and has been working since the apostolic era, **but it has been kept in check.** Happily there has been a restraining power at work, so that, although the element of lawlessness has even now reached alarming proportions, it has not been allowed to exceed the border line. God allows the wrath of man to be exercised within certain limits that it might praise Him, but the remainder of wrath He restrains.

There will come a time, however, when this restraining power will be withdrawn, and then the man of sin—that "wicked one"—who will exalt himself above all that is worshipped, and will actually sit in the temple of God, "shewing himself that he is God"—will be revealed in all his diabolical powers, and signs, and lying wonders.

A most important question arises here:—**What is this restraining power?** The pronoun used is "He," not "it,"

which clearly means that it must be a person, and if it be a person it can surely be none other than **the Holy Spirit of God**. Believers are designated "the salt of the earth," the reason being that they are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and therefore constitute an effective purifying agent on the earth in their corporate capacity. Were it not for the presence of God's redeemed people in the world, the condition of things would be intolerable. As is well known, the Holy Spirit descended at Pentecost. When will He ascend? He will ascend with the Church when she is caught away to meet her glorified Lord. This being so, the restraining power will be removed when Christ comes for His own, previous to the period known as the Great Tribulation.

(To be continued)

THE NUMBER FOUR IN PROPHECY

In his night vision Daniel saw the **four** winds of heaven strive upon the great sea (Dan. 8.2,3), the well-known symbol for "peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues" (Rev. 17.15); and **four** great beasts came up from the sea, which, according to the inspired interpretation, represent four "kings," or kingdoms (ver. 17), that would arise out of the earth, signifying their moral origin.

It was also revealed to Nebuchadnezzar, in the form of a great image, that **four** Gentile kingdoms would arise out of the earth, of which his was the first. These were the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Macedonian, and the Roman. On the death of Alexander the Great his empire broke up, and ultimately formed into four kingdoms—Greece Assyria, Egypt, and Rome.

We believe that history will again repeat itself and that at "the time of the end" **four** great powers will again arise to contend for the mastery, namely the Russian, or northern confederacy; the Assyrian, or eastern confederacy; the Grecian, or Balkan confederacy; and the Roman, or western confederacy. Thus at the very end of the "times of the Gentiles" these four great powers will be found facing each other—each with its allotted part to play on the prophetic stage—and all openly opposed to the claims of Jehovah and His anointed (Ps. 2). The first to be judged will be the western power; the second will be the Assyrian; the third the Grecian; and the last the Russian.—James Scott.

JOSEPH — A TYPE OF CHRIST

by T. CORNFORTH TAWS (Leicester)

The importance of the life and character of Joseph is emphasized in the Book of Genesis in that more space is devoted to him and his activities than to any of the Old Testament patriarchs recorded in this 'Book of Beginnings.'

When we read this thrilling story of God's overruling providence we learn much of Joseph as a beautiful type of our Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God sent by the Father to be the Messiah of Israel the Saviour of the world.

The secret of Joseph's life with all its trials and temptations is simply stated in Gen. 39.2 'The Lord was with Joseph,' suggesting to us that 'If God be for us who can be against us.' However, this simple statement reminds us of a profound truth concerning our Lord's perfect union with the Father, as the Saviour Himself said 'I and my Father are one.' (John 10.30).

Joseph is best known for his 'coat of many colours,' which was a sign that he was Jacob's favourite, his BELOVED SON, for we read 'Israel loved Joseph more than all his children.' This sign of devotion was also a mark of distinction which made Joseph outstanding, so that all knew he was 'the chosen son.' How this reminds us of God's well beloved Son of Whom we read, 'the Father loveth the Son' and again Jesus said 'Thou lovest Me before the foundation of the world.'

In a unique way God the Father expressed His love and appreciation of the Lord Jesus Christ when He said 'This is my Beloved Son' (Luke 9.35) when on the Mount of Transfiguration.

As an OBEDIENT SERVANT we find Joseph a perfect example; reflecting the Messiah, the true Servant of Jehovah, of whom Isaiah prophesied in chapter 42 'Behold my Servant.' God's Son willingly took the servant's place and in the shadow of the cross He said 'I am among you as He that serveth' Luke 22.27, a truth re-echoed by Paul concerning our Saviour' and took upon Him the form of a servant.' (Phil. 2.7).

We notice the willingness of Joseph to do his father's will and gladly going in search of his brethren. This reminds us how the Lord Jesus shewed His obedience to His Father

by willingly coming into this world to find 'the lost sheep of the house of Israel,' those who were His brethren after the flesh. As a devoted servant He could say, 'Lo I come in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God.' (Psalm 40.7,8).

While referring to the Son of God as the rejected Servant John writes, 'He came unto His own (possessions) and His own (people) received Him not'; this was a reflection of the treatment given to Joseph by his brethren and was anticipated by the Lord in the parable of the vineyard. (Matt. 21).

When we consider the Son of God as the UNIQUE SUFFERER, we find the type in Joseph very helpful. Why did Joseph suffer at the hands of his brethren?, only because of their envy and malice which is verily true of the 'Man of Sorrows' Who for envy was delivered to Pilate and then crucified. The prophetic statement 'they hated me without a cause' can be said of both Joseph and Jesus.

Despite the testimony of the Prophets and the Psalms that the Christ (Messiah) should suffer, the Jews as a nation, then and now, cannot accept a Suffering Saviour. Their concept of Messiah was a mighty deliverer, a national hero or a warrior king and even the Lord's disciples thought that Christ would deliver them from the bondage of Rome. They looked for the restoration of the kingdom rather than the regeneration of the people.

Joseph suffered the shame of the dungeon but Jesus endured the shame of the cross, for 'cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.' Calvary reveals something of the physical sufferings and the spiritual anguish of the One whose soul was made an offering for sin,—the perfect Sin-Offering.

In God's infinite goodness HE vindicated His servant Joseph who was exalted from the prison to the palace and exchanged rags for riches and regal splendour when Pharaoh arrayed him in vestures of fine linen: even so the Son of God who humbled Himself even to the death of the cross, God has highly exalted; He who was clothed with humility is now arrayed in majesty and crowned with glory and with honour and on day, before HIM every knee shall bow, even as the sons of Jacob bowed before Joseph when his dream was fulfilled.

Today we acknowledge God's Son to be the TRIUMPH-

ANT SAVIOUR, because like Joseph of old, HE is now the Saviour of the world Who has brought to all men the 'Bread of life' for Himself said 'I am the living bread' and has brought us salvation and satisfaction so that we 'should not perish but have everlasting life.' Joseph was honoured by Pharaoh, but God hath exalted His Son' to be a Prince and a Saviour.' (Acts 5.31).

Like Joseph we learn that our Saviour is a WISE STATESMAN. Remembering how the sons of Jacob were condemned by their sin and humiliated before 'the governor of the land,' we find that judgement was tempered with mercy because after three days in prison they were given full sacks and their money returned.

The 'House of Israel' is suffering for their sin of rejecting their Messiah and crucifying 'the Lord of Glory.' (1 Cor. 2.8): but Christ's judgements are also blended with mercy, HE still calls them 'My brethren' and as His chosen earthly people are the objects of His 'everlasting love.' (Jer. 31.3).

When Joseph appeared to his brethren the first time we read 'they knew him not' (although he knew them) but it was on their second visit that 'Joseph made himself known' and said 'I am Joseph.'

Tragically, the Jewish nation 'knew not' Jesus as their Messiah when He appeared unto them the first time. Only a few, like Peter acknowledged who He was and confessed 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.'

However when the Christ of God appears 'the second time without sin unto salvation' (Heb. 9.28) like Joseph HE will make Himself known to 'His brethren' not as the Man of Sorrows but as the true Messiah of Israel the Lord of Hosts. In that day the nation of Israel like Jacob's sons, shall be troubled at His presence (Zech. 12.10), then will be a time of national mourning and repentance, but soon their sorrow shall turn into joy when they acknowledge the true Messiah as King of Righteousness and King of Peace.

The government of Egypt was entirely in the hand Joseph, so likewise in a coming day the Scripture regarding our risen LORD shall be fulfilled, 'The government shall be upon His shoulder' (sa. 9.6) and the world will be under the control of a wiser than Joseph, for when our Saviour reigns on the Throne of David it will be with a greater

wisdom than Solomon, for with righteousness He shall judge the world (nations) and His people (the Jews) with equity.

We cannot close our meditation without affirming that the Son of God, the Messiah of Israel and the Saviour of the world will 'in that day' be **ABSOLUTE SOVEREIGN**, the supreme ruler of the nations. Joseph confessed that throughout all his experiences God was working out His purpose (Gen. 45.7,8) which was for the blessing and salvation of His people Israel, and so with the Christ of God for we read in Acts 2.23 that what HE endured at the hand of evil men was all by 'the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God' and He Who was once crucified, God hath made 'both Lord and Christ.' (Acts 2.36).

Maybe the day is not far distant when our Saviour shall be revealed in all His majesty and glory and acclaimed 'King of Kings and Lord of Lords' thus fulfilling the prophecy of Zechariah 'In that day the LORD shall be King over all the earth.'

During His sovereign reign in the Millennium the Nation of Israel shall be united having 'one king' (Ezek. 37.22) and shall dwell in 'their own land' (Ezek. 37.21) 'The Land of Promise' as made by covenant to the patriarch Abraham. 'Alleluia : for the LORD GOD omnipotent reigneth.'

(Rev. 19.6)

ISAIAH'S PORTRAITS OF CHRIST

by J. FLANIGAN (Belfast)

3—"THE BRANCH" (Chapter 11)

Isaiah is not the only Old Testament prophet to portray our Lord as the Branch. Jeremiah and Zechariah are also familiar with this title of Messiah. The Hebrew word is "Netzar," and some have imagined a connection with "Nazarene." This is perhaps strained, but it is an interesting suggestion.

The early verses of Isaiah 11 are reminiscent of the golden Lampstand of Tabernacle and Temple. That Lampstand had a central stem with six branches. Three pairs of branches adorned the centre stem in beautiful symmetry, and this

lovely theme is repeated in Isaiah 11, as we shall see.

There is a sharp and striking contrast here with the closing verses of chapter 10. There the Assyrians, the enemies of Israel, are described as a haughty forest of high trees. But they are cut down by Jehovah, and there they lie. The House of David has become like a felled tree also, and note that reference to the stump of "Jesse," who was of course, David's father. The House of David has been reduced to its original Bethlehem insignificance, but a glorious thing is about to happen. While the forest thickets of the Gentiles lie as they have been felled, there springs a fresh green shoot or twig out of the stock of Jesse. A tender plant indeed, out of the parched ground of Israel; a Branch out of the roots to bear fruit for the pleasure of Jehovah. The tenderness of a Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes in Jesse's Bethlehem. The gentle quietness of a Boy and a gracious Youth brought up in despised Nazareth, a fruitful bough for God and for men.

Seven spirits are mentioned. The Spirit of Jehovah is the majestic central stem. Then follow the three pairs. There is the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding; the Spirit of Counsel and Might; the Spirit of Knowledge and the Fear of Jehovah.

"The Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon Him." The word "rest" means "to dwell; to abide; to be at home; settled." So it ever was with our Lord in abiding, unbroken communion with the Spirit. But perhaps especially do we see this as His baptism, and at the beginning of His ministry in the synagogue in Nazareth. The Spirit in bodily form as a gentle Dove abiding upon Him. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me" He read in their hearing. Note the three Divine Persons in perfect unison and harmony—(1) The Spirit (2) of Jehovah (3) upon Me. The Dove abides upon the Son while the Father approves from the heavens.

In the three pairs of branches from the central stem we have the personal, official, and moral glory of Christ. These all have been displayed in Him in His ministry here upon earth, and will be displayed again on earth when He comes in Kingdom glory to rule. This is the theme of the greater portion of this chapter. The varied glories of the Messiah, the Branch, will give character to His kingdom when He reigns. Look at these glories.

“The spirit of Wisdom and Understanding.” Wisdom and Understanding are the attributes of a Messiah who is Divine. They declare His Personal, essential, eternal glory. That the Messiah should be a Divine Person seemed impossible to the Jew. And it does yet. If the Lord their God was one Lord, and not like the many Gods of the heathen, how could the coming One be God also? This was ever their problem when our Lord claimed to be the Son of God. Rightly they saw this as a claim to Deity and this they could not accept. And this problem persists with them still, even though the first reference to God in Scripture is in the plurality of “Elohim.” (Gen. 1.1). Compare Deut. 6.4. Wisdom and Understanding have been defined as follows.

Wisdom: “The power to discern the nature of things.”

Understanding: “The ability to discern the differences.”

“The spirit of Counsel and Might.” Already, in an earlier meditation, we have seen our Lord as Counsellor, and as Mighty God. Here is a repetition of that same theme, and here is His official glory. What more necessary qualities in a ruler than Counsel and Might. How many mighty rulers have fallen for lack of counsel. How many wise rulers have fallen for lack of strength to implement what they knew to be right. These twin branches are necessary in balance. They are both in Christ. They have been defined thus—

Counsel: “The gift of forming right conclusions.”

Might: “The ability to carry them out with energy.”

“The spirit of Knowledge and of the Fear of Jehovah.” This is not knowledge in a general sense, but knowledge of Jehovah. And this knowledge of Jehovah brings with it that reverence and dignity of behaviour which is characteristic of those who know the Lord. This is all seen in perfection in the Lord Jesus. We have come to call it “His moral glory.” His knowledge of the Father was complete. He could say to the Jews, “Ye have not known Him; but I know Him” (John 8.55). It is the knowledge of one who was ever in the Father’s bosom. He knew His Father intimately. Such knowledge, based upon the fellowship of love, is accompanied by that desire to live only as pleases the Father. And so He lived. Even Christ pleased not Himself. In Him then is—

Knowledge: “Full knowledge founded on a fellowship of love.”

Fear of Jehovah: "Reverence in the joy of pleasing the Lord."

All these things make our Lord "of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord." Literally, the beautiful sense of it is this—the fear of Jehovah is fragrance to Him. He senses with delight the fragrance of the fear of the Lord. He does not, will not, judge after outward appearances; His judgments will be according as to how matters are related to Jehovah. This desire for the glory of the Lord will determine the character of the Kingdom. Girded with righteousness and faithfulness Christ will hold the sceptre in millennial glory. He will rule with impartiality and with equity. Having destroyed the Wicked One He will take His Throne. He who once was girded with swaddling bands, and with a towel, and with a purple mocking robe, and with grave clothes, will then be girded with glory to usher in an era of peace for earth.

O the glory of that Kingdom! Wolf and lamb will dwell at peace together; and leopard and kid; and calf and lion; and cow and bear. They will go to pasture together. The Prince of Peace is upon the Throne. A child will play safely at the adder's den. The infant need no more fear the viper. Let us not spiritualise these beauties away. Such conditions happened literally when our Lord was here in the flesh. They will obtain when He comes again. It is a glorious restoration of Eden with a Man upon the Throne and the creation at peace. The Root of Jesse will be the gathering centre for the nations. Jew and Gentile alike will know the blessing of that benign reign and the Saviour too shall rest in His glory.

Today in Israel the great word on many lips is the word "Aliyah." It means "The Ascent;" "The Going Up." It is the opposite to "Diaspora," the dispersion. The Nation is coming home. Israel is returning to the Land. On the 15th May, 1948 the State of Israel was formally set up. Ben Gurion declared, with deep emotion, "For two thousand years we have waited for this hour, and now it has happened . . . the State of Israel is open for the ingathering of exiles . . . it will rest upon the foundations of liberty, justice and peace, as envisaged by the prophets of Israel." Alas, it is a regathering in sad unbelief. It is not yet the "Shalom" of the millennial day. There is yet no life in the dry bones.

Nevertheless, we live in a remarkable age, when, looking back over the amazing events of the last half-century, it is difficult to believe that still there are those who do not see a future for Israel.

One day our Lord Jesus will be the gathering centre. He will assemble the outcasts of Israel and the dispersed of Judah. From the four corners of the earth they shall come; from Egypt and Assyria; from Pathros and Cush; from Elam and Shinar; from Hamath and the Islands of the Sea. Like as it was when Israel went up out of Egypt, so shall they go up again. Is it to be wondered at, that after chapter 11, comes the song of chapter 12. There is such a parallel with the redemption out of Egypt that Isaiah can only exclaim, "Sing unto the Lord for He hath done excellent things."

"Behold the Man whose name is THE BRANCH; . . . He shall build the temple of the Lord; . . . and he shall bear the glory and shall sit and rule upon his throne." Zechariah 6.12-13.

SUGGESTIVE BIBLE STUDIES

Patience in James 5

The people who provoke to impatience	Vers. 1-6
Principles and practice of patience	Vers. 7-10
The patience of Job	Verse 11
The danger of impatience	Verse 12
Preventive measures against impatience	Vers. 13-18
Results of patience in dealing with others	Vers. 19-20

The Secret of the Lord

Security of His saints	Psalm 91.1
Encouragement for His saints	Psa. 91.14-16
Care for His saints	Psalm 31.20
Revelation to His saints	Psalm 25.14
Preservation of His saints	Psalm 31.23
Thought for His saints	Psalm 31.20

The Prophet Elisha

His Call to service	1 Kings 19.19
His Consent and obedience	1 Kings 19.20-21
His Choice and equipment	2 Kings 2.9
His Condition for blessing	2 Kings 2.10-12
His Confidence in God	2 Kings 2.13-14
His Commendation from the prophets	2 Kings 2.15
His Character, one of fidelity and devotion ...	2 Kings 2.1-8

THE DOCTRINE OF HUMILITY

by J. E. TODD

It was said that the effect of Christian teaching had 'turned the world upside down' (Acts 17 : 6), or as someone has commented 'turned the world right side up'! One of the outstanding features of our Lord's teaching was to reverse the generally accepted standards of the world. The worldly 'virtues' of pride, arrogance and force He degraded to the level of sins (Matt. 20 : 20-28, 23 : 1-12); but the worldly 'vices' of gentleness, meekness and humility He elevated not just to virtues, but showed them, by His own example, to be part of the divine character! Hence Paul states the absolute necessity for each Christian to be 'renewed in the spirit of your mind' (Eph. 4 : 23). In standards of behaviour every Christian needs to be 'de-programmed' of worldly standards and then 're-educated' by the Lord's teaching. In no case is this need greater than in the doctrine of humility.

What is humility? By the world it is regarded as a weakness. The humble man is portrayed as weak in character, never exerting his rights and trampled on by everyone, an object of contempt. Unable in his weakness to achieve anything either for himself or others.

But our Lord showed by His teaching and example that humility is a power, a power so great that it is able to achieve results which no other power can.

The Lord began by showing that pride, which is the opposite of humility, is the very essence of sin. This is seen in His constant battle with the Pharisees and their arrogant religious pride. Pride is when love of self is placed first, above all other things. The law of God requires mankind to love God with our whole being and to love our neighbour as much as ourselves (Matt. 22 : 34-40). Sin is defined thus, 'Sin is the transgression of the law' (1 John 3 : 4). The pride of loving ourselves first is the contradiction of all divine law, therefore pride is the very essence of sin. It is pride, the love of self, which prevents a Christian from doing some of the works which are esteemed in the sight of God. Pride is the weakness which is powerless to rise to the spiritual heights

of stooping to perform the humble task. It is a case of, 'For that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God' (Luke 16 : 15).

Humility, in contrast to pride, can be defined as the unconscious forgetfulness of self. The unconscious aspect of humility is most important. To be conscious of our unselfishness can stimulate pride in it, and when we become proud of our humility, we become hypocrites! Beware of the man who boasts of his own humility! Humility is the liberation from all pride, self-esteem, claiming of rights, care of reputation, selfish ambition and even the fear of shame itself. Liberation from these things which can paralyse virtue.

Humility is the power to perform the mean, the monotonous and the unglamorous task. It is the power to pay the price of time and sacrifice to do the unnoticed and unrewarded task. It is the power to serve to God and others in those things which are considered to be 'beneath one's dignity.'

The most important fact about humility, as shown by our Lord's example, is that it is an aspect of the divine character. O that we could grasp that fact. We are exhorted to have the same humble attitude as the Lord Jesus Christ. He veiled His divine glory and became a servant. As a Man He further humbled Himself and became obedient to the extent of dying, even to execution on a cross (see Phil. 2 : 3-8). It was humility which enabled God the Son to lay aside all that was rightfully His (except His deity, He could not cease to be Himself) and become a Man. An atom of pride would have prevented this. But not only did He in humility become a Man, as a Man obeyed even to the point of death, the shameful death by crucifixion as a convicted criminal.

Thus humility gave its greatest display of power at the cross. 'Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously' (1 Pet. 2 : 23). No flash of pride, no self-esteem, no claiming of His rights, no selfish ambition, not even shame itself could force Him to relent, by the sheer power of His humility He was prepared to suffer such a death for the sake of others. 'Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree.' (1 Pet. 2 : 24).

In both these passages of scripture which declare His humility, His humility is set before us, as Christians, as an example to follow. 'Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.' (Phil. 2 : 5). 'For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps.' (1 Pet. 2 : 21).

Where are we to find such humility for ourselves? It is found only in the divine sinless character of our Lord. He was the One who laid aside His garments, took the water and the towel and washed His disciples feet. The work of the meanest slave, voluntarily and spontaneously undertaken. Yet again, this incident is set before us as an example. 'If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet: ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.' (John 13 : 14-15). As we contemplate the glory of the Lord's humility, the Holy Spirit can change us into that likeness. 'But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.' (2 Cor. 3 : 18). His exercise of His control over our lives is our only hope of reflecting the glory of His humility as we yield our lives to Him. 'Yield yourselves . . . as instruments.' (Rom. 6 : 13).

We are to trust in the power of the Spirit of Christ within us to give us the power of humility. The power to forsake pride, self-esteem, rights, reputation, ambition and even the fear of shame. The power to obey Christ in the service of our fellows, even when the task is mean, monotonous and unglamorous. When no one even notices, compliments or rewards the effort. When the task is considered by others to be beneath their dignity. To continue when one is criticized because other consciences are pricked! That humility which is the power to do ANYTHING necessary for obedience to the Lord and the welfare of His people, and does it eagerly and without prompting or praise.

'Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister (servant); and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant (slave): even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister (serve).' (Matt. 20 : 26-28).

'He that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.' (Matt. 23 : 11-12).

COMMITTEE NOTES

Retrospection at the end of each year brings with it, as always, a sense of sadness as we survey the misery, grief and sorrow, caused by the wickedness of man — the anguish and dark despair resulting from man's rebellion, whether open or secret, against God.

The categories of sin in Romans 1 and the amazing parallel in the last days, as foretold by Paul the apostle in II Timothy 3, clearly indicate that the passage of time, however long, does not change the human heart.

Yet it must be acknowledged, prevailing conditions do have their effect on God's people. The words of the Lord Jesus spring readily to mind "and because iniquity shall abound the love of many shall wax cold" (Matt. 24 : 12). We do well to heed the warning.

Like the dark days of the judges, however, the conditions only serve as a black background against which God will display His grace. The clearest witness to this surely is the preaching of the Gospel to this latest hour and God in His long suffering giving man space to repent.

We are grateful to God in His patience to us. Such is His goodness that He deserves infinitely more from us than He demands from us.

We recall His faithfulness throughout another year of Assembly Testimony and wish to express our appreciation for all the helpful contributions by our brethren — such contributions involve, time, study and thought.

Our thanks go to the saints who help in the maintaining of the magazine by their practical fellowship.

We are also grateful for the continuing assistance of our brother Robert Martin who so ably "gives account" for us. To the editor (for whom we pray for a full recovery from his recent illness) and to the assistant editor, and secretary who give so diligently of their time, we record our gratitude.

As we enter another year in the will of God, we trust, that the ministry contained in the Assembly Testimony will continue to preserve and edify His people in Assembly gatherings until He come.

ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY BOOKLET

A series of articles by Jim Flanigan on the Revelation appeared in this magazine over the period 1980 — 1984. In conjunction with Gospel Tract Publications these articles have been produced in booklet form. This booklet is available from:

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THOUGHTS OF CHRIST

(for the busy Housewife) No. 3

BY ERIC G. PARMENTER, CLEVEDON

The many afflictions and sorrows which compassed the Saviour on earth added no new qualities to Him, they only served to reveal that which was already inherent in Him. The meekness which the Lord manifested on the cross, or in Pilate's Judgement Hall, was not more perfect than that which marked Him as He grew up beneath the care of Joseph and Mary when "He went down with them . . . and was subject to them" sharing their low estate.

Moses was the meekest of men, and yet in meekness failed, speaking inadvisedly with his lips: John, the beloved disciple, who so well appreciated the value of love, was one of them who wished to call down fire from heaven; but our beloved Lord, under all circumstances was ever the same. The unchanging and unchangeable Christ.

The exhibitions of the meekness of Christ were all in the power of the Holy Spirit. Every word spoken, every feeling expressed was in that power and when He was searched by the fires of Calvary God delighted in a purity that was perfect in its fragrance — His motives were pure, His service was fragrant. God alone evaluated and gave a true assessment of the worth of Jesus the perfect servant "Behold My Servant, mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth."

THOU ART THE SAME

Pole and pole, circled Equator,
Measured earth, by the Creator,
Fish, Fowl, beasts, stars in their courses
Acknowledge Who wrought their resources.
He Who stretched out the curtained skies
Confounds the wisdom of the wise.
He Who made me so fearfully,
Together fashioned wondrously,
Who by His power all things upholds,
Preserves the flocks within their folds,
Call His Own sheep, the stars by name,
Of Him 'tis said "Thou art the Same,
Yesterday, today, forever
I AM the LORD, I change not" — never

— JOHN GLENVILLE

“O LORD OF HEAVEN AND EARTH AND SEA”

CHRISTOPHER WORDSWORTH (1807 — 1885)

The congregation of the little country parish church at Standford-in-the-Vale cum Goosey in Berkshire, England, had been very niggardly in their giving and week by week the collections remained meagre. At length and with exercise of heart, their minister, Christopher Wordsworth spoke to them of the duty and privilege of giving and finally decided to write for them a hymn. The hymn, consisting originally of nine stanzas, was sung repeatedly in that little Berkshire church and besides achieving a very practical outcome, has come down to us in all its richness and beauty,

“O Lord of heaven, and earth, and sea,
To Thee all praise and glory be;
How shall we show our love to Thee,
Giver of all?

The golden sunshine, vernal air,
Sweet flowers and fruits, Thy love declare;
Where harvests ripen, Thou art there,
Giver of all.

Thou didst not spare Thine only Son,
But gav'st Him for a world undone;
And freely with that blesséd One
Thou givest all.

We lose what on ourselves we spend,
We have as treasure without end
Whatever, Lord, to Thee we lend,
Who givest all.

Whatever, Lord, we lend to Thee
Repaid a thousandfold will be;
Then gladly will we give to Thee,
Giver of all.”

Christopher Wordsworth was the nephew of the famous poet-laureate, William Wordsworth, and the son of Christopher and Priscilla Wordsworth. He was born on October 30th, 1807 at Lambeth, the youngest of three brothers, all of whom in later years gained high distinction as prize men at their universities.

Christopher's education was first at Winchester and later at Trinity College, Cambridge. He matriculated at Trinity College in 1826 and following a brilliant career there, in which he carried off an unprecedented number of university and college prizes, graduated with many honours in 1830. On graduation he was elected a Fellow of the College and engaged as Classical Lecturer and in 1836 was chosen as Public Orator for the university. During his Trinity days, he travelled widely in Greece and the record of his travels he published in his "Athens and Attica" (1836).

In 1836, Wordsworth was elected Headmaster of Harrow School, an outstanding distinction for someone still under 30 years of age. In 1844, he was appointed by Sir Robert Peel as Canon of Westminster and two years later, he accepted the living of Stamford-in-the-Vale cum Goosey where for 19 years he ministered faithfully as vicar in that quiet parish in Berkshire. In 1869, he was elected Bishop of Lincoln, a post which he held for 15 years, resigning just a few months before his death on the 21st March, 1885.

Christopher Wordsworth has been described as, "a fine scholar, a great and good man." He was renowned as the most celebrated Greek scholar of his day, and with an enormous working capacity he became a prolific writer. In 1851, he published his "Memoirs of William Wordsworth," a fitting record of the great poet of Rydal Mount with whom he had kept in close touch over the years by visitation and by pen right up till his uncle's death in 1850. His monumental work "A Commentary on the whole Bible," which might have been a long life's labour for any scholar, was completed in the years 1856 — 1870, and in this notable commentary Wordsworth makes scripture interpret scripture. Other publications appeared with regularity and included, besides books, volumes of sermons, tracts, pamphlets, letters, addresses and speeches.

As a hymnwriter, Christopher Wordsworth contributed with distinction. He regarded, "the first duty of a hymn-writer to teach sound doctrine." The subject matter of his verse was varied and he wrote hymns for almost every season of the church's year. These he compiled and published in 1862 as "The Holy Year" which was in essence a calendar of hymns containing 117 of his own compositions and 82 hymns from other sources. Francis Arthur Jones says of Wordsworth that he "wrote his hymns at all sorts of odd moments and in all sorts of places — in the train, riding or during a walk. If at night he was unable to sleep, he would get up and compose a few

verses. The hymns were written on the backs of envelopes, small scraps of sermon paper or even on the margin of the book he happened to be reading. He was an extremely rapid writer but spared no pains in correcting till the composition satisfied him."

Of Wordsworth, as a hymnwriter and as a man, John Ellerton has this to say, "Christopher Wordsworth, Bishop of Lincoln, is one of whom we certainly do not just think as a writer of hymns but as a great scholar, a diligent and careful expositor, an accurate theologian and controversialist, a great and wise ruler in the church and a most holy, humble, loving, self-denying man. And the man is reflected in his verse. To read one of his best hymns is to look into a plain face, without one striking feature, but with an irresistible charm of honesty, intelligence and affection."

Great hymns full of great truth have come from Wordsworth's pen, and include:

— "See the Conqueror mounts in triumph," telling of the glorious ascension of the Lord Jesus

— "Gracious Spirit, Holy Ghost," paraphrasing the apostle Paul's great chapter on love (1 Cor. 13)

— "The Galilean Fishers toil," portraying the Lord Jesus, coming, as of old, in the dark experiences of life

— "O Day of rest and gladness," speaking of the blessedness and beauty of the Lord's day and

— "Hark! the sound of holy voices," picturing the redeemed of the ages, beyond tribulation and engaged in triumphant song.

"O Lord of heaven and earth and sea" is Wordsworth's best known hymn. In it, he speaks of the greatness and of the goodness of God. All creation, daily and in every land, are the recipients of His beneficence. Egerton Young, who opened up the Nelson river district with the gospel was one day surrounded by 300 wild Indians. He read aloud to them and for some four hours expounded the sublime truth of John 3:16 that, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." Their hearts were touched. They had never heard it before. When he had finished the principal chief stepped forward and spoke, "Missionary," he said, "God . . . I see His goodness in giving us the moose, the reindeer, the beaver and the bear. I see His loving-kindness in sending us, when the south winds blow, the ducks and geese; and when the snow and ice melt away, and our lakes and rivers are open again, I see how He fills them with fish. I have watched all this for years, and I have felt that

the Great Spirit, so kind and watchful and loving . . . but what you have just said fills my heart and satisfies my longing . . ."

Truly God is the "giver of All" — of this there can be no dispute for He has given His Son and "how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Rom. 8 v. 32).

Such beneficence can never be fully repaid. Nevertheless, our hearts have been touched by its bounty and would like to give something in return. Whatever we give, however, is merely a sending back of what God has already given to us. David, at the close of life, after he had poured out all his treasure unto the Lord freely admitted, "For all things come of Thee, and of thine own have we given Thee" (1 Chr. 29 : 14), "O Lord our God, all this store . . . cometh of thine hand and is all thine own." (1 Chr. 29 : 16).

Nor is God only the Great Giver. He will yet be the great Recompenser.

"Whatever, Lord, we lend to Thee
Repaid a thousandfold will be;
Then gladly will we give to Thee,
Giver of all."

ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY

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ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY



Contents

EDITOR'S NOTE

CHRIST IN THE APOCALYPSE

by John B. D. Page

ISAIAH'S PORTRAITS OF CHRIST

by J. Flanigan

FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTALS

by J. B. Hewitt

NO SELF-SEEKING by W. W. Fereday

THE GREAT TRIBULATION by Ernest Barker

DO WE NEED TO RE-THINK OUR MISSIONS?

by Jim Jardine

REVIEWS by A. M. S. Gooding

TALKS TO YOUNG BELIEVERS

by John Ritchie

THE PRESENCE OF GOD

by J. B. Currie

WHEN THE REAPING TIME COMES

by George Muller

THOUGHTS OF CHRIST

by Eric G. Parmenter

HYMNS AND THEIR WRITERS

by Jack Strahan

Tune — O WORSHIP THE KING. 5.5.5.5.6.5.6.5

Except the LORD watch,
Except the LORD keep,
In vain do we search
And forfeit our sleep.
The LORD is our keeper
He sees from above,
Rejoice then O weeper
And rest in His love.

In vain do we turn
To man for our aid
And painfully learn
The error we made.
The LORD is our Helper
We certainly know,
A haven of shelter
When stormy winds blow.

We praise Thee, O Thou
Preserver of men,
Thy goodness bestow
Upon us again.
Thou source of all blessing,
The endless supply
Of mercy unceasing,
To Thee do we cry.

Thy bountiful hand
Will always provide,
Thy wisdom has planned
Our footsteps to guide.
O Infinite Giver
Of solace unpriced,
All things and forever
Have reached us in CHRIST.

J. M. Jones (Toowoomba).

EDITOR'S NOTE

HE THAT SHALL COME, WILL COME, AND WILL NOT TARRY

(Hebrews 10 : 37)

Another milestone in our pilgrimage has passed! The path of the just is as a shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. The valley may be dark and long. The storm clouds may gather, the valley be filled with tears, but 'tis true "the glory shines before us!" He whose glory was to Paul light brighter than the noon day sun will soon burst upon our sight. Not as He will to Israel and the nations as the "Sun of Righteousness with healing in His wings" but as the "Bright and Morning Star." Did He not say, "I am the Root and Offspring of David and the Bright and Morning Star" and He added "Surely I come quickly."

The darkness deepens. Satanic activity increases. The world staggers to its doom. Evil men and seducers wax worse. Wickedness increases as in Lot's day. The love of many waxes cold. Many openly deny the truths they once professed to love. The gospel that is preached is so often "another Gospel." The saints are discouraged, disallusioned, divided, depressed, despised — but

"BEHOLD HE COMETH"

This blessed hope illumines with beams most cheering the hours of night!

LOOK UP!

"Therefore let us who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breast plate of faith and love; and for a helmet the hope of Salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him."

May I wish all my readers Gods richest blessing throughout the remaining days. Thank you for all your prayers, which God has graciously answered in raising me up again.

CHRIST IN THE APOCALYPSE (22)

by JOHN B. D. PAGE

THE CELESTIAL CITY (3)

The Lamb in the City

Reading : Revelation 21.9 to 22.5.

It was in the heavenly city that the seer saw the Lamb finally. Christ is designated as such seven times in this paragraph and, in this millennial setting, He was seen in connection with His "wife" (21.9), His "twelve apostles" whose names were engraved upon the city's twelve foundations (21.4), His "book of life" inscribed with all the names of those allowed to enter the city (21.27) and so forth. But interestingly, the fourth and central occurrence reads, "the Lamb is the Light thereof" (21.24), signifying that He Himself is the sole source of the city's illumination.

Between the first mention in Revelation of the Lamb in the fourth chapter and these last references to Him in the book, the scene is the seven years of tribulation (chs. 6-18), being the interval between the rapture of the Church and Messiah's coming with power and great glory to set up His kingdom on the earth. A glance at these intervening Scriptures, not necessarily all, to the Lamb reveals certain aspects of His character and activities during that appalling period.

Transported in thought to the tribulation, still future, John saw people terrified by the "wrath of the Lamb" and some cried for the rocks to fall upon them whilst others hid in mountain caves for shelter (6.16ff). In contrast to the gloom and darkness of that terrible time of divine indignation on the earth, there was glory and brightness in heaven when a vast concourse of martyrs drawn from all nations, who had responded to the godly Jews' preaching of the gospel of the kingdom "stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes", and they cried with a loud voice attributing their "salvation to . . . God . . . upon the throne and unto the Lamb" (7.9ff,14).

At Satan's expulsion from the atmospheric heaven to the earth after the lapse of three and a half years of the tribulation, there was not only joy in heaven at the kingdom being potentially Christ's but also for the martyrs who "overcame him by the blood of the Lamb"

(12.9-11). This demonstrates the efficacy of the blood of Calvary, extending beyond this age of grace, for victory over Satan and, as indicated earlier, for salvation (7.14).

Looking again, John saw that "the Lamb stood on Mount Zion" in the midst of a redeemed company of Jews. In spite of gross immorality and wickedness around them, they had kept themselves undefiled, having the sole purpose in life to "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth", and they are described as "the firstfruits unto God and unto the Lamb" (14.1-5, R.V.).

At the close of the tribulation, seven years filled with human tragedy and divine vengeance, a confederacy of ten kings, likened to ten horns for their power, "Shall make war with the Lamb" and in spite of their military might, "the Lamb shall overcome them". Victory is assured for the Lamb, because He is about to be "Lord of lords, and King of kings" upon the earth (17.14).

These cameos of Christ depict Him not as the Lamb suffering at Calvary but as the Lamb, vested with sovereign power, exercising His authority over His opponents and showing mercy to the repentant.

An interesting link is found between the first mention of the word "lamb" in the Old Testament and John's use of the word as a title of Christ. As the aged patriarch Abraham trudged up Mount Moriah, his young son Isaac, directing his father's attention to the fire and the wood, asked him, "Where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" In reply, Abraham said, "God will provide Himself the lamb for a burnt offering" (Gen. 22.7ff, R.V.), which was a striking answer. If the pronoun "Himself" had followed immediately the noun "God" for emphasis and forming part of the subject for the verb "provide", then Abraham's response to the question would have applied only to the immediate provision of a lamb for sacrifice on Moriah. Significantly, the pronoun "Himself" follows the verb "provide", being part of the predicate of the sentence, and so Abraham spoke prophetically of God providing Himself in Christ as the Lamb.

"Where is the lamb?", asked the lad. Dispensationally, the answer came centuries later from John the Baptist who, seeing Jesus coming to him, proclaimed to the crowd around, "Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1.29). The

definite article used with the word "Lamb" identifies the Person as the fulfilment of the patriarch's prophetic utterance whilst the words "of God" following the proper noun "Lamb" indicate that the Lamb is of God's providing as foretold by Abraham. Remarkably, this first mention of the Lamb in the New Testament reveals the purpose of the divine provision — that of sacrifice, the scope of which extends beyond the bounds of Israel even unto the world.

"Where is the Lamb?", we may repeat. In reply, keeping to the writings of John who is the principal user of this Christological title, the Apocalyptic seer said, "I behold, and lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, . . ." (Rev. 5.6). The Lamb, no longer dying in the midst of thieves and malefactors at Calvary, is now alive and exalted, standing in the midst of celestial beings in the heavenly sanctuary.

"Where is the Lamb?" for the last time we ask. Turning to the seer's last vision for answering the question, the Lamb is in the celestial city, descending from heaven. John knew that, in his day, all sacred cities had a central square where the temple stood on the site of supreme honour, to which pilgrims wended their way for worship. Upon entering the city's square ("street", A.V.), which was of translucent pure gold, the seer remarked instantly, "I saw no temple therein" and, for this unusual feature, he gives the reason, "for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it" (21.21ff). His interest was not in the temple and its courts as buildings but in the sanctuary as the abode of God, which is the significance of the Greek word *naos* used here. Interestingly, in view of this last occurrence of the word, never again will the Lord be enshrined in a sanctuary, into which neither priest nor worshipper could enter. But this sanctuary is identified as the Lord God and the Lamb, whose presence will pervade the whole city and unto whom there will be unrestricted access.

Upon the millennial earth below, there will be the temple with its courts in Jerusalem (Ezek. 40.6 to 41.26) and the holy of holies of that edifice will be filled with the glory of the Lord (Ezek. 43.5). As the Lord's dealings with Israel differ from those with the Church and as Israel does not enjoy the close relationship with the Lord as the Church does, there will be unlimited access for either priest or worshipper during the kingdom age.

Returning in thought to the heavenly city, J. N. Darby in his hymn may well express the worship that will be ascribed by the glorified saints to the exalted Lord :

'Praise the Lamb!' the chorus waking,
All in heaven together throng;
Loud and far, each tongue partaking,
Rolls around the endless song.'

(To be continued).

ISAIAH'S PORTRAITS OF CHRIST

by J. FLANIGAN (Belfast)

4—"THE ROCK"

On the historic 14th May 1948 a little group of leading Jews in Palestine was engaged in a struggle of words.

On the afternoon of that day the new Israel was to be born and the declaration of sovereignty was to be broadcast to the world. But there were problems with the wording of the proclamation. Some of these Jews were atheistic; they would refuse to sign the document if it contained any mention of the Name of God. On the other hand, some of them were devoutly religious, orthodox, and they would refuse to sign if the Name of God was not included on such an historic paper.

The proclamation was due to be read at 4 p.m. After 2 p.m. they were still locked in argument. Then came the compromise. After the solemn declaration of the independence and sovereignty of the new Israeli State, the statement concluded with the avowal that it was "with trust in the Rock of Israel" that the signatures were penned to the document.

Each individual in the group chose his own interpretation of "The Rock of Israel". The orthodox among them correctly saw it as a Divine Title. The atheists viewed it as describing Israel's military might and national rock-like determination. That such a dilemma should ever have arisen, in such a place, and at such a time, is sad. That such a compromised solution should have been necessary is tragic.

The promise given in Isaiah 28.16 of a tried and tested foundation Stone is very precious to the believer. It will be precious to the remnant of a future day. For them the promise was initially intended. When the unbelieving Nation shall have made its covenant with death; when, in the days of Antichrist, that unholy alliance is trusted as a refuge, and fails; and when the waters of judgement shall sweep away that refuge of lies like an overflowing scourge; in that day Jehovah will lay in Zion a sure foundation for the remnant of His people. In the midst of judgement there will be salvation, just as in the deluge of Noah's day the ark was lifted safe above the waters.

But the believer today is already resting on that same Rock. The assembly, whether locally (1 Cor. 3.9-11), or in its widest form (Matt. 16.18), is built on Christ. And so too, is the individual believer, (Matt. 7.24). We have come, prematurely, but in the purpose of God, into the enjoyment of that sure foundation. Just as we have come, beforehand, into all the privileges and blessings of a Covenant which has yet to be ratified with the Nation in a future day, so have we come, before them, to an appreciation of the Rock of Israel.

However, it is important to notice that in the scriptures referred to, Matthew 16, and 1 Corinthians 3, the builders are not the same.

In Matthew 16, (first reference to the assembly, the ecclesia) Christ Himself is the builder. He is the Son of the Living God, the Christ, and as such is the firm Rock upon which He, personally, will establish the new assembly. He says, "I will build My Church". Every stone built into this, upon Him, and by Him, is a living stone (1 Peter 2.5). There is no inferior material. The building cannot fail. Not all the powers of the Satanic kingdom can prevail against it. It must endure. It cannot be divided or destroyed. It is universal, mystical, spiritual, eternal, unassailable, impregnable, invincible and indestructible. It takes character from the Builder Himself, Who is also its chief corner Stone, elect and precious.

The local assembly is not so. Though also built on Christ it must be distinguished. Here it is men who lay the foundation; and it is men who build. Local building is our responsibility, and as with all else that is committed to man, there is the inevitable failure. We can rejoice when gold and silver and precious stones are built in; this is

how it ought to be. But wood and grass and straw there is almost sure to be when the human builders become careless.

The fire will ultimately discern it all, but let us even now be diligent. Let us build quality into the local testimony. Let us jealously guard the work. The questionable methods of modern evangelism; the lightsome attraction of musical innovations; the fleshly appeal of intellectualism; these are shoddy workmanship. Such does not augur well for the soundness of the building. Let us beware the alarming looseness of attitudes towards the denominations of Christendom; the increasing tendency to occasional and casual reception to the assembly; the apparent failure to recognise the unique separateness of the assembly; and the trend towards "Outreaches", "Training Centres", "Organisations", and "Associations", which are "extra" to the assembly. These do not help towards solid, reliable building of a local testimony to His Name.

Let us be true to our dignity as builders, feeling the weight of the responsibility committed to us. Let us build according to the character of the Foundation Himself, that which has the approval of His Word. Let us clear away the rubbish (Nehemiah 2.14), and build that which, in our several localities, will be according to the pattern and for His pleasure and glory.

"Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid . . . Jesus Christ. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon". (1 Corinthians 3.10,11).

There are several other interesting aspects of the Rock. Christ is not only the Sure Rock upon which we build; He is also the Sheltering, Shadowing Rock, in which we hide from the storm (Isaiah 32.2). He is the Smitten Rock from which we drink (1 Corinthians 1. 4); and He is the Stumbling Stone over which many will stumble and perish (1 Peter 2.8). One day He will be the Smiting Stone, crushing the final form of Gentile world power (Daniel 2.34), and grinding to powder those proud sinners who refuse to fall upon Him for mercy (Matthew 21.44). Ours is the blessing of being steadfastly built upon the Rock of Israel.

What blessing indeed, that those who were but poor Gentile strangers are able to sing with Israel's King David, "O Jehovah, my Rock, and my Redeemer". (Psalm 19.14. JND).

FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTALS

by J. B. HEWITT, Chesterfield

(49) SALVATION

Salvation is possibly the greatest evangelical theme in the Bible. It is of infinite proportions, the most inclusive word of all. It gathers into itself all the redemptive acts and processes — as redemption, propitiation, grace, forgiveness, justification, sanctification and glorification. It is described as great (Heb. 2.3), common (Jude 3), eternal (Heb. 5.9; Isa. 45.17; 51.6), with eternal glory (2 Tim. 1. 10). Salvation of God (Jonah 2.9), ascribed to God (Isa. 12.2), and the supreme mission of the Lord Jesus (Luke 19.10).

INTRODUCTION. Taking a telescopic view of this subject we note the following :— Pre-eminently thought by God as to its origination (Jonah 2.9; Acts 28.28). Peered into by prophets in their investigation (1 Peter 1.10). Plainly taught in man's ruination (Gen. 3.6, 8; Tit. 3.3-8). Patiently sought in man's reformation (Gen. 3.7; Tit. 3.5). Purposely taught in Christ's Incarnation (Matt. 1.21; 1 Tim. 1.15). Perfectly wrought by Christ's propitiation (Rom. 3.24, 25; 1 John 2.2). Persistently fought by Satan's opposition (Mk. 4. 15; 2 Cor. 4.4; 1 Thess. 2.18). Precisely brought by grace in its manifestation (Tit. 2.11). Personally possessed by faith's appropriation (Acts 16.31; Eph. 2.8). Eternal in its duration (Isa. 45.17; Heb. 5.9) and permanently ends in glorification (Phil. 3.20, 21).

RUIN — THE WHY OF SALVATION. Man is dominated by the Devil (Eph. 2.2; 1 John 5.19). Is an enemy, ungodly and a sinner (Rom. 5.10, 6,8). He is far off, and in darkness (Eph. 2.13; 4.18, 5.8). Man is ruined spiritually; he is dead (Eph. 2.1). He is ruined mentally; in the dark, blinded by the god of this age (2 Cor. 4.4), needing the light of the Gospel of Christ (2 Cor. 4.5). Ruined morally, he is degraded (Eph. 2.3; Tit. 3.3), he needs emancipation (Col. 1.13). Ruined totally (Rom. 5.6; 1Cor. 5.9,10) he needs deliverance (Heb. 2.14,15). Ruined eternally, he is doomed unless he trusts Christ for salvation (Rom. 5.8, 9; John

1.12; Acts 4.12; 2 Thess. 2.8,9). Luke 15 portrays man's lost condition; Like the "sheep" — naturally lost (vs. 3-7), iniquity or the inherent tendency of the heart. The "silver" helplessly lost (vs. 8-10), sin missing the mark. The lost "son" wilfully lost (vs. 11-24), transgression, disobedience to law.

RANSOM — THE WORK OF SALVATION. Job 33. 24; 1 Tim. 2.6. This great salvation is the greatest manifestation of God's power to deliver (Acts 26.18; Eph. 1.19,20). It was planned by God before the world began (2 Tim. 1.9; Eph. 1.4; 1 Peter 1.20). It was purposed in the coming Christ; Jesus is His saving name; (Matt. 1.21; 1 Tim. 1.15; 2.6; 2 Tim. 2.10). Provided by the blood, the death of Christ (Matt. 20.28; Acts 20.28). He gave His life a ransom for us in order to save us (Eph. 1.7; 2 Cor. 5.21; 1 Pet. 1.19). We have been purchased by His precious blood (Acts 20.28; 1 Cor. 6.20).

Procured by the Resurrection of Christ (Acts 2.31,32; Rom. 4.24,25; 10.9; 1 Cor. 15.3,4). Salvation is not something but Someone (Psa. 27.1; 62.2; Isa. 12.2; Luke 2.30).

REPENTANCE—THE WAY OF SALVATION. Mark 1.4,15. This was presented clearly by the Saviour (Matt. 4.17; Mk. 1.15; Luke 13.3,5). It was preached continually by the Apostles (Acts 2.38; 3.19; 11.18; 20.21). Repentance is indispensable to salvation. It is commanded by God (Acts 17.30). It is the first step in the souls return of God. (e.g. Manasseh a proud, godless, wicked man repented (2 Chron. 33.1-20).

RELATION — THE WONDERS OF SALVATION. Salvation is not confined to what takes place at conversion. God's salvation covers the past, includes the present, and embraces the future (2 Cor. 1.9b,10).

THE PAST — SAVED FROM THE GUILT AND PENALTY OF SIN. Luke 7.50. The tidings of salvation. (Acts 13.26). It is universal in its offer. Irrespective of nationality, position or condition (Mk. 16.15; John 3.16; Acts 10.34; 20.21; Rom. 1.16; 1 Cor. 1.24; 2 Tim. 1.9).

The truth of salvation; an eternal salvation (Eph. 3.11). A common salvation, meaning it is for all, none are excluded (Jude 3). A powerful salvation (Luke 1.69, 77,78; Col. 1.13,14). The terms of salvation. Faith in the Saviour (John 1.12; 3.36; 5.24; Acts 4.12;

Eph. 2.8,9). The time of salvation (Luke 19 : 9; 2 Cor. 6 : 2). "Now is the day of salvation. This very moment. It is a present and personal salvation. It brings deliverance from sin, wrath, the Devil and external death (1 John 3.5; Rom 5.9; Heb. 2.14; John 3.36).

THE PRESENT — SAVED FROM THE POWER OF SIN. Rom 5.10 — Through the present life of Christ in heaven (Rom 6.6, 7,14). Saved daily by the Intercession of Christ (Rom 8.34; Heb. 7.24,25). Saved from sin's government as well as its guilt (Rom. 6.18,22). Saved instrumentally by the Scriptures (Jas. 1.21; 1 Pet. 2.2; John 17.17, 19; Psa. 119.9). Experimentally by waiting on God (Psa. 27.4,5; 37.7; 40.1; Prov. 20.22). Saved by the contemplation of Christ (2 Cor. 3.18).

THE FUTURE — SAVED FROM THE PRESENCE OF SIN. Rom. 13.11; Phil. 3.20,21 The Lord Jesus is the Captain of our salvation, bringing us to glory (Heb. 2.10). The Author of an eternal salvation, we can never be lost (Heb. 5.9). When He comes to the air for us, He will save us from sin within, and from the presence of sin around us. This is announced to us "nearer than when we believed". (Rom. 13.11). It is appointed for us, and will be realised when we meet Him in the air (1 Thess. 5.9).

Later He will restore the preserved of Israel (Isa. 49.6). The redemption of the body is anticipated by us (Phil. 3.20,21; Rom. 8.18-23). As to the past, we are saved by the sacrifice of Christ (Heb. 9.26). Presently we are saved by His Intercession in heaven (Rom. 8.34; Heb. 7.25; 9.24). Any moment now the last aspect of salvation will be completed (Heb. 9.28; Rom. 8.23; 1 Cor. 15.51-54).

Numbers 21.1-9 is a good illustration of salvation. Verses 8,9 is the turning point. Any one who looked upon the serpent on the pole, lived. Their salvation was SIMPLE — only a look; EFFECTIVE — when he looked he lived ; it was IMMEDIATE — when he looked, it was EXCLUSIVE — no other remedy; INCLUSIVE — for everyone who looked, and it was PERSONAL — it was when HE looked. All this was TYPICAL — (John 3.14,15), and CERTAIN (Acts 4.12).

Make an acrostic on S.A.L.V.A.T.I.O.N. and find nine things from the teaching given in this manuscript.

NO SELF-SEEKING

by W. W. FEREDAY

It was really contemptible on the part of James and John (with their mother) to ask of the Lord right and left hand places in His kingdom (Matt. 20.21). He had just spoken to the twelve disciples of His impending agony. His language was most explicit. "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn Him to death, and shall deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify Him; and the third day He shall rise again." Why had they not understood these plain words? He was on His way just then to a cross, not to a throne. The fact is their minds were so self-centred, and so occupied with worldly ambition, that they paid no proper heed to what He said. What an insight into the human heart is here! Yet those men were true believers in the One whom men despised and the nation abhorred (Isa. 49.7). Neither reader nor writer of these lines is one whit better than James and John. Self has many insidious forms; and when self fills our thoughts, a deep moral gulf is created between us and the Lord we love, and His words lose all their meaning to our hearts.

The request of Zebedee's sons is the more distressing and repulsive when we recall what the Lord had promised but a little before to the whole apostolic band. In reply to Peter's enquiry "Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed Thee; what shall we have therefore?" the Lord replied, "Verily, I say unto you, that ye which have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Thus thrones had been actually promised James and John at the Lord's coming again; but such was their condition of mind that even this amazing promise of grace did not satisfy them. They must needs have thrones superior to all the rest of the disciples! Mary the Lord's mother never presumed as the mother of Zebedee's children did.

The Lord refused to pledge Himself as they wished (leaving all such matters to the Father) but He promised them the honour of suffering for His sake—honour indeed, however poor flesh may shrink from it. James was the first of the twelve to be martyred (Acts 12.2), and John had a

long-drawn-out life of trial and suffering for his Lord. Rev. 1.9 tells us how sweetly John learned his lesson. Writing to his fellow-saints from his exile in Patmos, he describes himself as "I John, your brother and partaker with you in the tribulation and kingdom and patience which are in Jesus" (See R.V.). As the last of the Apostles he was unquestionably entitled to special veneration, but he claims nothing now. His pride and ambition have gone. No desire remains for exaltation above others; he is just our brother and fellow-sufferer for Jesus' sake.

May the Lord keep us spiritually so near Himself, and so teach us His own fathomless grace in all that He has endured for our blessing, that all self-assertion may be banished from our lives.

THE GREAT TRIBULATION WILL THE CHURCH PASS THROUGH IT?

by **ERNEST BARKER**

Part 3—The Seven-Sealed Book

The next suggestive reason why the Church will not pass through the Great Tribulation is undoubtedly the most important, and perhaps the most unanswerable. The consideration of this will necessitate a fairly close examination of one of the most soul-inspiring chapters in the Bible, namely, Revelation, chapter 5, which opens thus:—"And I saw in the right hand of Him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the back side, sealed with seven seals."

It is possible that the book mentioned in this verse contains the title deeds of earth, whilst it is quite clear that the seven seals by which it is sealed are vitally connected with the terrible judgments which, in God's time, will be poured out on this guilty world.

Among all the inhabitants of heaven and earth, only One is found worthy to open the book and to loose its seals, namely, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the ever victorious One, who, as the Lamb of God on Calvary, prevailed over the powers of darkness so completely as to reveal His worthiness to open the book, and to loose the seals. Immediately afterwards He is seen in the midst of the throne as the Lamb once slain. Surrounding the throne are four living creatures, and four and twenty elders, and these are en-

gaged in singing the sweetest song ever sung. It is described as the **New** song, and it will ever be new as the strains echo and re-echo through heaven's courts. Shall we listen once again to the grand words:— "Thou art worthy . . . for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."

It is generally conceded that these four and twenty elders either include or represent the Church, and indeed it could scarcely be otherwise for who but the redeemed can sing the song of redemption? And let us remember that this heavenly company is not composed of one particular people or nation but they represent all parts of this world which God loved, and for which He gave His Son. Let us also bear in mind that whilst these four and twenty elders are engaged in singing the new song **the book is entire** with its seals unbroken.

Now, when is the first seal opened? **Not in chapter 5**, but in chapter 6. It is exceedingly important that we observe this fact seeing it conveys the inevitable conclusion that before the divine judgments overtake this world, **the redeemed are already with Christ in heaven.**

Let us now tabulate the facts, and endeavour to see the proposition in its true perspective:—

- (1) The book is in the right hand of Him who sits upon the throne.
- (2) The book is sealed with seven seals, which are unbroken, and which are vitally connected with the terrible judgments which will be poured out upon the earth.
- (3) The four and twenty elders either include or represent the Church which is gathered out from the four corners of the earth.
- (4) These four and twenty elders are in heaven, around the throne, **previous to the breaking of any of the seals.**
- (5) The record of the breaking of the first seal is in **chapter 6.**
- (6) It therefore follows that, before any of the awful things occur which are recorded in Revelation 6 and onwards, **the Church is safely housed in glory.**

It may be said in answer to all this that the events in Revelation are not always recorded in chronological order. This is no doubt correct, but the question of chronological order does not affect the point at issue. The incontrovertible fact remains that, when the book is seen **intact**, the redeemed are with Christ in heaven—therefore they must have been translated previous to the breaking of the first seal.

Naturally, there are many perplexing questions which arise in the consideration of this great subject. It would indeed be strange if it were not so.

The Sounding of the Trumpets.

One of these difficulties relates to the sounding of the trumpets, mentioned in 1 Corinthians 15.52, 1 Thessalonians 4.16, and Revelation, chapters 8 to 11.

The distinction, briefly, appears to be as follows:—The first two might be termed **trumpets of blessing**, and will form part of the three-fold summons which will be heard when the Lord comes for His own. The trumpets mentioned in the book of Revelation might be designated **trumpets of judgment**, with which, I suggest, believers will have nothing to do. It is quite true that in 1 Corinthians 15 the Apostle Paul refers to the **last trump**, and as far as believers are concerned, it will be the last. It is not at all improbable that the writer had in his mind the three trumpet sounds which were heard so frequently by the Roman soldiers, the last of which was the signal for them to march forward. There is also a suggestive link between this last trump and the trumpets which were used in the camp of Israel, recorded in Numbers, chapter 10. One trumpet was to be blown for the gathering together of the princes—the heads of Israel. An **alarm** was sounded when the people were to start on a journey. Then comes this significant verse:—“But when the congregation is gathered together, ye shall blow, but ye shall not blow an alarm.” When the Lord returns for us we shall hear the trumpet sound, though, happily, **it will not be an alarm** but the signal of a glorious final “gathering together” of all His beloved people who will meet their Lord in the air, and will see Him, not by faith, but by sight.

A further difficulty concerns the first resurrection, mentioned in Revelation 20, verses 5 and 6.

There are two resurrections yet to take place, **and only**

two. They are (1) of the just, and (2) of the unjust. The resurrection of the just will presumably take place in two parts, namely, (a) when the Lord descends from heaven (when the saints of the church age will be raised, and probably the saints of the Old Testament dispensation), and (b) at the end of the great tribulation period, when the martyrs of the tribulation will be raised. This is called the "first resurrection." The resurrection of the unjust will take place at the end of the thousand years which will comprise the Millennium, as notified in Revelation 20.11 to 15. Our Lord's reference to the two resurrections is in John 5.28 and 29.

(to be continued)

DO WE NEED TO RETHINK OUR MISSIONS?

by **JIM JARDINE, Brazil**

Back in the year 1912 Roland Allen, an Anglican clergyman, shook the ecclesiastical establishment when his book "**Missionary Methods, St. Paul's or Ours?**" was published. It was a book which changed many of the preconceived notions current with respect to missionary work. Our purpose in this article is not to consider what Roland Allen had to say. His question, however, is just as relevant at the end of the 20th century as it was at the beginning: Missionary methods, Paul's or ours?

In recent days the missionary methods adopted by those associated with "assemblies" have come under attack. There is indeed what the late F. A. Tatford called "a pressure for change."* Missionaries increasingly are being encouraged to "make their needs known" while commending assemblies are being encouraged to assume full support for their workers and to guarantee that support. Each assembly as it guaranteed such support would have a large or total say as to the work in which the missionary was engaged, where he worked and many other aspects of his life. This is plausibly presented as 'partnership in mission.' I have no doubt that behind this is the idea (not yet ripe for presentation) of greater control by a central missionary body. This could be brought in as being the help of 'experts' for assemblies who have little knowledge of overseas conditions. It should be noted that none of the missionary service groups of English speaking lands has given credence to

these ideas. Indeed they have been strongly resisted in some quarters. However, it is my personal impression that the eventual formation of a "Christian Brethren Missionary Society" is far from impossible if pressures on existing service groups have no effect. Another development has been the entrance to some foreign fields of what are in effect missionary societies although associated with "assemblies." These to a greater or lesser degree control workers and finance.

As we seek to place current challenges within a scriptural framework it is not enough to say; "but we've been doing it like this for over 100 years." The question which must be asked by each new generation is: "What was the model that Paul and his fellow workers left to us as recorded in the inspired Scriptures?"

By "model" we do not refer to what could be called incidentals. The fact that Paul travelled by ship does not mean that we cannot travel by plane. Paul used pen and ink, we can use typewriters and word processors. There are more sophisticated means of communication available today than ever Paul experienced. Yet we do believe that the New Testament lays down spiritual principles and practices that are as binding on Gospel service today as they ever were.

When we look at Paul's missionary career we become aware of two essential prerequisites for such service. First of all we note that he had a specific **call** from the Lord (Acts 26.15-20). This was to be "a minister and a witness . . . to the Gentiles (nations)" (vs. 16-17). Each one of us who knows the Lord has a specific call with regard to our life and witness—whether it be in Belfast or Bangalore, Baltimore or Brasilia. As we look to Him who died for us we are compelled to ask the question that Paul asked: "What shall I do Lord?" (Acts 22.10) He will reveal it to us, perhaps over years, and having received 'the mighty ordination of the pierced hand' may we never look back but go on in full confidence to do what ever He has called us to do. In addition we read that Paul left for Cyprus with the **wholehearted commendation** of his brethren. W. E. Vine has commented: "It was those who were exercising spiritual responsibility in the church at Antioch to whom the Holy Spirit said: "Separate Me Barnabas and Saul for the work

whereunto I have called them” (Acts 13.1,2). They it was who “committed them to the grace of God for the work” (14.26 R.V.). And when Silas went forth with Paul, they were “commended by the brethren to the grace of God” (15.40)”†. The word ‘commend’ simply means ‘to give or deliver over’ and of course the missionaries were delivered over to the Lord and His grace. Who better to look after them?

It is a solemn responsibility for a local assembly to commend a brother or sister for overseas service. It was the occasion of prayer and fasting in the assembly at Antioch and when the Holy Spirit chose His servants He chose the best the assembly had to offer.

Commendation does **not** mean **control** by the commending assembly. Dr. David Gooding says: “The church certainly ‘committed them to the grace of God for the work’. That does not mean, of course that the church virtually gave Paul and Barnabas permission to ‘go out as a missionary’. No one did that for Paul except the risen Lord. Nor does Luke say that the church sent them out, rather he says that the Holy Spirit sent them out (13.4). And certainly the church at Antioch exercised no control over their movements on the field. The momentous decision, for instance, to bring the gospel over to Europe (16.8-10) was taken by the workers on the field in direct response to the Lord’s direct guidance”§. The Lord controlled directly the movements of His servants who sometimes worked on their own (as Apollos) or sometimes in voluntary co-operation (as Paul with Barnabas, Silas, Timothy and Luke). We look in vain for organised missionary societies or any distant control whether it be by field director or assembly elders in a far off land.

Of course the commending assembly will pray and maintain a vital interest. The elders will be ready to give advice if called upon to do so, but they will leave the control of the servant to his rightful Master.

It is logical that if the servant of God leaves the path of righteous moral conduct or imbibes false doctrine then the commending assembly would, sadly, have to withdraw its commendation but no right of command is ever given to it with respect to the servant’s movements or work.

Another factor which should be noted is that **commen-**

dation does **not** imply a **guaranteed salary**. We read of Paul earning money to pay for his own expenses and those of his fellow workers (Acts 20.34). We read of the assembly in Phillipi giving generously for the support of the workers (Phil. 4.10-18) but we look in vain to find any notion of guaranteed support from any assembly whether it be Antioch in the case of Paul, Lystra in the case of Timothy or any other. Paul didn't write around giving details of personal financial needs. We find his philosophy in Philip-pians 4.19: "My God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus". Thousands of the Lord's servants have gone out "for His name's sake . . . taking nothing from the Gentiles" (3 John v. 7) and the Lord of the Harvest has provided for them just as abundantly as Boas did for his labourers in a past day (Ruth 2.14). To the worldling or worldly believer such a system seems madness but to those who have just a little faith God has been proved time and time again never to fail.

This doesn't mean that assemblies and individual believers are 'let off the hook' financially. Those who have of this world's goods can have no better investment than to dedicate their wealth to the preaching of the Gospel at home and abroad. However, as to the worker, his responsibility is to look to the Lord and Him alone for his needs.

Thus we see that a call from God and the commendation of the local believers are essential for the missionary. Essential too is that he learns to walk with God looking to Him for guidance and support. This leads not to chaos but, as in Paul's day, to the work being done as the Holy Spirit desires. When 'new ideas' for missionary support and control are mooted (in reality some very old ideas heated up and served as new) we should remember that while they might represent the advanced thinking of so called 'missionary statesmen' they find no support from the plain teaching of the Word of God.

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REVIEWS

NOTES ON REVELATION by Jim Flanigan.

This book of 119 pages is the result of many years of concentrated study of the Holy Scriptures. Our brother acknowledges the encouragement he received from a Bible Class teacher in Parkgate Avenue Gospel Hall, Belfast; a friend in Melbourne who used to say "Read the Revelation, study the Revelation, it will affect your ministry, it will colour your Gospel preaching, it will mould your character—whatever else you read, or don't read, read the Revelation"; and in more recent years he learned much more from our late brother David Craig who used to thrill the saints with both his Gospel preaching and ministry based on prophetic subjects.

It is evident from the reading of this book that the advice and help received from these men created in our brother Jim a great interest in, and determination to *know*, the Revelation. These 21 chapters were originally prepared for publication in Assembly Testimony magazine, and have resulted in many requests for them to be produced in permanent form.

The book is a simple outline of the book of the Revelation. It is not meant to be exhaustive, but it deals with all the outstanding themes. It is clear, orderly and prophetically correct. It does not deal with controversial issues but states clearly those truths which are most certainly believed amongst us. We advise all our readers to purchase and study this book. To young believers we suggest it should be an essential item in their library.

Published by Gospel Tract Publications, 41 Hillington Road, Glasgow, G52 4BL. (Price £1.95 plus p. & p.)—A.M.S.G.

WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES (Edited by T. Wilson and K. Stapley) containing :

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The present volume commences with 1 Peter by J. B. Nicholson. I first met our brother, he was then a youth, in the early '40s in Glasgow where he was greatly influenced into Godliness by our brother J. Forrest of Govan. He afterwards returned to U.S.A. and has been for many years engaged in the ministry of the Word and preaching the Gospel — I would say he is one of the Godliest and best taught men in the North American assemblies. George Waugh I have also known for 40 years or more. His ministry is characterised by solidity and accuracy. Now, with business life in the past, he is free to travel widely to help the saints. He is being much used of God — a teacher on whose exposition you can rely.

The third writer is, of course, myself. Let me humbly say, it ought to be far better — I have been studying John's Epistles for years and ministering thereon, but when I began to write I had to face up to the fact that these three epistles abound in difficulties. One can avoid these in ministry, but when asked to write a verse by verse exposition one can no longer avoid the difficulties. The result of my studies I think will be helpful to the people of God. Some of my conclusions may be different from what some of my readers have hitherto believed — please, brethren and sisters, give them your careful consideration. I think you will conclude in the end I am right, though I admit that some of my reasoning is definitely provocative — nevertheless, worth reading!

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Talks to Young Believers

by JOHN RITCHIE

GROWING LIKE HIM

It is a common saying, that "we become like those whose company we keep." This is true in the highest sense, of those who "keep company" with the Lord Jesus. They become like Him : they reflect His character. As they walk in His company, day by day, "with open face beholding His glory," they "*are changed* into the same image" (2 Cor. iii. 18). As they listen to His voice, and follow in His steps, others take *knowledge* of them that they have "been with Jesus." Thus it was with Moses, after he had been forty days and forty nights on the mount, alone with God. He came down among the people, his face shining with the glory of God. Others saw it, and knew where he had been. So it is with some now. When you meet them, there is something so Christ-like about them. Their words, though few, are full of blessing; their very spirits savour of the presence of God. We know easily where *they* dwell, and whose company *they* keep. Like ships bearing spices from afar, their savour points them out; they do not need to advertise themselves. The same principle holds good of our companions. We become like them. What a blessing many a young believer has found in a truly godly companion! One who lived near to God, and whose aim in life was to lead others into "the secret place." Seek such a companion, dear young believer. But there is another side to this. A carnal, worldly believer can drag a spiritual one down to his own level, if he keeps company with him, and how often this is done. How many once-bright and happy saints; have been led into backsliding, through keeping company with foolish talkers, and light, flippant professors? Shun the company of such, and seek the companionship of Christ. When you go a stranger into a new situation, be careful what companions you choose.

THE PRESENCE OF GOD

by J. B. CURRIE (Japan)

The Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, present various expressions of God's Presence among men here on earth. The portrayals of the Divine Presence, when properly understood, have the salutary effect of showing the believer what is expected of him, practically, as he serves the Lord day by day even in such an age of wickedness in which we live.

There are six expressions of God's Presence among men which, with some attention to detail, will yield spiritual profit to any who would be exercised thereby. These well known representations are as follows :—

- (1) The Garden of Eden — (Genesis 3).
- (2) The Place called Bethel — (Genesis 28).
- (3) The Tabernacle in the Wilderness (Exodus 25-40).
- (4) 'Solomon's Temple' — (1 Kings 6 & 2 Chronicles 2-7).
- (5) The Person of our Lord Jesus — (The Four Gospels).
- (6) The Church of God — (1 Timothy 3.15).

In each of these instances the one especial characteristic emphasised is that of perfect holiness. A thrice Holy God in manifesting His Presence among men does so in keeping with His own Holy Character.

THE GARDEN OF EDEN

Both in Genesis 3 and in Ezekiel 28 the unmistakable demands of holiness are seen, first of all, in the expulsion of Adam and Eve who, because of their disobedience to God's Word, proved themselves incapable of continuing in that place of holiness. The second instance is an even greater example of the effect of that holiness upon sinful creatures. The awesome beauty of the Garden only serves to heighten the terrible fate which overcame the proud Lucifer. Personified as 'the King of Tyre' he is spoken of as 'the cherub that covereth' (vs. 12 & 14). The dignity and position of this mighty being created to stand in special relationship to the Throne of the Almighty did not preserve him once iniquitous pride 'was found in him' (Ezekiel 28.15; 1 Timothy 3.6).

THE PLACE CALLED BETHEL

In the night vision received at Bethel the Presence of God was again portrayed. Jacob's heart was filled with a godly fear so that

he was caused to cry 'How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God' (v.17). He who had fled in terror as the result of deceitful dealings was impressed with the holiness of the God with whom he had to do. That impression never left Jacob for the rest of his life. How becoming is that fear of offending a holy God so that it regulates every aspect of the human state.

THE TABERNACLE AND SOLOMON'S TEMPLE

In the detailed plan given by God for the erection of the Tabernacle as well as in those details of the Temple in Solomon's day, further expressions of Divine Holiness are to be seen. The High Priest of Israel, in his Tabernacle service, wore 'holy garments — for glory and for beauty' (Exodus 28.2). On his head was the mitre with its golden plate. The inscription on that plate, 'Holiness to the Lord', together with the rest of the garments, was calculated to cause all engaged in the Tabernacle ritual to do so with the thought of God's Holiness always before them. The 'fire from the Lord' which instantly devoured the irreverent Nadab and Abihu (Numbers 10) and the fatal leprosy which was Uzziah's punishment (2 Chronicles 26.19); Isaiah 6.1) show the tragedy of that irreverence which handles the things of God when out of fellowship with Himself. On the other hand, Solomon's prayer of dedication at the opening of the temple, reveals a humility of spirit which was most acceptable to the God Who was to dwell in that temple (2 Chronicles 6,7).

OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

The greatest expression of the Divine Presence is not to be found in a place but in a Person. It is not without significance that our Lord Jesus spoke of His Holy body as a 'Temple' (John 2.19). What these 'holy places' did to a degree, the Lord Jesus, possessed of all the attributes of Godhood in their completeness, did in perfection. He manifested God in all His Holiness. In spite of more modern revisions the words of the King James version are still to be preferred in 1 Timothy 3.16. 'God was manifest in flesh.' That expression of the very essential character of God given by the Lord Jesus during His short sojourn among men was one of unchanging and unchangeable holiness. The effulgence of beauty and glory as seen in the Person of Christ our Lord is more than enough to stir up within each one of us a deep seated desire for a walk of reverential fear and humility.

THE CHURCH OF GOD

As far as the believer of the present age is concerned that expression of holiness which never ceases to cause wonder and amazement is 'the church of God' That God would deign to manifest something of His character in the gatherings of His people, which we refer to as 'the local assembly', staggers the imagination. In places where rebellion and sin of the grossest kind flourish, such as in first century Corinth, the saints of the assembly are told, 'ye are temple of God — and the temple of God is holy' (1 Corinthians 3.16,17). To this end then, Paul, when writing to his younger fellow worker, does so that men 'might know how they ought to behave themselves in the house of God, which is church of the Living God, pillar and stay of the truth' (1 Timothy 3.15).

Four of these manifestations of God's Holiness are expressly called 'House of God'. When God applies such a title to the local assemblies of His saints it underlines the heavy responsibility we have as believers, young and old alike, to so conduct ourselves that our walk and our talk in every way reflect that 'holy calling' wherewith we have been called. In practical terms it means that every brother and sister in every assembly and in all aspects of personal living must give heed to the words of the Psalmist. 'Holiness becometh Thine house, O Lord, for ever' (Psalm 93.5).

WHEN THE REAPING TIME COMES

(An Address given at Bristol by George Muller, in his 92nd year)

"In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand." That is, "Use any and every opportunity which the Lord is pleased to give thee; seek to redeem the time, for thou hast but one life here on earth, and that a brief line—a very brief one as compared with Eternity; therefore make good use of it," Oh, the blessing that results from attending to this! On every occasion, under all circumstances, after we have sought the Lord's blessing and are in a proper state of heart, let us drop a word for Christ here and there and everywhere, and after we have spoken it, bring it before God again, and again in prayer.

When the reaping time comes, and we find ourselves in glory, that child for whom we prayed will be found there! That aged

cripple whom we met incidentally on the road, and to whom we spoke, will be in Heaven. That person in consumption whom we visited every day for a long time, and who gave little or no heed at all to what we had to say, will be found in glory, having at last laid to heart what we spoke so many times to him, and though we had no information about it, God blessed our word. Oh, the multitude of instances we shall find at last, when our work, labour, or service has, contrary to natural expectation, been blessed!

I was once standing here about sixty-two years ago, preaching the Word of Life, and after I had done I was cast down because my words seemed to me so cold, so dull, so lifeless. And not till three months after did I hear that through that very address abundant blessing had been brought to nineteen different persons.

And precisely thus we shall find it in our labour and service in the end. Often and often it appears to us that the many opportunities made use of have been lost. Yet it will be seen that all was owned of God, all put down in His book of remembrance; our labour, after all, was not in vain, and the reaping time has come.

But let us carefully see to it that when the reaping time comes there will be something to reap because we have been labouring. If there be no labour, if there be a careless, thoughtless walk, without prayer and crying to God mightily, then let us not be surprised if when the harvest time comes there is no reaping as far as we are concerned. But as assuredly as there has been the crying mightily to God, as there has been the sowing, as there has been the laying out of ourselves for God, most assuredly we shall reap.

"For thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that." We are ignorant of what God is about to do, because He does not tell us if at this particular time He will own our labour and service or not. Therefore, our business is at all times to seek to lay out ourselves for God, for, as I have stated before, we have but one life, and this one life is a brief life.

"Or whether they both shall be alike good," God may bless, not merely at one time, but both times. In the morning the work may be commenced, in the evening the Holy Ghost may deepen it, and God may bring double blessing out of our poor, feeble service.

Oh, let us seek to attend to this precious exhortation!

THOUGHTS OF CHRIST

(for the busy Housewife) No. 4

BY ERIC G. PARMENTER, CLEVEDON

The devotedness and perfectness of the Saviour's character and all that He manifested in His words and ways down here, were but the issues of His being what He essentially was, "The Holy One of God", He was both inwardly and outwardly pure and perfect. From His birth up He could say, "I delight to do Thy will, O my God: yea, Thy law is within my heart".

When He submitted Himself to the death of the cross, when that perfectness was presented for us at Calvary, and reconciliation and peace was effected, God calls us to rejoice in His beloved, to enjoy fellowship and communion in His own joy in Christ, and in the quietness of our own souls to feed on Christ in an atmosphere of joy and peace: God delighting to minister unto us what He has been enjoying from all eternity, Christ in all His perfections. Thus the way is opened to us for sorrow to be turned into joy and the cry of helpless despair to be exchanged for the voice of thanksgiving.

Surely, the Lord hath done great things for us whereof we are glad. He has given to us the garment of praise instead of the spirit of heaviness. What abounding grace on God's part! He wants us to enjoy with Him the peace of communion and to appreciate the excellence of Christ in the perfection of His sacrifice.

HYMNS AND THEIR WRITERS (44) by Jack Strahan, Enniskillen

"LAMB OF GOD! OUR SOULS ADORE THEE"

JAMES GEORGE DECK (1807 — 1884)

James George Deck was born of a godly Huguenot family at Bury, St. Edmunds on November 1st, 1807. His father, John Deck was the postmaster there. His mother was a godly woman whose burden in life was the spiritual welfare of her family. She believed in prayer and adopted the practice of regular setting aside time each day to be alone with God and pray for the family. Her prayers were answered and she had the unspeakable joy of seeing all her family of eight children led to Christ and consecrating their lives to His service. One of her daughters, Mary Jane (Mary Jane Walker) became the authoress of several well-known and good hymns as, "I journey through a desert drear and wild", "Jesus I will trust Thee, trust Thee with my soul", "O spotless Lamb of God, in Thee" and "The wanderer no more will roam".

James George Deck, as a young man, studied in Paris under one of Napoleon's generals and at the age of 17 went to India as an officer in army service. While there, God spoke to him in a very definite way, teaching him the sinfulness and need of his own heart. He resolved to do better, and drew up a code of good resolutions, signing it with his own blood. He soon found, however, that he had not the strength to keep it, such was the weakness of the flesh. In 1826, Deck returned to England after a severe attack of cholera and later in the same year, through the instrumentality of his sister Clara, came under the ministry of a godly Anglican clergyman and was brought to Christ for salvation. He was then 19 years of age.

In 1829, Deck married Alicia Field, daughter of Samuel Field, an evangelical clergyman and in the following year returned to India. There he boldly witnessed for Christ among his colleagues with the result that a number were brought to a saving faith in Christ. In 1835, Deck returned again to England having, for conscience sake, resigned his commission. His exercise then was to enter the Church of England as a minister but while staying at the home of his father-in-law in County Devon, an incident happened which changed the whole course of his life. The occasion was the christening of his second son when there were some present who questioned the scriptural authority for such a practice and this caused Deck deep exercise of heart. He searched the scriptures but nowhere could he find any basis for 'baptismal regeneration'. Nevertheless, it was contained in the "Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England". What was he to do? Having left the army to enter the Church of England, he now saw that the teaching of this church was not supported by the word of God. In his dilemma he referred the problem to his wife and her clear reply, "Whatever you believe to be the will of God, do it at any cost," gave him guidance as to his path. Deck continued to search his New Testament and very shortly afterwards joined the fellowship of other like-minded believers gathered to the precious name of the Lord Jesus.

Deck began to witness for Christ and preach the gospel throughout the county of Devon. Many believed, and he taught them from the word of God the truths of believers' baptism and regularly gathering to remember their Lord while awaiting His return from heaven. After some fourteen years of active service for the Lord around the towns and villages of the West country, Deck suffered a breakdown in health. A complete change was recommended by his medical advisers and in 1852, James George Deck, his wife and family of eight children sailed for New Zealand. The

Decks arrived in Wellington, New Zealand, aboard the ship 'Cornwall' in the latter part of 1852. They purchased land and as a family settled in Waiwera near to Motueka in the Nelson province of the South Island. Shortly after their arrival, Deck's beloved wife Alicia died and was laid to rest in Motueka cemetery. Deck remarried in 1855 and five more children were born, but shortly after the birth of the fifth baby (Martin Luther) his second wife and her new-born baby both died from a severe attack of measles.

Though times were difficult, Deck's faith in God stood firm. He faithfully witnessed for Christ in this new land of his adoption, at first in the Motueka district and then more widely throughout New Zealand. For over 30 years there, he preached the gospel and taught the word of God. Though there were many difficulties there was much fruit and little assemblies were raised up to the Lord's name. Shortly after their second bereavement the Decks, as a family, moved to the city of Wellington in the North Island and lived there for several years but in the early 1870's, Mr. Deck's health started to fail and he returned to Motueka. There he died on the 14th August, 1884, and three days later, his body was laid to rest in the Motueka cemetery on the foreshore.

Deck's influence for God as an evangelist and teacher remains still in evidence in the West country of England and even more so throughout New Zealand. Nevertheless, it is as hymn writer and poet that he is best remembered. His compositions extended over a period of many years though most of his best hymns were written in the years 1838 - 1844 when, as a young man in his thirties, he preached the gospel around Devon and Somerset. Some 101 of his hymns and 65 of his poems were collected together in his "Hymns and Sacred Poems" and published in 1876. In its preface Deck says, "I have sought rather to render the hymns scriptural and true in their tone and character, than to please the natural ear and taste by an attempt at poetic composition".

Deck's hymns were written mostly for believers and breathe a deep spirit of worship. Many of them are particularly suited for use at the Lord's supper and include such favourites as,

"A little while, our Lord shall come"
"Abba, Father!, we approach Thee"
"Lamb of God! our souls adore Thee"
"Lamb of God! Thou now art seated"
"Lord Jesus, are we one with Thee?"
"Lord, we would ne'er forget Thy love"
"O Jesus Lord! 'tis joy to know"
"O Lamb of God, still keep me"
"O Lord, when we the path retrace"

"The veil is rent, Lo! Jesus stands"

"We bless our Saviour's name"

The hymns, "Lamb of God! our souls adore Thee" and "Lamb of God! Thou now art seated" were written by Deck in 1838. They originally appeared as two parts of one hymn and were entitled, "The Lamb of God". Each part had four verses.

Part 1

"Lamb of God! our souls adore Thee,
While upon Thy face we gaze;
There the Father's love and glory
Shine in all their brightest rays:
Thy almighty power and wisdom
All creation's works proclaim;
Heaven and earth alike confess Thee
As the ever great "I AM".

Son of God! Thy Father's bosom
Ever was Thy dwelling-place;
His delight, in Him rejoicing,
One with Him in power and grace:
Oh, what wondrous love and mercy!
Thou didst lay Thy glory be,
And for us didst come from heaven,
As the Lamb of God, to die.

Lamb of God! when we behold Thee
Lowly in the manger laid;
Wand'ring as a homeless Stranger,
In the world Thy hands had made;
When we see Thee in the garden,
In Thine agony of blood;
At Thy grace we are confounded,
Holy, spotless Lamb of God.

When we see Thee, as the Victim,
Bound to the accursed tree,
For our guilt and folly stricken,
All our judgement borne by Thee, —
Lord, we own with hearts adoring,
Thou hast loved us unto blood:
Glory, glory everlasting,
Be to Thee, Thou Lamb of God!"

This hymn is suited to the Lord's Supper. Its singing directs hearts in the footsteps of the Saviour — from the Father's bosom to the manger at Bethlehem, then to the garden of Gethsemane and onward to the tree at Golgotha. In its second part, the hymn traces further steps — upward to the Throne and onward to millennial glory. Throughout it seems as if each step on that unparalleled pathway is punctuated by the cry, "Behold, the Lamb of God!"

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ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY



Contents

CHRIST IN THE APOCALYPSE

by John B. D. Page

THE POWER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

by John A. Brett

JACOB, OR THE TRIUMPH OF FAITH

by E. R. Bower

HOW RICH ARE WE?

by J. E. Todd

THE GREAT TRIBULATION

by Ernest Barker

FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTALS

by J. B. Hewitt

ISAIAH'S PORTRAITS OF CHRIST

by J. Flanigan

TALKS TO YOUNG BELIEVERS

by John Ritchie

PSALM 34

by S. Nicholls

THOUGHTS OF CHRIST

Eric G. Parmenter

HYMNS AND THEIR WRITERS

by Jack Strahan

Tune —

'Tis Past the Dark and Gloomy Night.

8.6.8.6.

Thy sorrows, LORD, those toils and
tears,
Thy griefs and pains are past,
The crowning glory of those years
We shall behold at last.

Upon the hidden manna then
With wonder we shall feed,
The tale of sovereign grace again
And yet again shall read.

Those words and deeds of love
Divine,
The path Thy feet have trod
With radiant glory ever shine
Before the Throne of God.

And to our waiting vision then
That path Thou wilt reveal,
The secrets of Thy love explain
Which love would here conceal.

O hasten that eternal spring
When we shall see Thy face,
And through unending ages sing,
'Tis all of sovereign grace.

J. M. Jones (Toowoomba).

CHRIST IN THE APOCALYPSE (23)

by JOHN B. D. PAGE

THE INCOMPARABLE CHRIST (i)

Reading : Revelation 22.6-13.

The prophetic part of Revelation ends with a vision of the Lamb's wife, likened to a great city, the holy Jerusalem, and then the book is brought to a close with an epilogue (22.6-21) which consists of titles ascribed to the glorified Christ, setting forth further facets of His majestic splendour.

The angel, who communicated the contents of the book from Christ to John (1.1), assures the seer that all the words of the book are "faithful and true". This phrase not only echoes the Lord's autograph, "the Faithful and True Witness", in the letter addressed to the church of the Laodiceans (3.14), but also the Warrior-King, Who descends from the open heaven, is called "Faithful and True" (19.11).

After a short statement first by the Lord Himself and then by John (22.7ff), the angel addresses the seer briefly (22. 9-11), after which the Lord speaks for the second time in the epilogue (22.12ff). declaring, "Behold, I come quickly". If there is a doctrine above all others which should thrill the heart of the believer, it is the imminent return of our blessed Lord. The Coming One now makes Himself known with a bunch of titles — "I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last" (22.13). All these Christological descriptions have already occurred in the book but, as they are found in the epilogue, it may be opportune to look briefly at the setting of them, except the first, "I am", which occurs later for the last time.

ALPHA AND OMEGA

By turning to chapter 1, we find the first use of this title with others in verse 8, and there are two ways of understanding this verse. If this eighth verse is taken as a continuation of verse 7 which describes Christ as coming again to the earth "with the clouds (of glorified saints), . . . and all the tribes of the land shall wail because of Him. Yea, amen", (J. N. Darby's *New Translation*), then the returning Messiah declares "I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, saith the Lord . . ." (v. 8). Such self-ascribed titles

by the Lord Jesus would be understood by a repentant and regenerate remnant of Israel as an unqualified claim to His Deity, His omniscience and His eternal Being. To His designation "Lord" (1.8), the divine Speaker adds, "Which is, and Which was, and Which is to come", which is a title given earlier to God the Father in the salutation (1.4), and so He identifies Himself with the Father. As the statement, or rather title, is an amplified form of the ineffable name "I am that I am" (Exod. 3.14), which is virtually the equivalent of the Old Testament name Jehovah, He associates Himself inseparably with that name. Remarkably, when the godly remnant of Jews behold Him in that day of His coming again they will say" . . . this is Jehovah; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation" (Isa. 25.9). In this eighth verse, He finally claims to be "the Almighty", which is the divine name revealed initially to the patriarchs (Gen. 17.1; 28.3; 35.11; etc.) and, according to its usage in the Old Testament, it was primarily for the patriarchal period as God said to Moses, "I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, . . ." (Exod. 6.3), and so "Almighty" (i.e., Shaddai, Heb.) was the name under which God entered into covenant with the three patriarchs. The significance of this divine name is the All-bountiful God who is able to supply all the needs of His people. Looking into the future, the Messiah, as "the Almighty", will deal bountifully, in both spiritual and material spheres, with His earthly people, Israel, during the millennium.

Turning again to verse 7 of chapter 1, the last words, "Even so, Amen", may be viewed as a conclusion, and so separate the eighth verse from it. Furthermore, the Revised Version of verse 8 reads differently, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, saith the Lord God, . . .". Who is the Lord God? we may ask. He is Jehovah Elohim of the Old Testament, the God of Israel, and He speaks here from heaven. This means that the verse is an interpolation which refers not to Christ but only to God, and so this is another way of considering this eighth verse, which is adopted by some commentators.

For the second occurrence of this unusual title, John was in the Spirit on the Lord's day and he hears a great voice saying "I am Alpha and Omega, . . ." (1.11), which has been considered in Article No. 3 (i). With this appellation, signifying His omniscience, Jesus Christ introduces Himself concerning things relating to seven churches in Asia and presents Himself in a vision, wearing high-priestly garments.

The paragraph (21. 1-8), describing the new heavens and the new earth, is drawn to a close by the divine Occupant of the throne in heaven, who is God, saying, "It is done", and then He designates Himself as "Alpha and Omega, . . ." (v.6) which is the third occurrence of this title. The work of renewing the universe when time yields to eternity is seen by God as having been finished and the divine purposes fulfilled. As all knowledge, all wisdom and all power are found in Him, God claims justifiably to be "Alpha and Omega".

Returning now to the epilogue, we have the fourth and last occurrence of this remarkable title, "Alpha and Omega" (22.13). If its first mention is taken Christologically as some writers do, then both its first and last uses are connected with the second coming of Christ, but there is a difference between them. In chapter 1.7ff, His coming again is described impersonally in the *third* person singular, "Behold, *He* cometh, and every eye shall see *Him* . . .", which implies a remote relationship with His people, Israel, and, of course, Messiah's coming with the saints for setting up His kingdom on earth is here in view. As the "Alpha and Omega", He possesses all the wisdom and knowledge that His millennial reign will demand of Him. In chapter 22.12ff, the Lord Jesus speaks personally, using the *first* person singular, "Behold, *I* come quickly, . . ." indicating a close relationship with His bride, the Church. This, of course, refers to the first phase of His coming which will be to the air for the saints. Continuing His message, the divine Speaker says, "and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as His work shall be", which is a reference to the review of the deeds of all believers throughout this church age and the giving of rewards at His judgment seat. Only He, who is the "Alpha and Omega" with infinite insight and unlimited knowledge, has the ability to undertake this enormous task.

THE BEGINNING AND THE END

This title is first found in chapter 1.8 (if taken Christologically), it is once applied to God (21.6), and again it is used of Christ in the verse before us (21.13).

The seer, more than other New Testament writers, uses the word "beginning". One example will suffice, because it relates to Christ. Quoting the opening words of Genesis 1.1, John opens his gospel with the phrase, "In the beginning . . .". According to Genesis 1.1,

it was then, "In the beginning", the first moment of Time, "God created the heaven and the earth", and so an *act* was done. To the opening words of his gospel (1.1), "In the beginning", John adds, ". . . was the Word", signifying that a *Being* was in existence before the beginning of Time, even in eternity. Hence, unlike the universe, the pre-incarnate Christ had no beginning because He is eternal, and so He ante-dates both Time and Creation (cp. John 17.5, 24).

For this Apocalyptic designation of the glorified incarnate Christ, the seer's mind may have reflected upon an Old Testament scripture such as Isaiah 46.1, 9ff, where Bel and Nebo, the gods of Babylon, are challenged by the God of Israel who demonstrates their inferiority and impotence by saying, "I am God, and there is none like Me", by which He declares Himself to be incomparable, and then He claims that He alone, being omniscient, is able to make known "the end from the beginning", that is, to look at the end of time and unfold everything in reverse to the beginning. In contrast to such feeble and powerless deities of Babylon, John sets forth the matchlessness of Christ by personifying Him as "the Beginning", even as Paul does (Col. 1.18), for He is the Origin and the Active Cause of all things throughout the span of Time, and as "the End", for all things are complete in Him. As "the Beginning", He is before all things; as "the End", nothing can reach beyond Him.

THE FIRST AND THE LAST

Returning in thought to John's vision of the Son of Man standing in the midst of seven golden lampstands, this title is found twice there — first, before seeing the vision when he hears a voice behind him saying, "I am . . . the First and the Last" (1.10ff), and then after beholding the vision, having fallen in a death-like swoon at His feet, the Lord says reassuringly to him, "Fear not; I am the First and the Last, . . ." (1.17).

For His autograph of the letter addressed to the church in Smyrna, the divine Writer incorporates this title, "The First and the Last, . . ." (2.8).

In the epilogue of the book, the soon-coming Lord declares for the fourth and last time, "I am the First and the Last" (22.13).

Supplementing comments on this title in an earlier article, we may look at its three occurrences in Isaiah, the source of its Apocalyptic use. In Isaiah 41.2-4, Jehovah turns to history and asks,

"Who raised up the righteous man from the east . . .?" For identifying this person, we should note that Cyrus was raised up from the north (v. 25) and he was not righteous, but Abraham, who was righteous before God, came from the east, and he pursued and triumphed over kings (v. 3, cp. Gen.14). To His own question, "Who hath wrought and done it, calling the generations from the beginning?" He answers, "I, Jehovah, the First, and *with* the Last: I am He". The preposition, which we have italicized, should be noted. One commentator says, "He, who called Abraham, the first, will be *with* the last (i.e. Messiah), who is the subject of this prophecy".

Next, we turn to Isaiah 44.6-20, where God remonstrates against His people, Israel, for turning to idols which, being made of gold, silver, or wood, were unable to see their worshippers or to know their needs (v.9-20). The divine Speaker, introducing Himself as "Jehovah, the King of Israel", who is their "Redeemer, Jehovah of Hosts", declares, "I am the first, and I am the last; and beside Me there is no God" (v.6). By declaring Himself to be "the First and . . . the Last", Jehovah demonstrates His superiority over these false gods because, as "the First", He has no predecessor and, as "the Last", He has no successor, which, of course, is equally true of the glorified Christ whom John delights to exalt. The seer may have had this paragraph particularly in mind, knowing the prevalence of idol-worship in the Roman world of his day. Paul, also aware of idolatry at Corinth, says, "there be gods many, and lords many", and then he adds, "but to us there is but one God, the Father . . . , and one Lord, Jesus Christ, . . ." (1 Cor. 8.6). This "one Lord", as designated by Paul, is, says John, "the First and the Last", who is superior to all heathen deities.

This title occurs for the third and last time in Isaiah 48.12-15 where the Lord through the prophet calls upon His people, Israel, to hearken to him for several reasons, one of which says the Lord is, "I am He; I am the First and I also am the Last". This is an unequivocal claim to absolute Deity, and consequently He is the Creator of the earth and the heavens (v. 13), and the Controller of world events (v. 14ff). Such a title is rightly appropriated by Christ because, being unquestionably God, all things in the universe were made by Him, and by Him all things in creation hold together (John 1.1,3; Col.1.17).

He is undeniably the Incomparable Christ! (*To be continued*).

THE POWER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

by JOHN A. BRETT

In these days when so many are occupying their time trying to show that our Lord Jesus was just a good man, it does us well to consider what the scriptures have to say about His power.

Let us consider the **DECLARATION** of His power. Luke 4.32 leaves us in no doubt of the fact, that when the Lord Jesus spoke, power was evident. In the city of Nazareth, where He had declared in Luke 4.24 "No prophet is accepted in His own country," His teachings were met with anger and a desire to destroy Him. But when He speaks in Capernaum His words were met with astonishment, "for His word was with power."

In Matthew 8.8 we again see how His power was declared. The centurion comes to Jesus with a heavy heart and a deep longing. His servant is lying "at home, sick of the palsy, grievously tormented" and yet with all this on his mind he still recognizes his own unworthiness. He is faithful enough to believe that if the Lord Jesus "but speaks the word" his servant will be healed. In a day when so much is being made of the so called sign-gifts we must remember that it is our responsibility to speak the word.

One final thought on the **DECLARATION** of His power is connected with our speaking the word. Romans 1.4 says of our Lord Jesus that he was "declared to be the Son of God with power." As the One who is "the same yesterday, and today, and forever," we must make known this wonderful declaration. "The Son of God," with His omniscience (John 18.4), omnipotence (Mark 4.39) and omnipresence (John 1.47), is our Saviour and **NEVER** ceased to possess these attributes of Godhead. So we must declare Him with the power He promised in Acts 1.8, and be witnesses unto Him.

Our second consideration centres around the **DEMONSTRATION** of the power of our Lord Jesus Christ. The gospels are filled with illustrations of the power of the Lord Jesus being demonstrated.

Lazarus, Jairus' daughter and the widow of Nains' son were raised to life as a demonstration of the Lord's power over Death.

Palsy and leprosy each met the same dismissive fate as His power was demonstrated over Disease.

Mary Magdalene and the two men of the Gergesenes were the beneficiaries as the Lord demonstrated His power over demons.

The walking on the water, the calming of the storm, the feeding of the multitude, all are examples of the demonstration of the power of our Lord Jesus.

What of today? The power of the Lord Jesus is seen in the tremendous changes that have occurred in the lives of men and women, boys and girls who have acknowledged Him as Lord. As we enjoy His presence and His power in our lives, let us never forget that His power was demonstrated to us on the first occasion, "that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins." (Matthew 9.6). Tremendous power indeed.

Now let us consider the **DISTRIBUTION** of His power. We read of this in Matthew 10.1. Notice it was not a general distribution to all of His followers but just to the twelve disciples. As we later learn from 1 Corinthians 1. 22, it is "the Jews" that "require a sign" and so the Lord Jesus specifies that the distributed power was only to be for "the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

In our day there is a teaching abroad that if a person does not have miraculous power in either "healing" or "tongues" they are not saved. This is a lie from the one who the Lord Jesus in John 8.44 described as "a liar and the father of it."

The power that we have received is not that we might be miracle workers but mighty witnesses. We have this power! Where then is our witness?

Our final consideration concerns the **DEDICATION** of His power. The amazement of the doctors and the questioning of Mary fade into insignificance as "wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business" is uttered by "the child Jesus" (Luke chapter 2). Then early in His public ministry He states "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me and to finish His work," (John 4.34). But surely the greatest example of the dedication of His power is seen in John 10.18 where speaking of His life the Lord Jesus says, "I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." Our hearts can only be thrilled as we allow the fulness of this statement to saturate our being. He was so dedicated to doing His Father's will, that He exercised His power to lay down His life.

No man has ever possessed the power that He possessed. It was His alone. He never changes and our hearts overflow as we realize that our Saviour, was able to declare before He returned to His father, "All power is given unto me, in heaven and in earth." (Matthew 28,18).

"JACOB, OR THE TRIUMPH OF FAITH"

by E. R. BOWER

Genesis 25.27. ". . . and Jacob was a plain man dwelling in tents."

Jacob, the name of opprobrium; Jacob the deceiver, trickster, grabber, contender, supplanter, over-reacher — and much more, but — and we ask in all sincerity — was this Jacob's true character? What was it that God saw in Jacob that, through the prophet Malachi (1.2) He could say, "Was not Esau Jacob's brother? Yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau . . ."? Of the twins in Rebekah's womb, God's preference or choice was Jacob. Jacob was God's elect. The apostle Paul speaking of the birth of the twins says of them, "not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand not of works, but of Him that calleth . . . Jacob have I loved . . ." (Rom. 9.10-14).

Our Lord said to His disciples, "Have not I chosen you Twelve, and one of you is a devil?" and, "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you." (John 6.70; 15.16). And we ourselves are assured, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world . . ." (Eph. 1.3-6). So we ask again, what was there in Jacob that God could so express Himself, "Jacob have I loved?" There are several 'key' verses which, it is believed, will help us to understand the true character of Jacob.

(1) Our text (Gen. 25.27) tells us that Jacob was a "plain man dwelling in tents". In the English of the A.V. the word "plain" means, among other things, "honest, sincere, hearty, blameless, innocent, quiet" and in Job 1.1. the same Heb. word reads of Job that he was a "perfect and upright" man. Cf. also Ps. 37.37.

(2) Faith's gallery (Heb. 11) tells us that, "By faith he (Abraham) sojourned in the land of promise with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God." (v.9). Who can doubt that Jacob, as a joint heir of the promise, shared and was well schooled in, the faith of Abraham and of Isaac. Not forgetting the part played by Rebekah. Jacob lived within the ambience of the promise for some 70 years, that is until he fled to Padan-aram.

Jacob had availed himself of the despised birthright many years before, but by Rebekah's instigation he coveted the blessing which went with the birthright, and sought to pre-empt the purpose of God. One mistake brought fear instead of faith. Years passed and Jacob is on his way home and

(3) at Mahanaim (Gen. 32.1) "the angels of God met him" as they had done at Bethel years before (Gen. 28.12,13). Despite his knowledge that "The Angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them" (Ps. 34.7) and of 2 Sam. 17.24-27; 19.32) Jacob's fears remained. Almost immediately there came the "mysterious" wrestling of Jacob with "a Man" (an Angel — Jehovah of hosts. See Hos. 12.5). The result of the wrestling conveyed by the A.V. of v. 28 and other versions, is that Jacob was the victor, but others see Jacob as "holding on" exercising a princely power (Heb. 'sarah' — only here and Hos. 12.2-5); thus it may read "strong against God and prevailing against men". The words of Hosea appear to confirm the second view. "Thy name shall no more be called Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince thou hast power (contended) with God, and with men, and hast prevailed." Israel — God commands (of some 40 Heb. names compounded with "El" or "Jah", God is always the doer of what the verb means).

(4) Hosea (12.2-5) refers to the wrestling. "Yea, he contended with the Angel, and prevailed (although this may refer to the Angel prevailing); he wept, and made supplication unto Him". The form of the verb "made supplication" expresses humble petition for favour by a suppliant who has no claim, nor any power beyond his helplessness to commend his request. It is the gracious favour of the superior to the inferior, all undeserved. (N. H. Snaith. *Distinctive Ideas of the O.T.*). A commentator (One Volume Commentary. Dummelow) remarks, "In the narrative is portrayed a spiritual experience through which Jacob passed at a critical moment in his life, and in which he received the final lesson that humbled and broke down his self-will, and convinced him that he could not snatch at the blessing from God's hand, but must accept it as a gift of grace".

(5) When Jacob was upon his death bed, he blessed his two adopted sons (Ephraim and Manasseh, the sons of Joseph) and spoke of "The Angel, which redeemed me from all evil" (Gen.

48.16) — "The Angel which ransomed me". Here, as before, we see the Angel as the second person of the Godhead — our Lord Himself. This is the first mention of redemption in the Scripture.

(6) Jacob now blessed his own sons (Gen. 49), and mid-way through his blessing he suddenly exclaims, without any apparent reason, "I have waited for Thy salvation, O Jehovah". — a phrase repeated by every pious Jew every morning, afternoon and evening in the prayer known as the Amida (because it is said standing) or the Shmone Esrai. Here is another first mention. Salvation (Heb. 'yeshua', from whence Joshua and Jesus). Some see this as a foreshadowing or "profession of faith, naturally called for by this chain of events, in the advent in due time of the promised Deliverer, and of which the accomplishment here became united in thought with the Name of Jehovah". (Bible Commentary).

(7) Finally, "By faith Jacob when he was a-dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph, and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff". (Heb. 11.21). By faith, the blessings that he had received, and the promises, were passed on — Jacob blessed as he had been blessed. By faith, he worshipped — faith was triumphant.

If ever there was a man who experienced the trial of his faith, it was Jacob — read Gen. 31.36-42 for instance — but he won through. He contended with men and prevailed, but he had to learn that he could not contend and prevail against God.

Peter sums up the trial and triumph of faith in 1 Pet. 1.3-9. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory; receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls".

HOW RICH ARE WE?

by J. E. TODD

'For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich' (2 Cor. 8.9).

But how rich are we?

'And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God' (Luke 12: 19-21). Obviously there are two kinds of riches. 'For a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth' (v. 15), these are material riches. 'Rich towards God' (v. 21), these are spiritual riches. Equally obvious, the Son of God forsook the riches of heavenly glory and embraced the poverty of this world, even to the extent of the cross, in order to make his people rich in the latter sense, that is spiritually rich, 'rich towards God.'

But what does it mean to be rich towards God?

Spiritual Activity.

How rich are we in spiritual activity? If a man's life does not consist of the amount of his material possessions (v. 15), and it does not, then of what does it consist? From Genesis to the Revelation the scriptures teach the doctrine that life is fellowship with God and death is separation from God. Of life Genesis says, 'Man became a living soul . . . they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden' (2.7, 3.8), man in fellowship with God. Of death Genesis says, 'For in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die . . . So he drove out the man' (2.17, 3.24), man out of fellowship with God. Of life the Revelation says, 'A pure river of water of life . . . the tree of life . . . they shall see his face' (22.1-4), man in fellowship with God. Of death the Revelation says, 'The lake of fire. This is the second death' (20.14), man eternally separated from God. The Lord Jesus Christ said, 'I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly' (John 10.10). This He achieved by bringing us into fellowship with God through His own atoning death. 'For Christ

also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God' (1 Pet. 3.18). 'This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God' (John 17.3). How rich are we in the spiritual activity of living in fellowship with God? Are we consciously walking with God, listening to His voice in Holy Scripture, living out His teaching, knowing that we are pleasing Him in the small and great activities of life? These are the purposes for which we were both created and redeemed. Only this is ultimately satisfying to a man. The Lord said, 'My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me' (John 4.34). How rich are we in spiritual activity?

Spiritual Ambition.

How rich are we in spiritual ambition? 'For all these things do the nations of the world seek after,' that is material things; 'But rather seek ye the kingdom of God' (Luke 12.30-31). Our advanced western civilisation places before Christians endless tempting ambitions in the form of education and careers leading to high salaries and the amassing of material possessions. But the command of God to the man and woman of God is, 'For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness' (1 Tim. 6.10-11). We need an amount of education, money and material possessions to maintain life. But these are not to be the ambitions of life. The Christian's ambition in life must pertain to the kingdom of God. To put sin out of our lives and to be righteous in thought, word and deed. To develop godliness, 'God-likeness,' to show to others something of the character of our Father. To live trusting in God, not in ourselves or money. To be loving and gentle, not just to be bad people made good but also to be good people made nice. To be loyal and consistent to the Lord and His people. Are these the overriding ambitions of our lives? How rich are we in spiritual ambition?

Spiritual Affection.

How rich are we in spiritual affection? 'For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also' (Luke 12.34). How can we lay up treasure in heaven (Matt. 6.19-21)?

In the parable of the feast (Luke 14.12-14) our Lord explains. When in obedience to the Lord's teaching we spend time, energy, thought and wealth for which we receive no return for ourselves, then He will reward us at his second advent. 'For thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just' (Luke 14.14). When the Lord comes again, the dead in Christ will be raised (1 Thess. 4.16) and rewarded at His judgement seat (2 Cor. 5.10). If our treasures are material possessions then our affections will be bound to earthly things, but if our treasures await us in heaven then our affections will be bound to heavenly things. How rich are we in spiritual affection?

Spiritual Alertness.

How rich are we in spiritual alertness? 'Be ye therefore ready also : for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not' (Luke 12.40). The Lord goes on to tell Peter that His disciples are a special kind of servant, that is stewards (v. 42). A steward differs from a slave in that he is responsible to his master for certain duties without supervision. We are responsible to live our lives in a way that is profitable to our Master the Lord Jesus Christ. One day we shall render an account to Him. 'Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward' (1 Cor. 3.13-14). Shall we hear the words, 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant' (Matt. 25.21), or will it be a case of, 'If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss : but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire' (1 Cor. 3.15)? Are we ready to render to the Lord an account of our time, energies and wealth, the talents which our Lord has entrusted to us as his stewards? How rich are we in spiritual alertness?

The distinction between material and spiritual riches is vividly illustrated in the letters to the seven churches. Of the church at Laodicea it was said, 'Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods and have need of nothing' (Rev. 3.17). They were materially rich. But immediately the Head of the church replies, 'Knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor.' They were spiritually poverty-stricken.

But the distinction is reversed in the letter to the church at Sardis. 'I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty' (Rev. 2.9). Materially speaking they were poor. But then follows the statement, 'But thou art rich.' They were spiritually rich. 'will give thee a crown of life' (v. 10).

How rich are you?

THE GREAT TRIBULATION

Will The Church Pass Through It?

by **ERNEST BARKER**

(PART 4)

Disengaging our thoughts from the appalling judgments in which the world will be involved, let us now concentrate our mind for a short time upon the glories which await us, and which will be the joyful possession of all true believers at the return of the Lord Jesus.

Salvation in all its Fulness.

The unmentioned writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews informs us that as surely as Christ appeared once to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, so surely will He appear the second time, apart from sin, unto salvation. The great sin question was settled once and for all at the cross. Calvary will never be re-enacted. When Christ comes again that great event will be "unto salvation." Then shall we understand fully that salvation which was designed by God in the past eternal ages, purchased by Christ at the cross, and made good unto us by the Holy Spirit. The oldest and most experienced saint on earth to-day has barely touched the fringe of this "great salvation," but God has arranged His programme for us in such a wonderful way that when we see the Lord Jesus face to face, we shall then realise as never before its height, and depth and length, and breadth. We shall appreciate its divine magnitude, and exult in its unsearchable fulness.

It is by no means an insignificant fact that on more than one occasion in the New Testament reference is made to eternal life as a **promise**, the reason being that, although we possess that life here and now, by far the grandest part of it is future, and will be realised when we are "for ever with the Lord."

The apostle John reminds us of the greatness and grandeur of that love which the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God. This is our spiritual birthright. Esau foolishly sold his birthright for a mere morsel of pottage, but, happily, it is **impossible** for us as believers to sell our birthright, for the simple yet profound reason that our life is "hid with Christ in God." So great a divine value has been placed upon that life which has been imparted to us, that God has graciously hidden it, and His hiding-place is Christ. It is therefore beyond the reach of all our enemies.

But the Apostle continues his fascinating theme by saying, "And it doth not yet appear what we shall be." If it were to appear—what would happen? If for a brief interval of ten seconds God were to unveil to us our future we simply would be unable to bear that exceeding and eternal **weight** of glory. It is therefore necessary for us to exercise that "patience of hope" for which Paul commended the Thessalonian Christians.

Although, however, the complete vista of heaven's wonders has not yet been disclosed, this much has been placed on record:— "We shall be like Him." Compared with this, every other prospect fades away into insignificance. The fulfilment of these five words will see the culmination, combination, and consummation of all God's eternal purposes towards us. To see the face of our beloved Lord will be heaven indeed: but to be **like Him**—who can tell what **that** will mean?

When the Apostle Paul reminded the Philippian believers that their citizenship was in heaven, he took the opportunity of informing them at the same time that a magnificent transformation would take place at the return of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will change this body of our humiliation (which is subject to failure, disease and death), and will re-fashion it like unto His own glorious body, according to the working of His almighty power. This will constitute the greatest change in our spiritual history. It is said that our physical bodies are constantly changing—in point of fact they change completely two or three times in a normal lifetime—but however frequently, and however thoroughly these natural bodies may change, a far more wonderful change is yet to take place. The earthly image was sadly

marred as a result of the fall, but as certainly as we have borne the image of the earthly, so certainly shall we bear the image of the heavenly. The first item in the divine plan of redemption was God's foreknowledge, and He who knew the end from the beginning predestined that we should be conformed to the image of His Son. This formed the transcendent purpose He had in view when He saved us by His grace.

Preserving Our Identity.

But let us bear in mind that in heaven we shall preserve our identity. Not only does the sun possess a glory of its own, but the moon also possesses a glory which is her own. And not only so, but the stars have their own glory also, and even they themselves differ from one another in glory. That is to say that although these celestial bodies manifest a combined glory, they also display an individual glory. Thus it will be with us when the "perfect day" dawns. We shall all be like Christ, and at the time each believer will preserve his identity.

This subject of personal identity leads to a question which is so frequently asked:—Shall we know one another in heaven? **Undoubtedly we shall.** There are many Scriptural evidences of this. To quote one out of many, when the Apostle indicated to the saints at Thessalonica that they were his hope, and joy and crown of rejoicing at the return of the Lord Jesus he clearly implied that he would identify them though they would be so few among the myriads of the redeemed.

The closing promise in the Bible is, "Surely, I come quickly." Of all the future events recorded in the Scriptures, this lies nearest to the heart of our blessed Lord. For the literal fulfilment of this promise He endured the cross, and despised the shame. He is now anticipating the moment when He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be **satisfied.** Moreover, that satisfaction will be mutual, inasmuch as we too shall be satisfied when we awake with His likeness.

Well might we gladly respond, "Amen, even so, come Lord Jesus." What a future! No more tears; no more pain; no more sorrow; no more disappointments; no more anxiety; no more hunger; no more thirst; no more sin; no more curse; no more death. But, after all, these are only negatives. What must be the positives? What shall take the

place of all these things which now so frequently tend to depress us? **Joy unspeakable, and glory in all its fulness.** It will be joy upon joy; song upon song; glory upon glory; satisfaction upon satisfaction ever abounding as the endless ages of a dateless eternity roll by. We shall be in a glorified place, clothed in glorified bodies, in company with a glorified people, and in the presence of a glorified Saviour.

A Wonderful Presentation

Then will be seen the most wonderful presentation ever witnessed. The Church — that pearl of great price, to procure which the Lord Jesus “sold all that He had” when He offered Himself without spot to God—will be presented to Himself, a **glorious** church complete in every respect. No member will be missing; no division will mar its grandeur; no spot, or wrinkle, or blemish will spoil its beauty; no discordant note will be heard; no cloud will intervene; nothing will be wanting to complete the supermagnificence of that wondrous spectacle when we shall be presented faultless before His presence with exultation.

There is a strange theory current among certain of God’s children though happily one does not hear it mentioned so frequently now as formerly. It is the idea that when Christ comes for His own, only a limited number will be taken, and the remainder will be caught away at a later period. These privileged saints will be (so we are informed) the faithful ones—those who have lived consistent lives, who have rendered faithful service, and who are eagerly awaiting His return. This is indeed a theory hard to be understood, and for the following reason:—It is possible, on the one hand, for a believer to be faithful and true to the Lord, and yet never to have been clearly taught the truth of the second coming of Christ, whilst, on the other hand, it is possible for a believer to have been thoroughly initiated into this grand truth, and yet to have lived an inconsistent life.

The words which occur in Hebrews 9, verse 28, “And unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time,” had a special significance for those Christians to whom the epistle was addressed, who were perfectly familiar with the services of the tabernacle. When the high priest entered into the holy place to make an atonement for sin,

the people stood without, anxiously awaiting his reappearance (see Leviticus 16.17 and Luke 1.10 and 21). There might have been those who grew somewhat careless as the time passed, but that in no wise altered the fact that the high priest went in, and came out, for the blessing of **all** the congregation of Israel. Similarly, Christ was once offered to bear the sins of His people, and ere long He will reappear on behalf of them **all** for that final act of blessing when He will say, "Rise up my love, my fair one, and come away."

Who Will Be Caught Away?

If it be true that only the **faithful** ones will be caught away when the Lord returns, one wonders how many will go! Who after all has reached that standard of loyalty which would constitute him worthy to be among the first to ascend? At the best we are all unprofitable servants. Compared with what it should be, our love is cold, our service is poor, our influence is limited.

Does it not amount to this—If it be a question of **merit**, not a single saint will go. If it be a matter of **grace** (and surely it is), then **all** will go.

Finally, let us ever remember that just as our hope is centred in Christ, so His hope is centred in us. Many times we read in the fourth gospel that He came down from heaven, not to do His own will, but the Father's who sent Him. The great mission of the Lord Jesus to this planet might be summed up in these words, "Lo! I come to do Thy will O God." This was particularly manifested in Gethsemane's garden, when, under the shadow of the cross, He said, "Not My will, but Thine be done."

But there was one occasion when He definitely expressed the desire for the fulfilment of His own will, and the record is in John 17, verse 24, "Father, I **will** that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me, where I am, that they may behold My glory."

How grand it is to realise that this intense longing on the part of our blessed Lord is so intimately connected with His redeemed ones! Every other thought; every other purpose; every other anticipation was subservient to this tremendous yearning of His heart.

Let us, therefore, take courage, because, "**Now** is our salvation nearer than when we believed." (concluded).

FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTALS

by J. B. HEWITT, Chesterfield

(50) JUSTIFICATION

Justification is a most important subject as it has to do with a right relationship with God. It is one of the great cardinal truths of the Gospel. It was the age old question of Job 25.4, "How then can man be justified with God?" There appeared to be no answer to this problem for God declared Himself to be "One that will by no means clear the guilty" (Ex. 34.7).

Taking a broad view of the subject the following facts may be noted. We are justified judicially by God (Rom. 3.26; 8.33); meritoriously by blood (Rom. 5.9); freely by His grace (Rom. 3.24); effectually by the Spirit (1 Cor. 6.11); assuredly by His resurrection (Rom. 4.25); instrumentally by faith (Rom. 5.1), and evidentially by works (Jas. 2.14-16).

THE SCRIPTURAL MEANING OF IT. The act of God declaring men free from guilt and acceptable to Him and counting them righteous (Rom. 3.25,26; 5.18). A change in a man's relation to God, or standing before God. Some have described it, "just as if I have never sinned". It would be good but has no Scriptural basis, it is bad theology. The noun form "OIKAIOSIS" means to pronounce righteous or acquitted. On believing one is acquitted of his sin and accounted righteous. This is the PREROGATIVE of God. He has done this for us in Christ (Rom. 5.16,17). We are just in His sight eternally.

ITS TWO-FOLD NATURE (1) It is a removal — the negative side. Saved from the anger of a holy God (Rom. 5.16). The accusations of conscience are silenced (Heb. 9.14; 10.2). From the consequences of sin (Rom. 6.23; Heb. 9.27). (2) It is a restoration — the positive side. We are cleared from all guilt (Rom. 5.16; 8.33), and constituted righteous (Rom. 3.22; 4.3-9; Gal. 3.6). As in the burnt offering the death of the victim procured acceptance before God. (Lev. 1.4; Eph. 5.2).

THE SINNER NEEDS JUSTIFICATION. All men are unrighteous (Rom. 3.10), unruly (Rom. 3.16,17), unclean (Isa. 64.6),

unprofitable (Rom. 3.12), ungodly (Rom. 5.6) and unable to please God (Rom. 8.8; Heb. 11.6).

SOME MISTAKES ABOUT JUSTIFICATION. People think that by good living, charity, law-keeping, and religion they can obtain favour with God. This is not so. (Job 9.1,2,20; Psa. 130.3; 143.2). It is not possible by keeping the law (Gal. 3.10,11). Some taught that circumcision must be added to faith (Gal. 3.2,3; Rom. 4.1,2). The law gives the knowledge of sin, it cannot justify (Rom. 3.20). It guides us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith (Gal. 3.24).

THE MARVEL OF JUSTIFICATION. We are justified by God (Isa. 50.8; Rom. 8.29). He is righteous in all His ways and judgements in accordance with His character. (Rom. 3.4,30). Verse 21 is important "Now" shows the unique character of this day of grace. "Sins that are past" (v. 25), remind us of God's forbearance in passing over sins prior to Calvary. The death of Christ declares God righteous in thus acting. He is a Just God. We are justified by the grace of God, the spring of it (Rom. 3.24). In grace God bestows the blessing, "Freely" means "without a cause" or "for nought" (John 15.25; 2 Thess. 3.8). Justification is the gift of God. (Rom. 5,16,18). All is bestowed freely because of the blood shed sacrificially at Calvary (Rom. 5.9), and the Saviour's obedience on Calvary (Rom. 5.9,19).

THE MEANS OF JUSTIFICATION. "By His blood" Rom. 5.9. This is the only basis. It is procured by and in Christ (Gal. 2.17). The sinner on believing in Jesus possesses justification "NOW" (Rom. 5.9a). By the resurrection of Christ (Rom. 4.25; 8.34). His death is the ground of justification. His resurrection is the guarantee, that it is judicially, and legally acceptable. This is illustrated in Abraham before the law (Rom. 4.1-4, 9-25), and David under the law (Rom. 4.5-9). Justification is received on the principle of faith (Rom. 5.1; 3.28). It is faith in the Person and work of Christ (Rom. 4.3; Gal. 3.6). The faith of the sinner is reckoned for righteousness, as in the case of Abraham and David (Rom. 4.5-9). It is entirely of faith (Gal. 2.20).

THE MESSAGE OF JUSTIFICATION. Clearly declared by Paul (Acts 13.38,39). The condition of blessing "all that believe", the extent of the blessing — "from all things. Illustrated in the prayer of the Publican (Luke 18.13,14). He was acquitted and

accepted. Both Peter and Paul proclaimed Christ as the only means of salvation (Acts 4.12; 13.38,39).

THE MEASURE OF JUSTIFICATION. No charge can be laid against us (Rom. 8.33). We are cleared from all things (Acts 13.39). We are changed eternally (1 Cor. 6.11). Our conscience has peace with God (Rom. 5.1). Communion with God is ours daily (Rom. 5.2). We are confirmed as heirs (Tit. 3.7), and certain to be glorified (Rom. 8.30). There is no disagreement between Paul and James regarding this great truth. The quotation in Rom. 4.2,3 is from Gen. 15.6 and refers to Abraham's justification by faith. James 2.21 is from Gen. 22, dealing with his consecration. This took place some thirty years afterwards and was conclusive proof of the genuineness of his faith. Rahab is mentioned because her act (Jam. 2.25) was a work of faith. Both confirmed that faith is always seen by its actions. God saw their faith by what they did in a crisis. Two features of Christianity are expressed in these two characters — a higher affinity in relationship and a nobler association in fellowship. To Abraham was given the seal of circumcision for assurance, to Rahab was given the scarlet cord of acceptance. James reminds us that a faith that never moves a limb is a corpse, movement is the test of life (Jas. 2.20). Others take a different view, Paul's teaching is positional the principle of faith; James' teaching is practical, the practice in the life. Only God could assess the reality of these two great characters and blessed them accordingly. A good illustration of justification is found in the "Cities of Refuge" in Jordan ch. 20. Meditate on this and see how it works.

ISAIAH'S PORTRAITS OF CHRIST

by J. FLANIGAN (Belfast)

5—"THE PERFECT SERVANT"

Jehovah has had a multitude of servants. They are a noble and illustrious roll of honour. But when Jehovah exhorts us to "Behold My Servant", none of us thinks of asking, "Lord, which servant?". There is but one servant worthy of the adoring contemplation of all the saints. His Name is Jesus. It is upon this blessed One that we now meditate.

The early verses of Isaiah 42, with passages from chapters 49, 50, 52 and 53, are often referred to as the "Servant Songs". They sing of the lovely character and ministry of Messiah. They tell of His Incarnation, of His Crucifixion, and of His eventual Glory. In Chapter 42 there are seven delightful features of Jehovah's perfect Servant.

SUBMISSIVENESS. This is an essential prerequisite for every servant. That He Who is the Son from eternity should be willing to be called "Servant", draws out our admiration of One Who was perfectly submissive. "My Son", says Jehovah, in the second Psalm. "My Servant", He says, in Isaiah 42.1. Our Lord has added a new dimension to Sonship. That a Son should be a Servant was a thing unknown in Jewish households. Servants and sons were different. Even the prodigal knew this (Luke 15.19). The holy submissiveness of the Servant-Son has added dignity to service. "He took upon Him the form of a servant", and we bow in worship.

FAITHFULNESS. The unswerving consistent faithfulness of the Lord Jesus brought delight to the heart of God. "My Son"; "My Servant"; My Delight"! The Father's expression of delight at the Jordan is the intimation of what those hidden years really meant to Him. For thirty years in Nazareth there lived, in utter faithfulness to God, One who could say, at any time, "I must be about my Father's business". In the things of His Father He was ever occupied. His work in a carpenter's shop, or His attendance at the Nazareth synagogue; His subjection in the home, or His holy demeanour in the town; all, alike, were for the pleasure and glory of His Father. Those were thirty years of faithfulness to God, and the years of public ministry that followed were just the same.

FRUITFULNESS. "My Spirit upon Him". There are three references by Isaiah to the Holy Spirit and the Messiah; chapter 11.2, chapter 61.1, and here in chapter 42.1. There would appear to be links with His incarnation, with His baptism, and with His public ministry. The gentle Dove abode upon Him. It is reminiscent of the oil in the Meal Offering. There was unbroken communion between the incarnate Son and the Spirit in the holiness of His perfect Manhood, and this is evidenced in an unique life, in which was ever present all the fruit of that Spirit. Every beautiful feature was there, in perfect blend and balance. There was love, joy, and peace, in His relations with God. There was longsuffering, gentleness, and good-

ness, towards man. There was, in His blessed Self, faith, meekness, and temperance. His was, indeed, a fruitful life and ministry.

QUIETNESS. "He shall not cry, nor lift up . . . His voice". We know of course, that, literally and actually, our Lord did cry; and He did lift up His voice to be heard in the street. He preached to multitudes, and no doubt preached that all might hear. What this lovely phrase means is this, that He would never, ever, engage in noisy, cheap, loud advertising of Himself. The street vendor shouts his wares. He attracts attention to himself and to his goods by shouting in the street. It is the cheapest form of publicity. Our Lord would never be associated with such. Nor should His servants be. He has exemplified for us that quiet dignity which should ever characterise the service of God. There is no room for, and no need for, noisy gimmickry, in the ministry of the glad tidings.

GENTLENESS. With the "Bruised reed" and the "Smoking flax" the perfect Servant deals gently. The reed was the most primitive of wind instruments. The flax was the wick of the simple oil lamp. When the reed was bruised the melody was spoiled. When the wick smouldered the flame was dimmed. Neither the reed nor the wick were of any intrinsic value. They could easily be discarded and replaced. But this was not the way of the Lord Jesus. With gentle grace and tenderness He would mend the reed or trim the flax. A Thomas may doubt; a Peter may deny; the others may forsake Him and flee; but He will restore them. He will have the reed playing sweetly again. He will have the smoking flax burning brightly once more. May we, His servants, imitate His gentleness, and deal kindly with those who err and get out of the way. Our Lord never tolerated sin; nor should we; but He did exercise forbearance towards His erring people.

STEADFASTNESS. "He shall not fail". Sometimes we excuse our failures. If only we had lived in a different age; if we had lived in a different place; or if we had been given a different task; it might have been easier, we imagine. But the perfect Servant ministered when things were as dark as ever they had been in Israel. And He moved in a variety of circumstances, engaging in a variety of tasks. Wherever you find Him; whatever He is doing; at whatever time; He did not fail. Preaching, teaching, healing, praying, comforting, rebuking, He did not fail. Whether individuals like the woman of Samaria or the Rabbi Nicodemus; whether little groups in a

fisherman's cottage or multitudes by the Sea of Galilee, He did not fail. His was a steadfast ministry, with a fixed purpose — the glory of His Father.

RIGHTEOUSNESS. "Judgement unto truth . . . judgement in the earth". Just judgement was His motivating desire. Jehovah would be glorified in this. Impartial, righteous dealing with all the people. He would never be swayed. Voices may call, but He was deaf to them. There would be sights that would distract others, but to those sights the perfect Servant was blind. He had a single eye and a pure motive in His ministry. He lived and served for the pleasure of God, and left us an example.

"So we remember Him, in all His ways,
The Man of Thy good pleasure, through those days
Of earthly sojourn, suffering and shame,
And give Thee thanks for Him in His blest Name".

Talks to Young Believers

by JOHN RITCHIE

A WARM COMPANION

"When I left for America", writes a young believer, "I was in a cold and back-slidden state of soul. In fact, the only desire I had, was to get on in the world and make money. When I arrived, a stranger among strangers, I would very soon have drifted along with the world. In my new situation, my fellow-worker, a young lad of fifteen, was a *warm* Christian, and before I was in his company an hour, I felt the power of his godly, honest life. He asked me if I was converted, and when he found out that I was, he soon let it be known throughout the warehouse. So that I found myself a marked man the first day. When the evening came, he took me with him to his lodgings, and after spending an hour or two happily, we knelt down together. He prayed for me so earnestly, and asked God to 'help me to take a decided stand for the Lord'. My soul has been restored to the Lord, and I am very happy. I thank God for my *warm* companion." Dear young saints, has your warm and bright testimony been the means of bringing some backslider back to the Lord, or does your worldly walk and talk drag others down?

PSALM 34

by S. NICHOLLS (Cumbran)

This is the second of the "Alphabetical" Psalms. Others are Psalms 25, 37, 111, 112, 119, 145, each verse or verses beginning with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet. The title of this Psalm links it with Psalm 56 which is its prelude (There are fourteen Psalms whose titles indicate links with historical episodes in David's life).

For this historical setting we need to read 1 Samuel 21.10-15, where we have the record of David's flight from Achish. It is not without significance that chapter 22 opens with the words "David departed or escaped to the cave Adullom". We like to think of that cave echoing and re-echoing to the sound of praise as expressed in our Psalm. "O magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt His Name together" (v.3). Those in distress and in debt and discontented are described as "humble" v.2, "poor" v.6, and "afflicted" v.19.

But there is now no more distress for the "Lord delivereth from fear" v.4, from "dangers" v.7, from "troubles" v.17, and from "afflictions" v.19. There is no more left for "there is no want to them that fear Him" v.9; "they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing" v.10. There is no more discontentment as they heeded the counsel of their father figure David. "Come ye children hearken unto me. I will teach you the fear of the Lord. What man is he that desireth life or loveth many days that he may see good" vs. 11,12.

This Psalm must have been a portion of Scripture enjoyed by Peter. He experienced angelic deliverance (v.7), in Acts 5.19 and 12.10. He wrote about "tasting that the Lord is gracious (v.8) in 1 Peter 2.3. He also freely quotes from verses 11-14 in 1 Peter 3. 10-12m "He that will love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil and his lips that they speak no guile".

A suggested analysis of the Psalm is as follows —

- vs. 1-10 David's Praise for Deliverance.
- vs. 11-14 David's Prescription for Discontentment.
- vs. 15-22 The Saint's Privileges Described.

THOUGHTS OF CHRIST

(for the busy Housewife) No. 5

BY ERIC G. PARMENTER, BASINGSTOKE

Old Testament scripture reminds us of the possibility of one of the common people, a ruler or anointed priest becoming guilty of sin, "through ignorance against any of the commandments of the Lord concerning things which ought not to be done". Because of this God in the unsearchable riches of His grace appointed the sin offering whereby the sins of ignorance might be dealt with according to His holiness.

How delightful for our hearts to contemplate our blessed Lord as the full anti-type of the sin offering: Even whilst He was being stricken, and made sin for us, there was found in Him all the perfection of divine excellency, God still beholding Him as "His beloved Son in whom He was well pleased" whose devotion and obedience in life and in death remained unchanged, as told out in those parts of the offering which were placed upon the Altar of Burnt Offering and ascended as a sweet savour to God: Yet how solemn to remember that the whole bullock, excepting what was placed on the altar, was carried "without the camp unto a clean place and burned up".

There by faith we see what was involved for the Lord Jesus to make satisfactory provision that the sins of believers may be ended forever: To stand outside the gate and behold Calvary — the flame fiercely raging in the full intensity of its devouring power learning something of the fire of Holy wrath concerning sin, will help us to apprehend the heinousness even of sins of ignorance which so often we think of as synonymous with guiltlessness.

PLEASE NOTE — CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Brother John Glenville has moved to a new residence.
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**16 Trelawney Road,
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“JESUS, THY BLOOD AND RIGHTEOUSNESS”

COUNT NICOLAUS LUDWIG VON ZINZENDORF (1700—1760)

The church of Christ owes much to godly mothers and godly grandmothers. It is known that soon after the birth of Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf on May 26th, 1700 at Dresden, Saxony, Germany that his godly mother in recording the event in her bible made this prayerful entry, "May the Father of mercies rule the heart of this child, so that he may walk honesty and uprightly. May sin never rule over him, and may his feet be steadfast in the word; then he will be happy for time and eternity". The boy's father, Count Zinzendorf, descended from one of the most ancient, noble and wealthy families in Saxony and who held high office under the Elector of Saxony, died six weeks after the birth of his son. His mother remarried and Nicolaus was brought up by his maternal grandmother, Henriette Catherine von Gersdorf on her estate at Hennersdorf. She too was a woman of deep piety and talented, a writer of hymns and religious works.

Nicolaus, when he was ten years of age, was sent to the Pietist school of Pastor Francke in Halle and there he spent six years. It would appear that a work of grace in his salvation was effected in those early years for, in looking back on those days from adult life, he recounted "it is more than thirty years since I received a deep impression of Divine grace through the preaching of the cross. The desire to bring souls to Christ took possession of me, and my heart became fixed on the Lamb".

At the age of sixteen, strong pressure was brought to bear upon Nicolaus to embark upon a diplomatic career in State service and he was sent by his guardian-uncle to study law at the University of Wittenberg. He qualified there three years later and was appointed Counsellor of the State at the Court of Saxony. It was just about this time that, in a pressing desire to see the world, he came one evening to the public gallery in Dusseldorf and there, while gazing upon Stenburg's telling picture of the crucifixion was confronted with life's great crisis. The Christ of Calvary seemed to gaze into his very soul and the words of the inscription underneath to burn into his heart.

"All this I did for thee;
What hast thou done for Me?"

Overcome by the love of Christ, he straightway resolved in his heart to serve only Him; thereafter, his life's motto was to be, "I have but one passion and that is HE and only HE". He had seen the

Christ, but more, he had also seen the world, not in its luxury but in its need and he resolved to do something about it.

In the early 18th century many Moravian and Bohemian believers, suffering under an oppressive Austrian government, fled their country and sought freedom under Zinzendorf on his estate at Berthelsdorf. These followers of John Huss (the "old goose of Bohemia") were welcomed and one of their leaders, Christian David, founded there the famous colony of Herrnhut (meaning "the protection of the Lord"). This model village was soon renowned far and wide, and Zinzendorf was famed for his willingness to receive all oppressed believers. Zinzendorf loved them as brethren in Christ and ministered fervently and untiringly in their midst. His biographer tells of his last days at Herrnhut, how that he endeavoured to seek the personal acquaintance of every member therein, whereby he might ascertain their spiritual state before God and that there was scarcely one soul there that he did not converse with privately.

Zinzendorf's dedication and vision inspired the Moravians to become pioneers in foreign missions. In the year 1732, when the Herrnhut colony numbered about six hundred, two of its number were sent forth as missionaries to the island of St. Thomas in the West Indies. When they departed, each with six dollars in his pocket, they determined to sell themselves as slaves if that was the only way of bringing the gospel to the negroes. In this spirit, the Moravian missions grew and grew, reaching to all five continents of the world. Thus, years before William Carey sailed for India or John Wesley itinerated around his native England, the Moravians had 165 missions scattered widely throughout the world.

Zinzendorf also became a prolific hymn writer and is reckoned to have been one of the greatest in Germany. His first hymn was written as a boy at Halle in 1712, his last just a few days before he died at Herrnhut in 1760, and between these dates he wrote more than two thousand hymns in all. His critics maintain that he wrote too much and did not give enough care to revision and correction. Nevertheless, some of his hymns are of excellent worth, fired by a deep personal devotion to his Saviour and marked by simplicity and sweetness.

Zinzendorf died at Herrnhut on May 9th, 1760. His closing testimony was assuring and triumphant, "I am going to the Saviour, I am ready. If He is no longer willing to make use of me here, I am ready to go to Him, for I have nothing else to keep me here". Thus he passed away into the presence of his Lord. It is recorded that there were scarcely sufficient funds to pay for his grave and yet

many travelled from long distances to pay last respects to a great leader. Over two thousand attended his funeral and several of his own hymns were sung on that occasion.

The hymns of Count Zinzendorf were sung at the first by the Moravians at Herrnhut colony and later by Moravians worldwide. It was the singing of these hymns that captured the hearts and influenced so deeply the lives of John and Charles Wesley. When they first heard them on a visit to Herrnhut and later on board ship to Georgia in America, their hearts were stirred, not only by the spiritual richness and depth of the words, but by the fervour and abandon with which they were sung.

Zinzendorf's hymns today are to be found mostly in Moravian collections but two of his compositions have found much wider acceptance and acclaim. "Jesus, still lead on", known in its original by almost every Sunday School child in Germany has been translated into the English by Miss Jane Borthwick. "Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness", written by Zinzendorf in 1739 while returning from a visit to his missionary friends in the West Indies and rendered the following year into English by John Wesley, is the hymn by which he is best remembered. In its original there were 33 verses and some of these will ever have an enduring place in the hearts of the people of God.

"Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness,
My beauty are, my glorious dress;
Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed,
With joy shall I lift up my head.

This spotless robe the same appears,
When ruined nature sinks in years;
No age can change its glorious hue,
The robe of Christ is ever new.

When from the dust of death I rise
To claim my mansion in the skies,
E'en then shall this be all my plea —
Jesus hath lived, hath died for me!

Lord, I believe, were sinners more
Than sands upon the ocean shore,
Thou hast for all a ransom paid,
For all a full atonement made.

Ah! give to all Thy servants, Lord,
With power to speak Thy gracious word,
That all who to Thy wounds will flee,
May find eternal life in Thee."

Man, through the fall, divested of his white and honourable robe of perfect innocence appears cringing before his God in his spiritual nakedness. Our bible, however, declares that his God is none other than Jehovah Tsidkenu (Jer. 23.6) and that he hath provided for His creative "a robe of righteousness" (Isa. 61.10). Like the inner vestment of the Saviour this robe of righteousness is without seam, woven throughout. Many eyes, human, angelic, satanic and even Divine have scrutinized it; it is without flaw and without spot. Such is the sufficiency of Calvary's work that the believer's spiritual attire is complete and he now appears unashamed and resplendent before his God, clothed in God's righteousness (2 Cor. 5.21), . . . nor will this robe of righteousness ever fade or wear out with the passing of time or throughout a long eternity.

**"My beauty this, my glorious dress
Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness!"**

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ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY



Contents

CHRIST IN THE APOCALYPSE

by John B. D. Page

ISAIAH'S PORTRAITS OF CHRIST

by J. Flanigan

FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTALS

by J. B. Hewitt

SOWING AND REAPING

by James G. Hutchinson

THE THREE CROSSES

by Nelson McDonald

SOME MODERN

MISREPRESENTATIONS OF OUR LORD

by W. Hoste, B.A.

PREACHING

THE GREATNESS OF THE SON

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

by Anthony Orsini

THOUGHTS OF CHRIST

Eric G. Parmenter

HYMNS AND THEIR WRITERS

by Jack Strahan

OH! THE RAPTURE!

(1 Thessalonians 4 vs. 15-17).

Oh, glorious expectation!
For saints who live on earth;
That Christ *shall* come from heaven,
(Saints too shall rise from death)
We all shall rise together
To MEET HIM in the air;
Oh! glad anticipation,
We'll SEE OUR LORD — so fair!

The LORD HIMSELF shall journey
To take HIS faithful home;
He won't *then* send an angel,
For HE HIMSELF shall come;
With a shout! HE'LL COME — TRIUMPHANT!
At last He'll greet His Bride,
Oh! GREAT HIS EXULTATION!!!
To have her by HIS side.

The voice of the archangel
We'll hear, clear through the skies;
And then — THE TRUMP OF GOD!!,
To lift our longing eyes
To view, OUR GRACIOUS SAVIOUR
We've waited long to see;
A MOMENT — FILLED WITH RAPTURE
To LAST ETERNALLY.

Oh, Moment! — SO STUPENDOUS!!
That we are longing for,
To MEET that LOVELY PERSON
We love — nay we adore.
To feel HIS love surround us
Oh *wondrous joy — sublime*
We'll be with HIM forever
Gone! Gone! the waiting time.

To be sung to the tune 'Aurelia' (The Churches One foundation)

by J. Matthewman.

CHRIST IN THE APOCALYPSE (24)

by JOHN B. D. PAGE

THE INCOMPARABLE CHRIST (ii)

Reading : Revelation 22.16.

"I Jesus . . ." — this was the first time that the Christ, exalted far above all, had spoken in such a personal way to John. The use of this name, given to Him at His birth, probably took the Apostle's thoughts back to Bethlehem, Galilee, Calvary, and Olivet.

This Person, so precious to them that believe, demands that His personal Name should be considered.

JESUS

As distinct from His titles, "Jesus" was the Name given to Him at His birth. According to oriental custom, the choice of name was the father's right to exercise which was expected of Zacharias when naming his son, John, at the time of the baby's circumcision on the eighth day (Luke 1.57-60). With our Lord, the custom was observed, for Matthew (1.25) records that the "he (viz., Joseph) called His Name Jesus". Actually, the prerogative was not exercised by His commonly supposed father, Joseph, but implicitly by His Father in heaven Who communicated the name by an angel to Mary before His conception and afterwards to Joseph (Luke 1.30ff; Matt. 1.21ff). Then eight days after His birth at His circumcision, the Child was called "Jesus" (Luke 2.21).

Although He was God manifest in the flesh, His Name Jesus, the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew, Joshua, was not uncommon amongst Jewish families. In this instance, 'Jesus' expresses the relation of Jehovah to Him in Incarnation, and it is associated with the shame of the cross that He endured to "save His people from their sins".

It was in Galilee where John, a fisherman, heard Jesus call Him to discipleship (Matt. 4.18,21); the occasion may have flashed back to his mind in the solitude of Patmos.

In his Gospel, John relates a personal experience at Calvary: "when Jesus . . . saw His mother and the disciple whom He loved", He said to her, "Woman, behold thy son!" and to the disciple "Behold thy mother!" to which John responded by taking her to his

home (John 19.26ff). Significantly, Jesus addressed Mary as "Woman", a respectful form of address with orientals, and not as "Mother", because she is not the Mother of God.

At the Lord's ascension into heaven from Olivet, John, being one of the eleven present, heard two men in white apparel say reassuringly, "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go in heaven" (Acts 1.11). In stating that the ascension prefigured His coming again to the earth, the two men did not use the title 'Lord' but His name "Jesus" because, as Lord, He will come again to the air for the saints of this church age (1 Thess. 4.16) and, as Jesus, He will come again to the earth unto His own people, Israel.

Judging from the large number of some six hundred occurrences of the name, "Jesus", in the four Gospels (in contrast to only about sixty-four from Acts to Revelation), it was the Name with which He came to the Jews at His first advent.

Interestingly, in Revelation "Jesus" is still connected with the Jewish people, and its six occurrences, which relate to the tribulation, are worthy of mention.

When the wrath of God will be poured out, like wine from a goblet, upon the worshippers of the Beast and his image, there will be "the saints", an elect remnant of Jews, who will "keep . . . the faith of Jesus" (14.9-12). Think of how their faith implanted by Jesus, whom their forefathers rejected and crucified, may will be sustained by their reading of the works of Jesus and His teaching as recorded in the New Testament!

On a later occasion (17.1-6), John was carried away in spirit into a wilderness, probably figurative of the spiritual wilderness of the religious world after the rapture of the Church, where he saw a great harlot in a dominating position of sitting upon a scarlet beast with seven heads and ten horns. The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, which were the colours worn by emperors and senators of ancient Rome and now by Popes and cardinals, and decked with gold and precious stones, probably symbols of Papal wealth and grandeur. Like common prostitutes, she wore upon her brow her name, "Mystery, Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth", indicating that ancient Babylonianism is the source of the idolatrous Roman Catholic system. With present-day Ecumenism, there is a strong tide flowing throughout

Christendom for re-union with the Church of Rome. The great harlot, symbolical of the apostate world-church of the end time, was drunk with the intoxicant of human blood — not only "with the blood of the saints" but also "with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus", and the seer marvelled at this nauseating sight. In contrast to their Jewish forefathers who bore false witness against Jesus at His trial before the Sanhedrin and contrived successfully in taking His life, these godly Jews of the last days, having been faithful witnesses for Jesus, will lay down their lives for Him.

From this heinous scene, John's gaze is directed heavenwards to the marriage supper of the Lamb, and he is reminded by the attendant angel that his "brethren . . . have the testimony of Jesus", which is then defined: "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (19.9ff). "The testimony of Jesus in the Apocalypse", says Walter Scott, "is of the prophetic character, referring to His public assumption of governmental power to be displayed in the Kingdom".

In a subsequent vision (20.4), the Apostle saw three groups of people: firstly, enthroned persons with authority to judge; next, a company martyred for Jesus; and lastly, those who refuse to worship the Beast or his image during the great tribulation. Once again, his attention is turned in the second group to the horrors of martyrdom, seeing "the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God". For the beheading of these believing Jews, there is an allusion to execution by a hatchet according to Roman practice. Their faithful witness for Jesus and loyalty in proclaiming the word of God will be after the rapture and before the setting up of the image of the Beast in the temple at Jerusalem.

It is not without significance that in these several scriptures, relating to the Lord's earthly people, the Jews, during the tribulation, the single Name "Jesus", belonging primarily to the days of His flesh, is correctly used. Such usage generally in reference to the Church, His heavenly people, would be inappropriate.

Coming again to the sixth and last mention of the Name "Jesus", it is in His testimony, and so its setting is not dispensational as in the previous occurrences but personal. A feature of the book is the testimony at the beginning and another at the end. The opening testimony is given by the Apostle, exiled and cut off from society:

"I John", said he, ". . . was in the isle, that is called Patmos, . . . for the testimony of Jesus Christ" (1.9). In contrast, the closing testimony is from the glorified Christ, who is foremost amongst the redeemed hosts of heaven: "I Jesus", said He, "have sent Mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches" (22.16). In the face of possible doubts and denials concerning "these things" — great prophecies, great judgements, great promises — revealed to the seer, this affirmation is made in a personal manner. Having beheld Jesus Christ in His manifested glory and majesty by way of various visions and many titles, John now heard Him say, "I Jesus . . ." — nothing official or remote, but so personal and heart warming for him shut away on that desolate isle of barren and rugged rocks in the Aegean Sea and far removed from fellow-believers. What grace on the part of his Saviour and Lord to speak so compassionately to the disciple whom He loved! His testimony is supported by a surpassing wonderful revelation of Himself: "I am the Root and Offspring of David, and the Bright and Morning Star". Consideration if this cluster of titles should heighten and broaden our vision and deepen our understanding of our beloved Lord as we mediate upon them in turn. — *(To be continued)*.

ISAIAH'S PORTRAITS OF CHRIST

by J. FLANIGAN (Belfast)

6—"THE SHEPHERD"

It is well known that chapter 40 is a watershed in Isaiah's prophecy. It is the beginning of the second great section of the book. Thirty-nine chapters have passed, answering to the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament. Twenty-seven chapters have yet to come, answering to the twenty-seven books of the New Testament. Chapter 40 is the first of these twenty-seven chapters. Here, as in the New Testament, we are early introduced to the ministry of John Baptist. It was a wilderness ministry; a call to repentance. John is the last of the prophets. Perhaps he is the porter, opening the door to the true Shepherd. In verse 11 of the chapter the Shepherd is introduced.

There is a strange and tender blending of greatness and gentleness; of grace and glory. The Shepherd who gently tends His

flock is none other than the Creator. He is the Everlasting God. He is Jehovah and the Holy One with whom the nations are as a drop from a bucket or as fine dust in a balance. The great things, and great ones, of earth, are to Him less than nothing, but in His very greatness He moves in gentleness towards His people who are His flock. David knew this. His opening words in Psalm 23 are not just a statement of fact; they are an exclamation, "Jehovah Rohi!" My Shepherd is Jehovah. With what confidence might we rest in His Shepherd care for us when we remember how great He is. His Shepherd ministry takes on a new grandeur when we consider it in the light of His greatness.

We do well to remember too, that for fifteen hundred years before Bethlehem, He was the Shepherd of Israel (Psalm 80.1). For centuries, and for generations, He shepherded that straying flock. He bore with their backslidings, their murmurings, and their unbelief. And in Israel's sad history can we not see a reflection of our own? What consolation to know that He whom I now call, "My Shepherd", knows well what human frailty and failing is, and He cares for me as He cared for Israel of old.

There is a four-fold ministry of the Shepherd in Isaiah 40.11. He feeds; He gathers; He carries; He leads. In the days of His flesh He did all this in a personal way for those whom He called His "little flock" (Luke 12.32). Now He has gone on high but His ministry continues. He is the chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5.4). He has under-shepherds. He careth for you. Sometimes it is a personal care. Sometimes it is effected for us in the patient ministry of shepherds in the assembly.

He feeds His flock. How graciously and patiently did He feed His little flock when He was here. He called them by name and they followed Him, and as they walked together, or sat together, He expounded truths to them and fed them. Sometimes on a mountain side, sometimes in a garden. Perhaps by the sea-side, or at times in the home. Maybe in the Temple court, or maybe on the highway. But He seemed to always teaching them, and this was their food. His word was their sustenance and their nourishment. So it is today. Nothing is as important for our growth as the Word. If at times we can read it for ourselves, and if He ministers personally to us in our reading, and we are fed, this is good. If at

other times He uses His servants to minister to us and to lead us into rich pastures, this also is good. Whether alone with Him, or waiting upon the ministry of His under-shepherds, we must feed on His Word. It is food of the flock.

He gathers. The very idea of a flock suggests togetherness. It is shepherd ministry to gather. It is the enemy's work to scatter. Sectarian division has been the great strategy of the Devil down the years. The simple answer to human systems and schisms is the unity of a scripturally gathered assembly. "Gather my saints together unto me" (Psalm 50.5). "Gathered unto My Name" (Matthew 18.20). "Dwell together in unity" (Psalm 133.1). "Unto Him shall the gathering of the people be" (Genesis 49.10). It is His mind that we should be together, and so He gathers. But how? The answer is again in His Word. The directions are simple and clear. There is nothing complicated except where men have made it so. Implicitly obey His Word and we shall find the footsteps of the flock; and find Him! It is still a wilderness ministry that calls us out to Him. He is not in the city. He is not in the camp. We must go out to Him. And as we go out we shall find that others are making their way out too, and with them we gather. As we get close to Him we shall be close to those who are close to Him and we shall be "together", as He desires it. This is not denominationalism, to gather to Him in obedience to His Word.

He carries. This word "carry" is the word which appears four times in the chapter which introduces the Aaronic priesthood, Exodus 28. Four times we read "Aaron shall bear . . ." The word there translated "bear", is the word which in Isaiah 40.11 is translated "carry". Aaron carried the people. He bore their names on his shoulders and on his breast. He bore their cause upon his mitre, and for their guidance he carried the Urim and the Thummim. He bore them on the strength of his shoulders and in the sympathy of his heart. So does our Lord Jesus carry us. For our security and in our sorrow, He carries us. He carries the lambs in ch. 40.11. He carries us to old age in ch. 46.4. Well do we sing, "All the way my Saviour leads me". This brings us to the fourth aspect of the Shepherd ministry of Isaiah 40.

He leads. He gently leads. There are lambs in the flock. Some of the ewes are pictured as having their young with them, by their side. The true shepherd will gently adapt the pace of the flock to

suit the lambs. He does not create a separate flock of lambs. He maintains the togetherness of the flock, but ever remembers the special needs of the lambs as they move along. So the lambs amongst us need particular care. The world in which they live is very hostile. There is infidelity and adversity. There are temptations, allurements, pitfalls, and snares. They need gentle guidance. They do not need meetings specially convened for them. They do not need to be segregated. But they do need patient instruction from the Word, exposition that they can understand, and exhortation given in such a manner that they can respond.

It is a great privilege granted to any brother, to be an under-shepherd. Your work is appreciated both by the Chief Shepherd Himself, and by the spiritual of the flock. May the Lord graciously give us a continuing shepherd ministry of feeding and gathering and carrying and leading, until He comes.

FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTALS

by J. B. HEWITT, Chesterfield

(51) REGENERATION OR THE NEW BIRTH

John 3.1014; Matt. 19.28; Titus 3.5.

Regeneration is God's act in the soul and the introduction of a new life. The word only occurs in Matt. 19.28, and Titus 3.5. The latter is the spiritual rebirth of the individual, the washing that needs no repetition. Matt. 19.28 refers to the new condition of things brought in with the millennium. The "renewing" is a continuous process which will go on during our life time.

Regeneration is an objective state or condition and can only be witnessed by the eye of God as it indicates an internal condition. Regeneration is an inward experience, the divine side. Conversion is the outward expression, the individual turning to God (1 Thess. 1.9).

THE NEED OF THE NEW BIRTH—John 3.1-3. Man is dead in trespasses and in sins, therefore reformation is of no avail (Eph. 2.1). The corruption of human nature requires it (John 3.6; Rom. 5.7,8; Titus 3.3). We learn from John 3.1,3, that human religion, learning, natural talent and ability can avail nothing in

this experience. Nicodemus was, politically — a ruler, a member of the Sanhedrin; Religiously — a Pharisee (Phil. 3.5d); Academically — the Teacher in Israel (v.10). Socially, he was a wealthy man (John 19.39,40), yet totally ignorant of spiritual truth (v.10; Ezek. 36.25-27). He acknowledged the Lord had wisdom, power and divine approval. He is taught by this new Teacher that he "must be born again" (v.3). This is not merely another birth, but another KIND of birth, "born from above" (v.7 RV. Margin). The Lord Jesus is the Instructor of Supernatural Knowledge (v.1-13).

THE WAY OF THE NEW BIRTH—John 3.4-9. In this dialogue the Lord explains to a man of great intellectual capacity that he is still unsuitable for the Kingdom of God (v.3). His sinful nature disqualified him for the communion of a heavenly society. Spiritual life cannot be evolved — it is imparted by the Spirit of God (v.5,6). Its important — "I say unto you"; the instrument — "the Spirit". Man is incapable of it (v.6a) and it is imperative and indispensable — "ye must be born again". Nicodemus immediately associated it with the earth (v.4), later he showed prejudice rather than misunderstanding (v.9).

The negative side of the new birth is seen in John 1.13.

(1) It is not inherited — "not of blood" RV; not self-effort or self-determination, no one can give to himself this new life.

(2) "Nor of the will of man", no human influence can produce the new birth. It cannot be imparted for it is of divine origin, and is a free gift from God (Rom 6.23).

On the positive side it is all of God (John 1.13c). The three Persons of the Godhead are involved. Effected by God, He quickens a person who exercises faith in Christ (1 Pet. 1.3; John 1.12,13; Eph. 2.1). Through the work of the Lord Jesus (John 3.14,15). By the Spirit: He is the active Agent in regeneration (John 3.6,8; Titus 3.5). The Spirit convicts of sin, cleanses, quickens, renews. It comes through the instrumentality of the Word of God (Jas. 1.18; 1 Pet. 1.23). Through the resurrection of Christ (1 Pet. 1.3). We are begotten through the gospel (1 Cor. 4.15). Just as Ezekiel preached to the dead bodies (Ezek. 37.9,10), so the Spirit breathes into us new life from above. The new birth is all God's work (Ezek. 36.36,37).

HOW DESCRIBED. As a new creation (2 Cor. 5.17; Gal. 6.15). "All things are become new". This radical change, is the

impartation of a new disposition. Our former standing, "old things are gone for ever". We have become "alive from the dead" (Rom. 6.13); a spiritual resurrection (Eph. 2.1,5; Col. 2.13; 3.1), and "the washing of regeneration". (Titus 3.5).

ENJOYMENT. The reception of a new life and nature, the putting on of the new man (John 3.15; 2 Pet. 1.4; Eph. 4.24). We become children of God (John 2.23; Gal. 3.36). God becomes our Father (Gal. 4.6); and all saints our fellow-citizens (Eph. 2.22). We have a new mind (Rom. 8.6b); can live victoriously by the power of the Spirit (Gal. 5.16,18; 1 John 4.4; 5.4.).

These are to be manifest in our daily life (1 John 3.14). These are the evidences that we are "born of God". Trace the nine references in 1st John. We should live righteous lives (1 John 2.29); love one another (1 John 4.7); a hatred of sin (1 John 3.9,10; 5.18). We delight in God's law (Rom. 7.22) and have a desire for the Word of God (1 Peter 2.2,3) and enjoy the fellowship of saints (Heb. 10.25).

SOWING AND REAPING

by James G. Hutchinson (Dundonald)

The pointed solemn statement of Galatians 6.7 is, "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap". A devoted and much used evangelist, who lived to be very old, said in the closing years of life, "that if there was one verse more than another, that steadied him and made him careful in all his activities it was "Galatians 6.7.

It can be most encouraging to those who seek to do what is right, yet how challenging and searching to those who do otherwise.

This truth is taught in the New Testament, Matthew 7.2 "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again " and again in Luke 6.38.

It is illustrated in Scripture. In Genesis 27 Jacob deceived his father with a kid and a coat. 2 Genesis 37 his sons deceived him with a kid and a coat; in Judges 1.6-7 Adoni-Bezek freely acknowledged he was reaping what he had sown.

It can be seen nationally also, the Egyptians would throw the children into the water, Exodus 1.16, soon their armies were in the sea. Exodus 14.27-28. If the nation refused the true Christ for 3½ years (they must have the false ruler for 3½ years).

In light of this, should we not all be exceedingly careful and ask "what am I sowing"?

1. WE CAN SOW IN THE GOSPEL.

(a) *Who can do this?* It is the privilege and responsibility of every child of God.

(b) *What do we sow?* The Word of God, Luke 8.11; 2 Timothy 4.2; not topical events, not lectures on the word but "the incorruptible word", 1 Peter 1.23.

(c) *How can we sow?* Parents in the home, putting into the young minds the truths of the Scriptures, — how important is the family altar! *Personal witness* — see the woman of John 4. *Tract distribution*, — open-air preaching, special meetings in hall, tents etc. — many areas open up to the exercised mind.

(d) *When should we sow?* "Morning and evening", Ecclesiastes 11.6. In season and out of season, 2 Timothy 4.2.

(e) *Where to sow.* Beside all waters, Isaiah 32.20. Wayside, rocks, thorns, good ground, Luke 8.5-8.

The encouragement for this noble work is, "That shall he also reap", Galatians 6.7 and Psalm 126.5-6, "Reap in joy", "We shall come rejoicing bringing in the sheaves".

2. WE CAN SOW IN MATERIAL THINGS, 2 Corinthians 9.6. The context is the offering for the poor saints. There is no suggestion of covetousness on the part of the writer, nor should there be on the part of any servants.

(a) *Why give?* *Meets a need*, 2 Corinthians 9.12. Poor saints; Assembly expenses; Gospel work etc. *Causes thanksgiving*, 2 Corinthians 9.12. *Own needs will be met*, Phillipians 4.19. Well illustrated in lad with loaves and fish. *Brings abundant harvest*, 2 Corinthians 9.6. While no doubt there is in this the idea of a spiritual recompense, is there not that of a material recompense also? God is no man's debtor.

(b) *What to give?* While no rules can be laid down in this matter, there are scriptures to be observed and principles to be noted. Abraham—Hebrews 7.2—a tenth; Jacob—Genesis 28.22—a tenth; Israel—Leviticus 27.30—a tenth at least. 1 Corinthians 16.2, "as God hath prospered" perhaps we should ask, should we under grace, give less that God asked for under law?

(c) *How to give?* At least two ways are indicated in scripture (i)

Assembly giving; 1 Corinthians 16.1 and (ii) Personal giving; Galatians 6.6 and 3 John 6.

With all on exercise regarding "sowing of material things" let us keep in mind that He still watches "over the Treasury" and let all our giving into whatever channel we may put it, be done only after prayerful thought. If so, it will go where it is needed and fulfil the purpose God has intended.

3. **SOW DISCORD.** Proverbs 6.19. God delights in unity and harmony. Psalm 133.1. "How good and how pleasant". Satan hates it and will use all he can to mar it and one of his ways is to "sow discord". It comes into a list of things God hates and those who profess to be the Lord's should take careful note.

(a) **How can it be done?** (i) Careless talk—1 Timothy 5.13, while this passage deals primarily with young widows, they are not the only ones who gossip and are marked by careless talk. (ii) Evil speaking—while the former is harmful and damaging, this is more so — it is a more deliberate thing. Sometimes it is not only what is said, but how it is said. The devil is called "the accuser of the brethren", how serious and solemn it is when believers begin to help him!

(b) **Where can it be done?** (i) In our own homes—A noted preacher has said, "Many children in Christian homes go astray and rebel, because they get too much "Roast preacher", i.e. too much criticism is indulged in. (ii) In other peoples homes—Some have the opportunity and privilege of being often in the homes of other Christians. How despicable and damaging the pursuit of seeking out news and telling tales; tales which would not always bear investigation. God has said, "Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer among thy people". Leviticus 19.16. (iii) Sometimes from the platform—The platform where God's word is read and spoken from should be a place of transparency and integrity, where God is feared and revered. Not a place where hints are dropped, suggestion made, innuendos uttered, that would divide speakers, hearers and congregations. Shame on any who would descend to such a grievous and God dishonouring practice.

Of our blessed Lord we read "He went about doing good", may God help us to try and follow this example. Let us sow in the Gospel and material things and refrain from sowing discord knowing "*we shall reap if we faint not*".

THE THREE CROSSES — Galatians 6.14

by Nelson McDonald (Scotland)

1—CHRIST CRUCIFIED

The Judaising teachers had entered among the Galatian Christians and were seeking to lead them astray by suggesting that the Cross was not sufficient for their salvation and they should still be adhering to certain passages of the law. When news of this reached the apostle Paul he wrote to them a letter — the Galatian epistle. In this he corrects them and reminds them in it that the Cross is everything to the saints or else it is nothing. He speaks of the Cross in every chapter to remind them of this — 1.4; 2.20; 3.13; 4.4-6; 5.1-11; 6.12,14; — and in order to woo and win their affections again for the Lord Jesus. He knows if the Cross does not melt and soften their hard hearts, bring a lump to their throats, tears to their eyes, praise to their lips and gratitude in their lives, nothing else in the world will. He finishes with 6.14 "God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross". The word glory is translated 'rejoice' Rom. 5.2, 'joy' Rom. 5.11, 'boast' Eph. 2.9. Thus Paul is saying 'God forbid that I should glory or rejoice or joy or boast save in the Cross'. Paul could have gloried in a variety of things — eg. He could have gloried in: Renoun—Phil. 3.5; Religion—Phil. 3.6; Reproach—2 Cor. 4.8 & 16-18; Revelation—2 Cor. 12.1, 4-6; Results—Acts 13.48, 14.1, 16.15,33, 17.34, 18.8.

Yet he gloried in none of these things, but in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Christ on a Cross—Paul gloried in that and we glory in it also because:—

i) The Devil has been Defeated—Heb. 2.14; 1 John 3.8; Matthew 12.29.

ii) Death has been Disannulled—2 Tim. 1.10; Isaiah 25.8; Hosea 13.14; Rom. 8.38; 1 Cor. 15.54; Rev. 2.11.

iii) Distance has been Removed—Eph. 2.13; Rom. 5.10; 1 John 1.7; Mark 15. 38.

iv) Communion has been Restored—Heb. 10.19; 4.16.

v) Worship has been Established—Heb. 11.21; 13.15; 1 Peter 2.5; Psalm 5.7.

vi) Love has been Demonstrated—John 3.16; Rom. 8.32; 1 John 4.9-10.

vii) Peace has been Made—Col. 1.20; John 14.1,27; 16.33.

viii) Blessing has been Bestowed—Eph. 1.3; Prov. 10.22; Num. 6.24.

ix) Hope has been Revived—Rom. 5.2; 15.13; 2 Thess. 2.16; Titus 2.13; Heb. 6.19; 1 Peter 1.3.

x) Victory has been Achieved—1 Cor. 15. 54-58.

No wonder Paul gloried in the Cross. He, and we, can appreciate the Cross for our —

a) Cleansing—Heb. 9.12; 10.12.

b) Communion—Heb. 10.19; Luke 23.45.

c) Consecration—Heb. 9.14; Gal. 2.20.

d) Comfort—Romans 8.32.

e) Companionship—Luke 9.23.

f) Confidence—Gal. 6.14.

g) Compensation—Eph. 1.7,8.

2—THE WORLD CRUCIFIED

John gives a seven fold description of the world in his first epistle :—

1. A Lustful World—1 John 2.16.

2. A Passing World—1 John 2.17.

3. An Ignorant World—1 John 3.1 — it knew Him not.

4. A Hateful World—1 John 3.13.

5. An Anti-Christian World—1 John 4.1,3.

6. A Deceived World—1 John 5.19.

7. A Conquered World—1 John 5.4.

Upon all of this we pass sentence — "crucified to me", and we take our stand at the Cross — John 19.25,26.

3—SELF CRUCIFIED

One of our most dangerous enemies is one that we carry with us constantly — it is self, the flesh. This we must reckon to be crucified — Gal. 2.20 — since if we do not conquer the flesh and keep it under, the flesh will conquer us — 1 Sam. 15.3; 2 Sam. 1.8; Exodus 17.8; Rom. 13.14.

The fruit of the Spirit in Gal. 5.24 cannot be produced on the branches of the flesh. To continue in sin and disobedience is a direct contradiction of Romans chapter six. There we have died with Him, been buried with Him, and raised with Him to walk with Him in newness of life. We, therefore, should yield ourselves unto God Romans 6.13, and the power for yielding is found in Romans 8 — the Holy Spirit. When sin comes in all its subtlety there should be no response in me to it. Another has said that in Galatians Paul was in effect saying that he had turned the world into a cemetery and walked through it like a corpse. Even in this modern age this attitude could be true of all who say 'Not me, but Christ'!

Some Modern Misrepresentations of our Lord

By W. Hoste, B.A.

THE Spirit warns us of false men creeping in unawares (Jude 4) and introducing false doctrine unawares (II. Pet, 2.17). It is a clandestine attack, within the citadel, under the pretext sometimes of defending the Person of Christ, e.g., HIS HUMANITY.

In order, these teachers say, to sympathise with His people He must have had no advantage over them by reason of His Deity in meeting temptation. Did He then cease to be Divine? This way leads to Unitarianism. Had He no advantage, as the Holy One of God? This way leads to a peccable Christ. Is it not a dangerous presumption for the creature to lay down limits for his Creator, within which alone He can "sympathise"?

In becoming "*like His brethren*" it was not necessary for Him to cease to be Himself.

I propose to deal with this subject under the following headings: (I.) The *Kenosis* and why we should reject it; (II.) Did our Lord's question betray "ignorance"? (III.) In what sense was our Lord tempted?

I. THE "KENOSIS" AND WHY WE SHOULD REJECT IT.

The "*kenosis*," like such expression as "the Real Presence," "Evolution," etc., is quite true, if properly understood, but as used popularly is to be rejected for the following reasons :

1. **It comes from a tainted source.** A thing's origin is of prime importance. No one would knowingly drink water from a poisoned well. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one" (Job 14.4). This theory comes from a tainted source, spiritually speaking, the "Higher Criticism."

2. **It was invented for an unworthy purpose.** It was pointed out that our Lord fully endorsed the Old Testament Scriptures, which the critics attacked. Then either He was wrong or they. The latter was to them unthinkable; then He must be wrong, not deliberately it was conceded, but because He knew no better, for had He not *emptied Himself* and become as ignorant of all such matters as any Jewish peasant?

3. **It rests on an insufficient foundation.** The fact that the word "*kenosis*" is an untranslated Greek word vests it with a mystic

halo to certain minds. It was coined from the verb *Kenoo*, "to empty." "He emptied Himself" (*heauton ekenosen*, Phil. 2.7, R.V.). Many good authorities prefer A.V. "made Himself of no reputation," though both translations really mean the same. It is interesting to note these men's conversion to "verbal inspiration." When it suits them, they cheerfully cut out whole passages; here they have recourse to "verbal inspiration" to disprove "verbal inspiration."

Really, Christ did not become less *personally* in incarnation, God changes not, but *positionally*, in that He voluntarily exchanged the perfect equality, which had always existed between Him and God the Father and which was His right, seeing He was "in the form of God," for the inequality of a new relation, that of the servant of the Father. "He emptied (or stripped) Himself of His glory by having taken on Him the form of a slave" — the glory was the glory He had had with the Father before the world was (John 17.5).

DR. LIGHTFOOT translates: "He stripped Himself of the insignia of His majesty." But to use an illustration, did Peter the Great, because he did not wear his imperial crown on the quays of Deptford, empty himself of his personal attributes and power? Was he not still Peter the Great? No more did our Lord lose what were inseparable from His Personality, His Divine Attributes. He was ever "the Word become flesh."

4. It conflicts with the context. The "self-emptying" is explained by "His having taken on Him the form of a slave" and "having been made in the likeness of men." But a great landowner might live in a humble style among his tenants, sharing their conditions and labours, confining his expenditure to theirs, without giving up his income or property, and certainly without foregoing the advantages of a good education or constitution.

5. It nullifies the true lesson to be learnt. The general bearing of Phil. 2. 5-8 is not doctrinal, but ethical. Let the mind of Christ be in His people, and it is the mind which is described here. Whatever He did, we should do in our measure. If He really renounced His Divine attributes and became powerless and ignorant we should renounce our human attributes and become powerless and ignorant too. But no one understands the passage thus. The Modernists set much store by their learning, and are far from

wishing to give it up. Is not the true lesson that if our Lord emptied Himself of His glory, we should "pour contempt on all our pride" and willingly forego any prestige of birth, wealth, learning, etc., we may think we possess?

6. **It contradicts conditions of service.** A servant does not empty herself of her qualifications in order to please her mistress, nor forget her skill and recipes, but, while no longer using them merely for herself, puts them at the disposal of the other. So the Lord used every attribute He possessed to carry out the Father's will, in His time and way.

7. **It lowers the Person of Christ.** We must refuse entirely to divide our Lord's Person or discuss His Humanity, as though His Deity were in abeyance. It is not as if Omnipotence, Omniscience, and Omnipresence were mere qualities, like human strength and wisdom, which may exist in degree and be considered apart from their possessor. God is the Omnipotent, the Omniscient, the Omnipresent One, and only He. Love and holiness are not distinctive of Deity. A Unitarian would no doubt willingly ascribe them to our Lord, while denying Him the possession of Divine attributes, Our Lord could far less renounce His Divine attributes without compromising His Deity, than a mere man could lose his human attributes without compromising his humanity.

8. **It is the stepping-stone to the full apostasy.** Many have given up the "*Kenosis*." It was a temporary expedient. They have no further use for it. They have discovered that the Lord had really nothing to empty Himself of.

As Athanasius truly says: "We cannot comprehend to perfection the Person of Christ, but we can know what He is not," and I think any truly spiritual person will shrink with horror from the caricature of Him, Who is, and always was, "the Power of God and the Wisdom of God," as the ignorant and helpless "Jesus" of the critics.

II. DID OUR LORD'S QUESTIONS BETRAY "IGNORANCE"?

To indite such a query, even in order to repel its suggestion is painful, but is forced upon us "for the truth" (11. Cor. 13.8). The R.V. of II. John 9 is significant—"Whosoever *goeth onward (margin, taketh the lead)* and abideth not in the teaching of Christ hath not God." "He takes the lead," but he outruns the truth, and beyond

is a dark hinterland of error.

That our Lord asked many questions during His ministry is undeniable, but that He ever asked one which bespoke "ignorance," can only be firmly denied. I believe such an idea is

Based on a Triple Misconception.

As to (1) the Person of Christ and what His Humanity implied; (2) as to what His "questions" entailed; (3) as to the testimony of Scripture to His Omniscience.

A favourite contention of the Modernist movement has been that the Deity of Christ had been unduly stressed, and that His Humanity needed enforcement. Without admitting the truth of this, it may be noted that the way to regain equilibrium in Divine Truth, if such has been lost, is not by going to the opposite extreme, but rather by seeking to hold fast the Divine Person—the Eternal Son of God, made flesh; then the whole truth groups itself naturally around Him; for that Person is as truly in relation to His perfect Humanity as to His true Deity. But what has resulted from the Modernist emphasis on the Humanity of Christ? In *isolating* the Humanity, they have *eclipsed* the Deity and *degraded* the Humanity. As has been remarked, "Is it not true that with the swing of the pendulum, the Deity of the Incarnate Son has begun to pale, and His Perfect Humanity been dragged down to the level of fallible men?"

Some seem to have the vague general idea that all "questions" are to inform the questioner. Genesis 3. and 4. contain nine questions by God Himself. Did He then not know where Adam was, that he had fallen, that Eve had misled him, why Cain was wroth, that he had slain Abel? No one would impugn the Omniscience of Jehovah Elohim, and yet similar questions by our Lord Jesus are cited as proof of His "nescience." Where is the justice of this? There are besides, questions and questions.

Questions Asked by Our Lord.

1. Some of our Lord's questions were corrective. How else could a child, in a seemly way, correct an elder than by a little question, reminding him of something he had evidently forgotten? Such, I suggest, were the questions of the child Jesus in the temple. We do not find Him in a pulpit, like some precocious boy-preacher, lecturing his elders, but hearing them and then putting in some little questions, which took all the wind out of their old patched

sails, and led them to ask Him some questions, this time purely to gain information. He was "about His Father's business"; can any caviller find a proof of "ignorance" in all this? The elders did not, for "they marvelled at His understanding and answers." We might include under this heading such questions as, "Why reason ye among yourselves?" of Matt. 16. 8, or, "Which of them will love him most?" of Luke 7. 42.

2. Others were **instructive**, according to what is known as the Socratic method, much in vogue even today, e.g., "If David therefore called Him Lord, how is He then his Son?" (Matt. 22. 45), where we may presume the Lord was not asking for information. "I will also ask you one thing. Is it lawful on the Sabbath," etc.? (Luke 6.9). The context favours the view that the Lord knew the answer to His own question. Again, in chapter 10.26, "What is written in the law?" Will any one suggest this question proved Him ignorant of the law?

3. Others were **testing**, e.g., to Philip, in John 6.5: "Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?" But the Spirit hastens to explain. "This He said to prove him, for He Himself knew what He would do." Surely such a statement affords a legitimate explanation of other questions of our Lord, and supplies a Divine answer to the strange suggestion, that if our Lord seemed to ask for information, which He did not really need, He was acting a part. Was He acting a part when He told the Samaritan to call her husband? We see the same in John 11.34. Fancy our Lord going straight to the grave of Lazarus! It would have savoured of magic or at least, as Chrysostom has said, of collusion. But could not He Who had just manifested His omniscience (v.14), was about to manifest His omnipotence (v.44), have found His way unaided to the grave?

It has even been gravely suggested that our Lord ought to have shown His omniscience on the Cross, if He possessed it, by refusing the vinegar, before tasting it. Had He done so, the soldiers would have supposed He did not know what they were offering Him; and so with such episodes as the fruitless fig tree. The Lord did not use His powers for display or to deprive others of the ocular proofs they might reasonably expect.

4. Others were merely **introductory**. Used in a natural way to further conversation or action. "What seek ye?" "Whom say men that I am?" "Whom seek ye?" "Children, have ye any meat?" Our

Lord was not out to prove His omniscience by what might have seemed magical ways. Was there not something Divinely perfect in our Lord's questions to Mary, "Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?" or to Peter, "Lovest thou Me?" He knew, but He must hear from their own lips. The question to the householder, "Where is the guest-chamber?" did not betray "ignorance," for He could already in His omniscience see the large upper room furnished and prepared, but it showed the moral greatness of the Lord; He could claim all, He *took* nothing.

5. Others were **convicting**. "What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?" (Mark 9.33). They would not say, but He knew only too well, as His subsequent action showed. I would suggest that all our Lord's questions fall naturally under one or other of these headings or may be explained in some such simple way. Lastly, there is

A Misconception of the Testimony of Scripture.

1. Inferences and deductions are not proofs, when passages can, with a little good-will, be explained in the fear of God in quite another way. God Himself could be proved "ignorant," on the plan these men adopt, e.g., in such passages as Gen. 18. 21 or Gen. 22. 12. But did not God see all? Did He not know all before?

It is the same with the much misunderstood verse, Mark 13.32. One wonders the omniscience of the Holy Spirit has not been called in question, for surely He is included in the "no one knoweth!" This alone would show that the truth of the verse has nothing to do with the incarnation, but with the relations and prerogatives of the Divine Persons in the Triune Godhead. Let this verse be read with Acts 1.7 and the difficulty vanishes. Even there, after His resurrection, the Lord reminded His disciples that the date of the setting up of the Kingdom was one of the Father's things, "the times and seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power."

2. The plainest testimony to the omniscience of Christ is ignored or explained away. Again and again we read: "He *knew their thoughts*"; "He *knew all men*, and needed not that any should testify of man, for He *knew what was in man*"; "Neither *knoweth* any man *the Father* save the Son; (the knowledge of the disciple can never approach that of the Teacher, when the lesson is infinite); and, lastly, the *unparalleled* (except in John 21.17) testi-

mony of the disciples resulting from His wonderful words just uttered. "Now are we sure *that Thou knowest all things.*" What could be plainer? But all goes for nothing with these men, in face of their theory that "our Lord must have been in the position of not knowing what was coming next in order to resemble us." But surely what we are called to is to resemble *Him*, not to drag Him down to resemble *us*. This same writer refers to this theory as "This marvellous experience of His of not knowing." It would indeed be marvellous were it true!

I hope what has been written here will enable the Lord's people to appraise this teaching aright. Let us, however, in closing, quote a few more Scriptures which still further negative this erroneous theory: "Jesus *knew from the beginning*, who they were that believed not and who should betray Him" (John 6.64); "He *knew that His hour was come*" (chap. 13.1); "Now I tell you *before it come*, that when it is come to pass ye may believe that I am He" (v.19). Chap. 14.29; see Isa. 40.21-23,26); and finally, "*Jesus knowing all things that should come upon Him*" (Chap. 18.4).

Is it not difficult to recognise in the Christ these teachers offer us, "who did not know what was coming next," the omniscient Christ of the Gospels, "Who knew all things that should come upon Him" and "all things" besides?

III. IN WHAT SENSE WAS OUR LORD TEMPTED?

Many of the moral signs of the last perilous times are with us today, among which we may note false teachers, who are at once "deceivers and being deceived" (II. Tim. 3.13); while undermining the faith of the saints, they seem able to persuade themselves that they are building it up. Thus the Higher Critics, who only leave us intact the *covers* of our Bible, assure us that the Book is now much more precious than before; we must suppose they think so, but if so, they are "being deceived." Again, those who, under guise of upholding the humanity of Christ, present us a Saviour Whom with sorrow we fail to recognise as the Living Christ of the Gospels, seem quite self-satisfied with their views; it is they who are upholding the truth; it is their strong faith that enables them to believe as they do. To us their theory seems "another Jesus" in the making. Well, if they must "deceive themselves," it is no reason why we should be deceived.

But why such efforts to enforce this onesided view of the

Humanity of Christ? In order, the reply is, to insure to Him the ability to sympathise with us in our temptations. But it is admitted that our Lord did not need to be ill, in order to sympathise with the sick. But this admission seems to give the whole case away, for why should not the same principle hold good in other respects? Why should our Lord have to become ignorant in order to sympathise with the ignorant? Indeed, an ignorant person could not do so. But "sympathy" was not the primary end of the Lord's mission. He had something more important in view, "to seek and to save that which was lost," and more important still, to "glorify the Father and finish the work He had given Him to do."

Let us now ask, in what sense was our Lord (1) tempted? (2) "in all things made like unto His brethren"? (3) "made perfect"?

1. In what Sense was our Lord Tempted?

Temptation (*peirasmos*) is used in two senses and great confusion arises from not distinguishing these; (a) of *enticement*, "Every man is tempted when he is drawn of his own lust and enticed" (James 1.14). Our Lord was clearly never tempted in this sense. He had no "lust" to draw Him away; "In Him is no sin." It is of the nature of unclean animals and birds to love garbage, but, for us it has no attraction. So the Lord passed through this scene of moral corruption, but there was nothing in Him to respond to it. What has a natural attraction for us, left Him unscathed. But there is another sense of temptation, that of (b) *testing*. "Though now for a season if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations" (I. Pet. 1.6). Enticement cannot come from God; "God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man," but God does test all His people. It was in this sense He *tempted* Abraham (Gen. 22.1). Satan *tempts* to bring out the evil, God *tests* to bring out the good effected by His grace. We should pray to be delivered from enticements, and flee from them, but we are to "count it all joy when we fall into divers testings."

In the latter sense our Lord was tempted in all points, *after the likeness* or similitude" (Heb. 4.15, *Kath' homoioteta*), the words "we are" are not in the original. That is, as far as it was possible for a sinless Divine Person to be tested "apart from sin," He was tested, and every test only served to bring out His perfections and proved Himself to be "the Holy One of God," the perfect Servant, the faithful Witness. Moreover, His was a holy sympathy, never with

sin unconfessed or devious ways persisted in, but with sorrow, suffering, and infirmity. He was tested in every possible way proper to Himself. In this sense He was "tempted" of the Devil. The first temptation is enough to show up the error here combated. Satan would not appeal to us to make stones into bread. It would be no temptation to us, for an obvious reason, but he knew the Lord had the Almighty power at His disposal, if He could be induced to use it apart from the Father.

Had the theory of the men been true, the Lord would have disclaimed possessing ("in function," the insidious phrase is) the power attributed to Him.

2. In what Sense was our Lord "in all things made like unto His brethren?"

"All things" must be limited by the context to the possession by our Lord of all that constituted true humanity — spirit, soul, and body. Not absolutely "all things," for though capable of death, He was not, like us, *subject* to death, nor, as we have seen, to sickness or sin. As Alford writes *in loco*. "All things, wherewith the present argument is concerned : all things which constituted real humanity, and introduce to its sufferings, temptations, and sympathies." This agrees with the context; the "many sons" of verse 10 are not angels. Christ did not take them up, but true men, possessors of blood and flesh; so He partook of the same, becoming truly man. Why should the reality of His Humanity diminish the reality of His Deity? He never ceased to be a Divine Person. "The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us." He, the Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, dwelling among men in this scene of sorrow, suffering, and sin; He, the Almighty Creator (John 1.10), enduring all at the creature's hand; as the "Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief"; IN FULL POSSESSION OF ALL HIS DIVINE POWERS, but never using them to escape one pang or evade one sorrow. "Emmanuel," yet as a man among men, entering into their circumstances, griefs and cares, and sharing them all, "that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God," though this is never, as we shall see, termed "His being made perfect." But is it not presumptuous folly to attempt to analyse all this and reduce it to the limits of a formula? We only know in part any divine truth, and even less of the Person of Christ (Matt. 11.27; I. Tim. 3.16).

This brings us to our last point.

4. In what sense was Christ "made perfect?" (Heb. 2.10).

Was it by the disciplinary processes of His ministry and Cross, as some affirm? If so, *then it would be impossible to avoid the conclusion that our Lord did need perfecting in a moral sense.* To put perfection in inverted commas explains nothing and escapes nothing. I believe it can be demonstrated that the term is never thus applied to our Lord, but only as expressing His qualifying by *death* and resurrection to be our Saviour and High Priest. Of course, in saying this we must not lose sight of the resurrection and ascension. The Lord is qualifying for a certain office, He must pass through the cross; but He must also reach a certain position in order to fulfil that office, and that is by resurrection and ascension; "now to appear in the presence of God for us." It is only thus He has reached the goal. We all agree that our Lord's life was one of suffering. Such sufferings were very varied, at the hands of man and Satan, by privation, by sympathy; as the Holy One in a defiled scene; as the Righteous Witness; by anticipation; and yet, at the last passover we hear Him saying, "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you, BEFORE I SUFFER" (Luke 22.15). It was as though He had never suffered till then, so unique were to be the sufferings of the Cross.

The word for perfecting (*teleioo*), is applied four times to the Lord, and in each case the context points to the Cross and *only to the Cross* as the means of it. Luke 13.32 is the first occurrence, "the third day I shall be perfected." This is at once connected with His approaching death which, being so near, called for an immediate journey to Jerusalem, which must preserve its sad monopoly of being the death-place of the prophets. Hebrews 2.10 is equally clear: "For it behoved Him (God) . . . to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings": the "for" is in logical sequence with verse 9, and explains the *necessity* of the death referred to there. To apply verse 9 to His death, and verse 10 to His ministry is topsy-turvy reasoning. No less clear is Heb. 5.9: "And being made perfect He became (not sympathiser merely), but the Author of eternal salvation." Christ was never morally imperfect, but His moral perfection could not avail. Without the Cross He could never have been "perfected" as Saviour. Clearly "the strong crying and tears" of the previous verses were not His ordinary experience, but can only be connected with the period of His death.

His prayer was, not to be saved from dying, but to be raised from death. It is really impossible to connect the "perfecting" of verse 9 with some kind of perfection attained by our Lord as the result of His experiences, without violating the context, and the truth of His Person. This is equally true of the last occurrence. "A Son perfected for evermore" (Heb. 7.28, R.V.). Again the perfecting is connected with His offering of Himself (v.27), and thus, His work being consummated by death and resurrection, He is for ever qualified to fill His mediatorial offices. We have not a High Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but Jesus Christ, THE SAME yesterday (that is, during His ministry), to-day (on the Throne of God), and for ever (in eternity).

Were the theory here traversed true, either Christ would not be the same now as when here below, or we should have a defective High Priest "to-day and for ever".

PREACHING

Let the preacher of the gospel preach all the truths that cluster around the Person and work of Christ. The fact and consequences of sin must be emphasised. Show that sin is against God and He must punish sin—that the wrath of God is revealed against it. Spare not the sterner themes, for men must be wounded before they can be healed, and slain before they can be made alive. No man will ever put on the robe of God's righteousness till he is stripped of his fig leaves, nor will he wash at the fount of mercy till he perceives his filthiness.

Show men that sin is not an accident, but the genuine depravity of their corrupt hearts. Preach the natural depravity of man. It is not fashionable (even in some assemblies) now to preach this doctrine, but it is a great necessity. Young people, brought up in Christian homes and under Christian influence are apt to be ignorant of this truth and, until they learn it, will never seek Christ as a Saviour.

Paul preached of righteousness, temperance, and judgement to come and made Felix tremble; these themes are equally necessary and powerful now. We rob the gospel of its power if we do not warn of future punishment for disobeying it. We must tell men that the Lord is coming to judge the world in righteousness. This will lead up to conviction which must precede conversion.—*Selected.*

THE GREATNESS OF THE SON

Very fully throughout the Scriptures the Deity of the Son is affirmed. We see Him in the eternal past before all worlds, and as Creator and Upholder of all things as they are created. We see Him at His incarnation, in His words, by His works, and in His vicarious death and His glorious resurrection, to be the Son of God. His exaltation, His high priesthood, and the acclamation of His Lordship, all prove Him to be "God over all, blessed for ever."

In ancient times, the office that a man filled imparted a certain dignity to his person. Thus David would not stretch out his hand against Saul, wicked persecutor though he was, because he was the "Lord's anointed." But with the Son of God it is the reverse. He gives value and dignity to all the offices He holds. They are but the varied expressions of His Divine and glorious Person. He imparts His own excellency and worth to all the offices He holds, and to the works that He performs. Everything He touches shares His merit.

And all who by faith come into vital union with Him, stand in His "preciousness" as Peter speaks (1 Pet. 2.7 marg.). They are accepted in the Beloved" (Eph. 1.6). They are "complete in Him" (Col. 2.9). All the excellency of His sacrifice is theirs and in it they stand before God, graced and accepted according to the Divine estimation of that great offering.—Selected.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

We are saved by God's work—not by good works.

The Bible is the Christian's blue print for life.

God will supply, but we must apply.

When it comes to doing things for others, some people stop at Nothing.

No cosmetic for the face can compare with inner grace.

Only when we die to all about us do we live to God above us.

Getting our own way serves only to get in the way of our service.

—Anthony Orsini, Florida, U.S.A.

THOUGHTS OF CHRIST

(for the busy Housewife) No. 6

BY ERIC G. PARMENTER, BASINGSTOKE

The dignity and glory of the Lord Jesus magnified every act that He performed whilst He was in the world. Having withdrawn from His public sphere of service we behold Him furnished with a basin, girded with a towel, and stooping down to wash and wipe His disciples feet (John 13). The holy hands of the Son of God are upon the defiled feet of His followers in order to wash away every defilement which, even unknown to themselves, they might have contracted. Jesus knowing that all things were in His hands — knowing that He came from God and went to God, in marvellous grace washes His disciples feet.

How comforting to realise — He meets us first, when bowed down beneath the crushing load of guilt and by His precious blood removes the load and casts it into the sea of divine forgetfulness. Now He meets us day by day as we are passing through an increasingly defiling world, with basin and towel removes the defilement which we unavoidably contract enabling us to tread the courts of the sanctuary with feet made clean by the Saviour — He cleanses our conscience by blood, our ways by His word.

The action of the basin and the towel never ceases for "having loved His own, He loved them unto the end" through all the changing scenes of life, — the love of Christ endures not for a day, a month, a year, it is a love for eternity :

Perfect grace — Perfect love — all from a Perfect Saviour.

HYMNS AND THEIR WRITERS (45) by Jack Strahan, Enniskillen

"RISE, MY SOUL! BEHOLD 'TIS JESUS"

JOSEPH DENHAM SMITH (1817—1889)

In early September 1857 four young converts met to pray in an old school house near to the village of Kells in the parish of Connor, Co. Antrim, Northern Ireland. The burden of their hearts was for a work of the Spirit of God throughout the land. Fervent intercessions were made weekly by these young men, but all through the succeeding months their cries to God seemed in vain. Then, on January 1st, 1858, God opened the windows of heaven — first the droppings, then the showers, then the outpourings of blessing till the land, which hitherto had been arid and barren, was in spiritual flood. God had heard, God had answered and a great spiritual awakening and revival swept throughout the North of Ireland.

Joseph Denham Smith was an instrument of God in that great spiritual harvest. At the time of its commencement, he was pastor of a Congregational Church in Kingston outside the city of Dublin. He had been born in England (July, 1817) at Romsey, Hants. and there he had spent his early years. He had known the devoted care and guidance of a widowed mother whose one desire for her boy was that early in life he might come to know the Saviour. God had abundantly answered that mother's prayer — Joseph had been led to Christ and soon afterwards had devoted his life to the work of the Lord. On hearing of Ireland's deep spiritual need, he moved to the city of Dublin and, after studying at its Theological Institute, he entered the Congregational ministry. His first charge was in the town of Newry, Co. Down and 1848, he moved to Kingston as pastor of a newly-established Congregational Church in Northumberland Avenue.

In August, 1859, Denham Smith had a visit from a Mr. and Mrs. Morley of Clapton. They had come from London to see something of the beauties of the Wicklow mountains and were about to return home. "But you will not return, will you, without seeing something of the remarkable revival?", remarked their host. So, together with the Morleys, Denham Smith travelled north and in the city of Belfast and in County Antrim he witnessed personally something of that great movement of the Spirit of God — souls, in their hundreds, smitten down by a deep sense of their own sin and guilt and awakened to the reality of coming judgement were crying out aloud to God for His mercy; many were finding salvation and peace in the Lord Jesus. Denham Smith was deeply moved by what he witnessed. He was convinced that it was a work of God.

The great revival of 1859, as a surging flood and as a spreading flame, reached the city of Dublin and district by early September of the same year. Joseph Denham Smith wholeheartedly entered into the movement. Leaving Kingston, he moved centrally to the city of Dublin and there gave himself unreservedly to the proclamation of the gospel and the helping of troubled souls. Through the influence of Mr. William Fry, a well-known and highly respected Dublin solicitor, the old Metropolitan Hall in Lower Abbey Street was acquired as a centre of meeting and there, "thousands flocked together in the morning, and remained hour after hour, many without refreshments — until ten and eleven at night. Careless ones were awakened, anxious ones led into peace, and persons of all classes rejoiced in a newly-found Saviour".

The city of Dublin was touched in no small way by the '59 revival; the human instrument at the centre of the movement was Joseph

Denham Smith. An article, recounting his life and work, bears witness to the richness of that spiritual harvest in Southern Ireland's capital city — "conversion invariably attends the services; as few as one and as many as sixty-nine have been reported as the result of a single meeting; and on the anniversary of the outbreak of the work, it was announced that some three thousand known conversions had resulted in the space of twelve months. Many of the conversions have been of a remarkable kind. Roman Catholics of all classes, including the highest ladies and gentlemen moving in the best circles in Dublin, young men and women from the shops and warehouses, sailors, soldiers, and children of tender age have alike professed change of heart and have manifested that change in their life". Among those who were saved at that time through the instrumentality of Denham Smith was Shuldham Henry who afterwards was greatly used of the Lord in the work of the gospel.

The time came when Denham Smith felt that he could no longer be bound by denominational ties. He thereupon resigned from the pastorate of Kingston and sought to serve his Lord in the preaching of the gospel and in a ministry to His people without denominational distinction. A more suitable and permanent meeting place was called for, as a centre from which Denham Smith might carry on this work in Dublin. No suitable building was available; so it was decided to erect a new one. After acquisition of a suitable site near to Merrion Square, a building with a capacity for 2,500 people was planned and building commenced in 1862. Merrion Hall was opened the following year and for over a century was a great gathering centre for the preaching of the gospel and later became the home of the assembly of the Lord's people. Down the years many noted and devoted servants of Christ have occupied its platform with attendant refreshing and blessing from the presence of the Lord. Such household names as Richard Weaver, Grattan Guinness, Shuldham Henry, Harry Moorehouse, George Müller and Dr. Barnardo are numbered among those early labourers but, perhaps, none have been more closely linked nor have seen more abundant blessing in Merrion Hall than Joseph Denham Smith. He personally played a leading role in its institution, was present at its opening, saw fruitful blessing there in the early years of its history and throughout his lifetime maintained a close link with the assembly meeting there.

Denham Smith, in his labours, travelled to the continent of Europe and in the capital cities of Paris and Geneva ministered the precious word of God to large gatherings of both saved and unsaved. He visited the city of London there, in later years, he made his home from which he continued in active service for the Lord. His

health, however, started to fail 'ere he had reached his seventieth birthday and on March 5th, 1889, at the age of seventy-one, he passed away peacefully into the presence of his Lord.

Joseph Denham Smith left behind a fragrant memory. Those who knew him were deeply impressed by his devotion to Christ. His ministries, extending over a period of more than fifty years, were always replete with the savour of Christ. From the very first when, as a lad of sixteen, he commenced to preach, right to the close, Christ was ever his central theme. In his preaching, his style was eloquent, yet simple, his powers of language and illustration exceeded only by the power of the accompanying Spirit of God. His written ministry too, reflects his deep devotion to his Lord and among his known publications are such gems as, "The Gospel in Hosea", "The Brides of Scripture" and "Green Pastures".

As a hymnwriter, Denham Smith produced compositions which were both scriptural and sweet. These first received publication in periodicals throughout the latter half of the last century. He compiled a volume of hymns, "Hymns for General and Special Use" and in this there appeared no fewer than thirty-six, signed as written by himself. Among his compositions there are to be found such well-known favourites as,

"God's Almighty arms are round me"
"Jesus, Thy dying love I own"
"Just as Thou art — how wondrous fair"
"My God, I have found"
"Rise, my soul! behold 'tis Jesus"

This last mentioned is a great favourite with many at the Lord's supper,

"Rise, my soul! behold 'tis Jesus,
Jesus fills thy wond'ring eyes;
See Him now in glory seated,
Where thy sins no more can rise.
There, in righteousness transcendent,
Lo! He doth in heaven appear,
Shows the blood of His atonement
As thy title to be there.
All thy sins were laid upon Him,
Jesus bore them on the tree;
God who knew them, laid them on Him
And, believing, thou art free.

God now brings thee to His dwelling,
Spreads for thee His feast divine;
Bids thee welcome, ever telling
What a portion there is thine.

In that circle of God's favour,
Circle of the Father's love;
All is rest, and rest for ever,
All is perfectness above.

Blesséd glorious word "forever"!
Yea, "forever" is the word;
Nothing can the ransomed sever,
Naught divide them from the Lord".

A look within the heavenly sanctuary both stirs and stills the heart. There the Saviour sits in glory and there irrefutable evidences abound of the sufficiency of His work for our salvation. The impact of such majestic and assuring sights first bids our souls to rise, then beckons them to rest.

ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY

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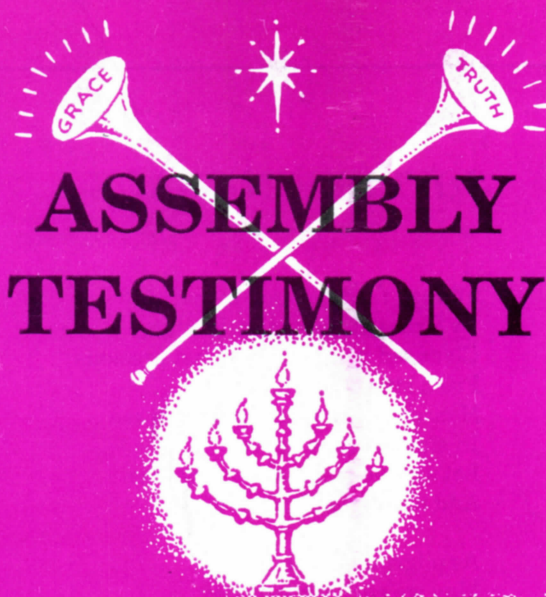
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ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY

Contents

CHRIST IN THE APOCALYPSE

by John B. D. Page

ISAIAH'S PORTRAITS OF CHRIST

by J. Flanigan

FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTALS

by J. B. Hewitt

FOUR ESSENTIALS OF A CORPORATE WITNESS

CHRIST — THE SUM OF ALL KNOWLEDGE

by James B. Currie

FELLOWSHIP IN MATERIAL THINGS

by Andrew Borland

NABOTH'S VINEYARD by E. W. Rogers

THE SHORTEST CHAPTER IN THE BIBLE

by Mark H. Prior

THOUGHTS OF CHRIST by Eric G. Parmenter

HE MUST INCREASE, BUT I MUST DECREASE

by R. J. Pantlin

A STUDY IN JUDE'S APISTLE

by Tom Wilson

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

by Anthony Orsini

HYMNS AND THEIR WRITERS

by Jack Strahan

SOVEREIGN GRACE

Though far from God by nature
By Grace are we brought nigh,
Cleansed by the Blood most precious
From sins of scarlet dye,
Henceforth with joy and gladness
In singleness of heart
Let's serve our Lord and Master
And ne'er from Him depart.

As pilgrims in the desert
May we each passing day
Sustained by heavenly Manna
Pursue our homeward way,
Our one ambition ever
That God be glorified
While waiting for the morning
When Christ shall claim His Bride.

In glory then forever
Shall we the praises swell
Of Him who died to save us
From an eternal Hell,
Of Sovereign Grace the riches
Shall God in us display,
Then loudest Hallelujahs
Shall sound harmoniously.

by James H. Wilkinson.

CHRIST IN THE APOCALYPSE (25)

by JOHN B. D. PAGE

THE INCOMPARABLE CHRIST (iii)

Reading : Revelation 22.16.

I AM

"I Jesus", said the divine Speaker, using the name of His Humanity, and He then supplemented it by ascribing to Himself the name "I AM" which, being emphatic in the Greek text, is a title and a declaration of His Deity. Hence, the two names, "Jesus" and "I AM" attributed to the one and same Person, contain the thought of His two natures, the one human and the other divine and, of course, He is not partly Man and partly God but He is totally Man and totally God, which is the wonder of His Incarnation.

There is another latent link between these two names when we remember that "Jesus" means "Jehovah saves" and "I AM" is the equivalent of "Jehovah". It was Jehovah's work of salvation, wrought through Jesus not by His virtuous life, which was outward evidence of His sinlessness, but by His vicarious death at Calvary.

Although the name, "I AM", has been considered in an early article, its last mention calls for further meditation. Its importance should not be under-estimated irrespective of whether it is seen in the Apocalypse or the Gospels. In the three synoptic Gospels, Christ is presented in His Manhood, admittedly from different aspects in each, and so, with His Humanity in view primarily, it is used by Him only eight times. By way of contrast, in John's Gospel where the Godhood of Christ is paramount, the Lord Jesus utters the name twenty-two times which is an unobtrusive confirmation of His Deity during the days of His flesh. The Name is not found in Acts or the Epistles, unless there is an obtuse reference to it in Phillipians 2.9ff where we are told that God has honoured Jesus Christ with "the name that is above every name", at which every knee will bow in submission to Him during the age to come, as suggested by one writer. In Revelation, the exalted Christ in heaven applies the name to Himself five times, that is, three times (if 1.8 is included) in the prologue (chapter 1) and twice in the epilogue (22. 6-21), but nowhere in the intervening chapters which form the body of the book, except in chapter 21.6 where it is ascribed to God at the close of the paragraph describing the new universe of the eternal state.

In assuming this Name, irrespective whether it was during His ministry on earth or now in heaven, Christ claims what is declared of Him in Colossians 2.9, "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily", upon which one writer comments, "Not the mere rays of divine glory gild Christ, but the complete orb of Attributes and Power of the Godhead indwell the Son". Such Attributes and Power of the Incarnate Christ were demonstrated in some instances when He uttered this great Name during His earthly ministry, and it may not come amiss to look at two from the synoptic Gospels and two from John's Gospel.

One one occasion, as recorded in Matthew 14.22-23, the disciples were half way across the Sea of Galilee when a boisterous wind sprung up and their ship was tossed by the waves. Then unexpectedly during the fourth watch of the night (i.e., 3.00 to 6.00 a.m.), they saw Jesus walking on the tempestuous sea and He said to them, "Be of good cheer; it is I" (or, literally, 'I AM'): be not afraid". Upon His pronouncing this unique Name, "I AM", the wind ceased and sea was calm.

When standing for trial before Caiaphas, the high priest (see Mark 14.61-64), Jesus was asked, "Art Thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?" In reply, Jesus said, "I am . . .". His answer was more than a confirmation of His Messiahship. By using the emphatic form "I AM . . .", for His answer, He not only made a claim to be Deity but He uttered the ineffable Name, which the high priest, recognizing it to be a breach of the law (Lev. 24.16), turned to the Sanhedrin members around him and said, "Ye have heard the blasphemy: . . .". In spite of his knowledge of the Scriptures, the high priest was blind spiritually and did not see the Defendant standing before him as the "I AM" Incarnate.

John records a dialogue between an immoral Samaritan woman and Jesus. To this woman, Jesus made seven statements, culminating in His uttering this great name. When she expressed eventually the hope of Messiah coming, Jesus said to her, "I that speak unto thee am He" (John 4.25ff). This was not only an affirmation of His Messiahship because, by omitting the italicized personal pronoun "He", Jesus said literally, "(I) that speak unto thee I AM". This matchless Name is found initially in the Pentateuch, and the woman's knowledge of the scriptures was limited to these Five Books of Moses because the Samaritans used no others in their

worship. Unlike the high priest, a devout Jew, she showed no resentment upon hearing the ineffable name uttered but she accepted Him as such and as Saviour.

Having been betrayed by Judas Iscariot, Jesus was confronted on a dark night by armed soldiers and officers of the temple guard, and He said to them, "Whom seek ye?" They answered, "Jesus of Nazareth", and He replied, "I am He". With the italicized personal pronoun "He" omitted, He answered literally, "I AM". As soon as that great Name came from His lips, "they went backward, and fell to the ground" (John 18.4-6). In falling to the ground, these burly soldiers had no sense of guilt, but they were unknowingly overpowered by the hidden power emanating from the Person who was the "I AM", and so they fell involuntarily.

Not only was He betrayed, but also arrested, brought to trial, condemned and crucified — such was the venom of man's hatred and hostility toward Him. But God, having raised Him from the dead, has highly exalted Him, and it is this glorified Man who speaks from heaven to the Patmos prisoner, declaring Himself to be still the "I AM" and, on the last occasion, He adds two more illustrious titles, "the Root and Offspring of David, and "the Bright and Morning Star". (*To be continued*).

ISAIAH'S PORTRAITS OF CHRIST

by J. FLANIGAN (Belfast)

7—"MAN OF SORROWS"

There are more than forty pronouns in Isaiah 53. There is no name. But the believer has no problem. The unnamed Sufferer can be non other than the Lord Jesus. It is the Rabbis who have the difficulty. Not being willing to apply the prophecy to Jesus of Nazareth they have sought for other explanations. Many are unhappy with the explanations which are offered, and for them the chapter is an enigma. "It is better", they say, "not to read it at all". Some have called it, "The Forbidden Chapter". For every believer it is a precious portion. For some of us it has a special preciousness, for it was here that we first found the Saviour.

This great portrayal of the Sufferer begins properly in ch.52. By attaching the last three verses of ch.52 to the twelve verses of ch.53, we have fifteen verses which are readily divided into five

sections with three verses in each. They form a pentateuch, and there is an intriguing parallel with that other great Pentateuch, the five books of Moses, Genesis to Deuteronomy.

At the end of ch.52 we have the Genesis section. Genesis is the book of Beginnings, as we speak of "Genetics". In the book of Genesis we have the beginnings of all that is afterwards developed in our Bible. Everything is there in germ form; in embryo. So it is with Isaiah 52:13-15. It is the seed plot of all that follows in ch.53. Here, in these few verses, there is portrayed the Servant's moral glory, His lovely life. We have, too, His exaltation, His high position through resurrection and ascension. His sufferings are here too, His visage marred. His future glory is here, His millennial splendour, and His ultimate triumph. Everything is here in this "Genesis" portion, which is now to be expounded in ch.53.

The first three verses of ch.53 are the Exodus portion. Exodus is that book in which is portrayed the nation in unbelief. The arm of the Lord was made bare in their deliverance from Egypt. He divided the sea for them, and in a barren wilderness He gave them water from the rock and bread from heaven. But they persisted in unreasonable unbelief in spite of every revelation of Himself. How sadly does the prophet cry, "Who hath believed our report?". In a dry ground in Nazareth there grew a tender plant for the pleasure of Jehovah. But there was nothing pretentious, and none of the beauty that they desired. So they despised and rejected the revelation of God in Christ, and repeated the unbelief of the wilderness. There had lived among them One who was the great antitype of their Paschal Lamb, their Tabernacle, the Rock, and the Manna, but they did not recognise Him. "Who hath believed?".

The Leviticus section follows in verses 4-6. The great theme of Leviticus is, of course, the sacrifices and offerings. A sacrificial system allowed Jehovah to go along with the people, but all those offerings spoke of the Christ who was to come. He has come, and by one offering He has satisfied God and obtained for His people a perfect acceptance. It is an offering which renders all the others obsolete. It has superseded them. "He was wounded for our transgressions". "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all".

I hear the words of love;
I gaze upon the Blood;
I see the mighty sacrifice,
And I have peace with God.

The book of Numbers has been called, "The Book of the Desert". It is largely an account of the people of God in their desert sojournings. In this next section of Isaiah 53, verses 7-9, we have the desert experiences of the Lord Jesus during His last hours on earth. What a desert was that for Him. Oppressed and afflicted; prison and judgement; stripped and slain; death and burial. In it all He was silent and uncomplaining. The House of Caiaphas! The Roman Judgment Hall! Herod's Palace! Meekly and unresistingly He trod the desert paths alone. He endured the mockery, the false witnesses, the spitting, the whipping post, the thorns, and all the shame. It is very possible that He was kept, for part of that night, in the common prison beneath the Palace of the High Priest. (Later, His apostles were to be detained in that same prison, Acts 5.18). When we read that, "He was taken from prison and from judgment", we may understand it literally. From the common prison at the House of Caiaphas, and from the judgment hall at the Fortress of Antonia, He was led out to Golgotha to be cut off out of the land of the living. Who shall point out His generation? Humanly speaking, He left nothing. A young Man of thirty-three years, cut off. Their intention was to bury Him, as they had crucified Him, with the wicked. But He was with the rich man in His death. Joseph of Arimathea attended reverently to the interment of the holy Body.

The closing book of the Pentateuch is Deuteronomy. It is the book of review and retrospect; of summing up and looking forward. So this closing section of Isaiah 53. As we look back we see the travail of the Blessed One, as Jehovah bruised Him. We see again the offering for sin; the pouring out of His soul unto death.

My soul looks back to see
The burden Thou didst bear,
When hanging on the accursed tree,
And knows her guilt was there.

But with joy we look forward too. We see Jehovah's pleasure prospering in the hand of the Risen One. The spoils of Calvary

are shared by God and Christ and His people. "I will divide . . ." "He shall divide . . .". It is the great peace offering. There is a portion for all. The Man of Sorrows is satisfied. His people are justified. God is glorified. Well might we read on into ch.54! "Sing . . .!" "Break forth into singing . . .!"

Man of Sorrows, God of Glory,
Wondrous path Thy foot hath trod.
Cross and crown rehearse the story
While we sound this note abroad,
Calvary's Victim
Now adorns the Throne of God.

FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTALS

by J. B. HEWITT

(52) ASSURANCE

The assurance of salvation is plainly written over the pages of the New Testament. The Epistles abound with the truth that we know we possess salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 10.9; Eph. 2.8). This assurance rests upon the Word of God (Jn. 20.31); the work of Christ (Heb. 10.14); and the witness of the Holy Spirit in us (Gal. 4.6).

THE STRONG FOUNDATION (Isa. 32.17; Psa. 27. 1-3; 46.1-3). Years ago preachers often said, "The blood of Christ makes us safe; the Word of God make us sure" (Ex. 12.13). Full assurance is built upon a scriptural foundation. The faithfulness of God and the promises of Christ are unassailable. The word in Isa. 32.17 is clear, "The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever". The Abrahamic Covenant as formed in Gen. 12.1-4 is confirmed in ch. 13.14-17; 15.1-7; 17. 1-8; the "I will's" of promises have been fulfilled temporally and spiritually and all will be realised.

Faith sounds out its confidence and challenge — the Lord is Light, Salvation, and Fortress. There is therefore no need to fear or tremble. This covers the past (v.2), and reaches into the future (v.3), and so embraces all life (Psa. 27.1-3). In Psa. 46.1-3 God is the Refuge of His people (vs.1-3). His strength and help (v.1,5);

His presence (v.5) and His power (v.8), makes all the difference between defeat and victory. What confidence is expressed in the words, "We will not fear - though - though - though" (v.2,3). It is the O.T. counterpart of Paul's great utterance in Rom. 8.38,39. Our God is faithful (1 Cor. 1.9, 30).

THE SAVIOUR'S AFFIRMATION is most assuring. "We will never perish" (John 10.28); "never thirst", "never cast out" (John 6.35,37). "We have everlasting life"; "we are free" (John 6.54; 8.36). We rest on Him who completed the atoning work (John 19.30; Heb. 1.3; 10.14). Saved by His intercessory work (Rom. 5.10; Heb. 7.25). "He is able to succour", "to save"; "to keep" (Heb. 2.18; 7.25; 2 Tim. 1.12). "He is our Life" (Col. 3.1). With the man of John 9.25 and Paul we can say, "I know" (2 Tim. 1.12). Everything depends not on what we are, nor on what we do, but on Christ (1 Cor. 3.11,23; 1 Peter 2.4,6).

THE SERVANT'S CONFIRMATION John's first Epistle is the book of assurance. He wrote his Gospel that we might believe and be saved (John 20.31). The purpose of the Epistle is that we may know that we possess life eternal (5.13). Seven times in chapter five we have the assuring words, "we know". The words, "know, knoweth, known and knew" are mentioned 38 times in this Epistle. The word "know" in 5.13 is the Greek work "oida" meaning fulness of knowledge, or to know perfectly. Christianity is a religion of certainties. Ours is a saving faith, and a knowing faith. It is not an intellectual faith, but a present active faith "unto you that believe".

Paul in Romans 5.1-11 reminds us that none of God's blessings stand alone, Ours is a full salvation (v.1-11) and a free salvation (vs.12-21). We have peace with God, access to God in prayer, rejoice in hope of glory, the love of God, the Holy Spirit and the assurance that Christ died for us and intercedes for us. Study the fice "much mores" in this chapter. We have adoption, are joint-heirs with our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 8.14-17). The unfailing love of God (Rom. 8.38,39). Union with Christ (1 Cor. 6.15; 2 Cor. 3.5; Eph. 5.30). Others tell of full assurance of hope and of faith (Heb. 6.11; 10.22). We have a mental grasp of all spiritual privileges (Col. 2.2). Our prayers will be answered (1 John 3.22; 5.14,15). We ought, like Abraham, to be fully persuaded that what God has promised He is able also to perform. (Rom. 4.21).

FOUR ESSENTIALS FOR A CORPORATE WITNESS

(SELECTED)

A Corporate Witness, i.e., a number of believers together acting in unison, is the desire of God for His people on earth, and the desire of all saints who love their Lord. In Acts 2 we read of the birthday, first of "the Church which is His Body", of which every Christian is a member, and against which the "gates of Hell" shall not prevail" (Matt. 16.18); and secondly of the first local church, that into which man's responsibility entered (1 Cor. 3.10), and which could be "defiled" or corrupted by man (1 Cor. 3.17). In verses 41 and 42 we learn of four essentials for the building and maintaining of a local church, God's corporate witness.

Firstly—Conversion to God. The Word of God through the Apostle Peter concerning Jesus whom they had crucified and whom God having raised had made "both Lord and Christ", so convicted them that they were "pricked in their heart" — (pierced thoroughly, Young), and said, "What shall we do?" Their experience was like Saul's of chap.9, that changed his whole life. There was "repentance toward God and faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ". So they were converted—turned—the beginning of Christian experience.

Secondly—Identification with Christ. These folk had seen no beauty in Christ that they should desire Him; they had rejected Him, saying, "Away with this Man and release unto us Barabbas". So blinded and bitter were their hearts that all the mighty works done in their midst did not promote faith in them; but when they were pricked in their heart, the Holy Spirit convincing them not only of their sin but the shame of it, they welcomed God's Word and "were baptized", i.e., they identified themselves with the One whom they previously rejected. Baptism is an outward confession of faith in Christ, involving not only the act of being baptised but a life in keeping therewith (Rom. 6.4). What I am, and what I do, is even more important than what I say. The believers were baptised in (or into) the Name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 19.5), i.e., in association with the Lord Jesus. Thereby they became closely bound to the Lord Jesus. Such outward confession followed by life in keeping is essential for the building of a corporate witness for God.

Thirdly—Subjection to the Lord. These folk had served their old master well, and had done his will, but being converted and identified with their new Master, they sought to do His will. The Lord

having His own way, He "added" them (ver.47). This the first local witness is surely our pattern. Could we look to Corinth, where man was taking the Lord's place, and saints were being divided instead of being "added" (1 Cor. 3.3)? Well might the Apostle Paul exhort them to be "perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment (1 Cor. 1.10). In 1 Cor. 1.1-2 they were "called saints with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours" (i.e., your Lord is my Lord and my Lord is your Lord). There is only one Lord (Eph. 4.5). To build a corporate witness for God it is essential for Christians to recognise and be in subjection to the one and only Administrator of a local church, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Fourthly—Perseverance. We have dwelt upon three essentials for the building of a local church; the fourth, itself fourfold, will maintain such a witness. "They continued stedfastly (i.e., they persevered)"—verse 42. How the local witness is marred by Christians who do not continue! In the same year these early saints were threatened not to speak to teach in the Name of Jesus. Note their response to this test. "Now, Lord, behold their threatenings; and grant unto Thy servants that, with all boldness, they may speak Thy Word" (Acts 4.29).

They persevered in (1) "the apostles' doctrine". The commission given to the apostles (Matt. 28.19-20), "Go . . . make disciples, baptising . . . teaching . . .," had been faithfully carried out. God blessed their witness, in that these souls were converted, became identified with Christ, were subject to their Lord, and continued stedfastly in the same teaching, with signs following.

(2) "and fellowship". This was not giving assent to a number of beliefs, nor joining a circle of activities, but a sharing in, a common participation in, mutual interests concerning their Lord. These will ever be recognised and enjoyed by saints walking in subjection to Him and obedient to His Word. It is not how we walk, but where we walk (1 John 1.7) that enables us to continue stedfastly in fellowship. "Can two walk together except they have made an appointment?" (Amos 3.3 R.V.). Association with the Lord Himself (Matt. 18.20) is the secret of that happy fellowship that maintains a local church witness.

(3) "and in breaking of bread". Love to their Lord would enable them to persevere in this. He had said, "This do in remembrance of

Me". As they took the one loaf, how they would be reminded of their oneness (1 Cor. 10.7)! No bitterness could remain in the hearts of those who were in sincerity and truth remembering their Lord. How this would give power and strength to their witness!

(4) "and in prayers". They were found "where prayer was wont to be made". The need of persevering through all their trials, sufferings and sorrows brought them to their knees in deep exercise, and in this they continued, without which the local church witness could not be maintained. How we need to give heed to Heb. 10.25, "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together". Alas for the evidence among us today of not persevering in prayer.

"Behold I come quickly; hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown (Rev. 3.11). Let us follow the example of those of old who "continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers".

CHRIST : THE SUM OF ALL KNOWLEDGE

by James B. Currie (Japan)

"Christ, in Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2.3).

The words of John concerning our Lord Jesus, "many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written" (John 21.25) are, by finite minds, often taken to be loving hyperbole. In the Colossian letter Paul gives the lie to that idea. Even among those who are completely loyal to the Person of Christ it may be that there are a few reservations tucked away with regards to the Apostle's statement. "All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Christ".

To combat the error of incipient gnosticism which would make of Christ a mere creature, albeit one of great dignity and position. Paul has stated that Christ, as to time and rank, "He is before all things" and, being possessed of all Divine Attributes it is "by Him that all things subsist or hold together". Simply put, without the Lord Jesus Christ there could be no material creation since "all things were created by Him and for Him" (Colossians 1.16-17).

Further, the words that follow almost immediately "it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell" (1.19) are given their full import in chapter 2 verse 9, "in Him (Christ Jesus) dwells all the fullness of the Godhead in bodily form". No amount of exaggeration

tion or hyperbole, no matter how well meant, can in anyway detract from this declaration. It stands in all its eternal verity. The Man, Christ Jesus, walking the paths and fields of Israel nearly two thousand years ago, possessed, unconditionally, all the essential characteristics of Deity.

God has used two vehicles in the revelation of Himself to men. The first is the one given in the physical creation all about us. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handiwork" (Psalm 19.1). The second, and more detailed revelation of the character of God, is found in "the Man Christ Jesus" (John 1.18). While "Worldly Wiseman" gropes, so often blindly, to grasp the meaning of the material sciences the humble believer sees all knowledge summed up in the Lord Jesus. Just as the greatest intellects of the world plumb the depths of every avenue of learning with no limits confronting them so, in keeping with the record of Scripture, Christ is seen to embody the infinity of Creatorial Godhood and thus is, in Himself, the summing up of all knowledge.

The Word of God testifies to these facts :

In the realm of AGRICULTURE, Christ is "the corn of wheat" (John 12.24).

In ANIMAL HUSBANDRY Christ is "the Lamb" (John 1.29).

In ANTHROPOLOGY Christ is "the Son of Man" (John 1.51 etc.).

In ASTRONOMY Christ is "the bright and morning Star" and "the Sun of Righteousness" (Revelation 1.16; Malachi 4.2).

In AVICULTURE Christ is the eagle (Deuteronomy 32.11).

In BIOLOGY Christ is the Life (John 1.4 etc.).

In ENGINEERING Christ is the Architect and Builder of the ages (Hebrews 1.2).

In GEOLOGY Christ is the Rock (1 Corinthians 10.4 etc.).

In HISTORY Christ is the Ancient of Days (Daniel 7.22).

In HYDROLOGY Christ is the water of life (John 4.14).

In JURISPRUDENCE Christ is the Lawgiver (Galatians 6.2).

In MATHEMATICS Christ is the First and the Last (Revelation 1.11).

In MEDICINE Christ is Jehovah the Healer (Luke 5.17).

In PHILOLOGY Christ is the Word (Alpha and Omega), (John 1.1; Revelation 1.11).

In SOCIOLOGY Christ is "the Friend that sticketh closer than a brother" (Proverbs 8.24).

In ZOOLOGY Christ is "the Lion of the Tribe of Judah" (Revelation 5.5).

No mortal can with Him compare
Among the sons of men
Fairer is He than all the fair
That fill the heavenly train.

David's words are very apt. "He is thy Lord; and worship thou Him" (Psalm 45.11).

FELLOWSHIP IN MATERIAL THINGS

by Andrew Borland

Fellowship in material things is amongst several spiritual activities described as well-pleasing to God. Uniting two allied aspects of sacrifice, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews exhorts thus: "By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually . . . confessing to His name; but to do good and to communicate (i.e. share with others as in an act of fellowship) forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well-pleased". (Heb. 13.14-16). The underlying connection between the two types of sacrifice is noteworthy, for, evidently, it is the heart that rejoices in God which is stimulated to show kindness and generosity towards others. Stringency in the spirit of liberality is attributable to a low conception of the position saints occupy in the economy of grace.

Moreover, the order and the terms of the exhortation should not be overlooked. God must have His portion first. Worship must precede every occupation if the latter is to be acceptable to God. The danger lies in our attempt to reverse the order of precedence. That worship, however, must not be conceived of in terms of material things. It is entirely spiritual, the fruit of the lips, rising from the inner man warmed by the appreciation of the place into which we have been brought by the work of our Lord. That is the entire theme of the epistle which calls Christians to "consider Jesus" (3.1). The depth and the sincerity of our worship can be judged by the extent of our sympathy with those who may be in material want. The Apostle John vigorously pronounced the same decision in words which admit of no misunderstanding: "But whoso hath this world's

good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? (1 Jn. 3.17). Incisive words like these should shock our smug conceptions of an emotional worship which expends itself in mere vocal outpourings and finds no practical "sharing" with others. The heart that rests at the secret source of every precious thing not only sings but also reflects in deeds the nature of the God Who is the Giver of every good and every perfect blessing.

The same subtle connection underlies the entire argument of the most lengthy section of the New Testament devoted to this aspect of fellowship, 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, the closing words of which are an unstrained outburst of impassioned worship, "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift". The apostolic contention and appeal are consistent with the divine attitude towards mankind. The ungrudging generosity and bounty of God should be reflected in those who profess to be partakers of His grace and should produce a like desire "to do good". As in many matters for the regulation of the church conduct the letters to the church at Corinth supply much information concerning this phase of assembly fellowship, and offer instruction for the guidance of Christians in the matter of the discreet use of material means.

A fundamental principle regulating all Christian life is propounded and is particularly applicable to the stewardship of money. "It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful" (1 Cor. 4.2). God is recognised as the ultimate owner of all. He dispenses gifts in the Church and material means to individuals. He does so at His own pleasure. The Christian is merely a steward, a "housemanager" put in trust with a deposit, for the safekeeping and the proper use of which he will be held responsible. On the day of reckoning, i.e. at the Judgement Seat, he will be accounted faithful if the discharge of his duty merits the commendation of his Master. All life will be brought under review, and the stewardship of "this world's good" will not escape the impartial Judge. Sobering thought for all, whether much or little has been committed to our trust!

The preacher of the gospel, too, is not without obligation in this connection. Chapter 9 of the First Epistle deals exclusively with the servant's attitude to the gospel message. Several spheres of responsibility are indicated. He must keep his body under, if he would anticipate reward at the end of life's race (24-27). He has a moral

obligation to his fellow men. Necessity is laid upon him to preach the gospel, and his reward is that he has the joy of declaring the message of God without charge (18). How assiduously the apostle Paul strove to protect himself and his companions from the least shadow of suspicion of a mercenary spirit. He laboured night and day, working with his own hands, to silence the malicious criticism that he was enriching himself at the expense of his "converts". Acting thus he had all the more right and authority to offer to the Corinthians advice as to their obligations in the same direction.

The apostle felt at times a special burden to instruct believers on the principles which should regulate their attitude towards those who ministered to them in things spiritual. They had, he asserted, a financial obligation. A truth for which the apostle contended vigorously, not only in one but in several passages, is summarised in 1 Corinthians 9.44: "They which preach the gospel should live of the gospel". He maintained his contention with numerous assertions and illustrations. In the first place, the Lord had ordained that it should be so, and the apostles had acted on the assumption that it was righteous procedure for them to adopt (4-6). Secondly, observation provided him with several illustrations. The general of an army is obviously maintained by the monarch under whom he serves. The vinedresser rightly expects to be partaker of the fruits of his labours, while the shepherd derives support from the flock which he feeds (7). Furthermore, scripture enjoins such a principle. The ox was not to be muzzled at the threshing, while the farmer both ploughed and threshed in the hope that he would share in the produce of his own toil and care (9-10).

Such an array of facts was meant to impress upon the Corinthians their obligation to have fellowship with those who laboured in the gospel with them. More particularly had it reference to the justice with which the apostle might himself expect to receive material support at their hands. He had spared himself neither hardship nor indignity that they might be partaker with him of the blessings of the grace of God. Was it unjust, then, for him to expect a reciprocation in material good? He had sown spiritual things; was it too much that he should reap their carnal things (9-11)? A similar metaphor was utilised to enforce the same truth upon the Christians in the churches of Galatia. The entire section in chapter six has its primary application, not to the worldly man who sows his wild oats, but to the

believer who misuses the goods the Lord has committed to his trust. "God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6.7). To the rich in Ephesus similar warning and exhortation are given: "Charge them that are rich . . . that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate" (our "word-fellowship" again). Such discharge of one's duty is described by the apostle Peter as acting as a good steward of the manifold grace of God (Pet. 4.10).

NABOTH'S VINEYARD

(1 Kings 21)

by **E. W. ROGERS**

I wonder how many of us would have behaved as Naboth did when he was approached by the Crown with an offer either to purchase or exchange his vineyard! Before we give an answer we should remember the self-confident boast of Peter followed by his lamentable failure, lest we be found boasting in the hour of ease and are found wanting in the time of testing.

OUR INHERITANCE

Naboth's vineyard had been inherited from his fathers: it was the heritage of his fathers and no substitute could be that. Our vineyard is not an earthly possession (for God is not now dispensing earthly blessing, but heavenly), but it is the 'faith once for all delivered to the saints', originally 'spoken by the Lord', and entrusted by Him to His apostles, and in particular to Paul. Paul in turn committed it to his 'son Timothy' who was enjoined to commit it to 'faithful men', who in turn should be able to teach 'others also'. So the inheritance passed from generation to generation and has come down to us.

Naboth's inheritance was a vineyard, and a vineyard in Scripture is a sphere of responsibility. The husbandmen should keep it. The wise man saw the vineyard of the slothful had become overrun with weeds. It was that which should have produced wine which rejoices both the heart of God and man : it should have produced something for the heart of God and the good of man. How many weeds have grown over the "faith" with which we have been entrusted : weeds of human tradition.

THE ALTERNATIVES

Naboth was offered one of two alternatives. He could either sell

the vineyard to the king, or else accept in lieu thereof another vineyard elsewhere.

In the one case the temptation was to turn into money the inheritance of his fathers, but this he would not do. "Godliness" was never supposed to be a means of monetary "gain". "The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil", though many through 'fair speeches' make merchandise of their audiences. They do not regard the proceeds as "base gain". The history of Micah recorded at the end of the book of Judges, with its most solemn sequel should warn all against "selling the vineyard".

The other temptation was to exchange it; but this Naboth declined to do also. It would have been but to have had "the form" and to have denied the "power". It would have been tantamount to "turning the grace of God into lasciviousness" or something worse. It would have been "another gospel" lacking in vital and essential elements. Solomon's golden shields are to be preferred to brazen ones, although the latter may look similar.

Ahab wanted to change the vineyard into a garden of herbs. He desired to alter its character altogether, so that instead of producing something for both God and man, it merely produced something for his own satisfaction. In his garden there was to be no "blood" of the grapes. His conduct resembled that of Cain who saw no need of the blood but brought of the fruit of the ground. How like Christendom which has caricatured "the faith" so that it is nothing like the original and has nothing for God therein!

POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS POWERS

The crown has limits, and this Ahab recognised, though Jezebel spurned them. She by craft set to work to accomplish the wish of the monarch so that she made herself the historic prototype of all who later and far too often behave as she did. Here the Political and Religious powers work together to bring about the downfall and murder of Naboth, and to confiscate his property. Let anyone read of the foul deeds of the Duke of Alva in the days of Philip of Spain and he will then see how those Auto da Fes were the extensive repetition of the murderous plan of Jezebel. A public assembly convened : false charges lodged; no defence allowed; a merciless and cruel murder; and property confiscated. Philip of Spain was dominated by the Roman church then. Later the Beast will still be ridden and dominated by the scarlet-dressed woman. Today he who

has eyes to see must wonder at the co-operation in close liaison one with the other of the political and religious world.

The scheme succeeded. Jezebel's wicked plot worked 'according to plan'. Not a hitch occurred and time and again it is stated 'Naboth is dead'. In the meantime God was silent; He did nothing. Wickedness flourished; the godly suffered. This is one of the mysteries of the present age, and should persecution against God's people ever arise here in our country they must expect nothing different. His silence, difficult to understand as it may be, is not however without its salutary effects. It develops character and proves loyalty at least, while the one who endures becomes an example for others who follow.

THE WICKED TRIUMPH

The innocent suffer : the wicked triumph. This is no new thing. It is as old as the Bible. Abel was murdered while the murderer lived. The Lord Jesus was killed while the crowd had their wish. The prophets were slain and the martyrs were tortured and burned. It is a long and continuous problem. Why should we expect things to be different for us?

Jezebel's wicked plot caused no concern on the part of the people of Naboth's city. No word of protest was raised by his fellow citizens. Submissively they obeyed the order which ostensibly came from the throne, and although its gross injustice must have been apparent no demur was raised. Perhaps they had no sympathy with Naboth because of what they judged to be his obstinacy and bigotry. Here is another mystery, that of the silent submission of the mass of people to the crimes of those who are set in authority. Vox populi can do a great deal of evil, and can restrain a great deal also.

Ahab is informed by his wife that "Naboth is dead", and he is told he may now take the vineyard. But what of Naboth's heirs? He had received the vineyard from his father, and his son should have inherited it from him. Jezebel, however, took care that the younger generation did not get the inheritance. This has, indeed, been the method of Rome for centuries. They seek the children but carefully keep the scriptures from them. This is a disturbing tendency of the present day, when children are uniformed and paraded on the first day of the week so that they cannot get to the simple Sunday School where the scriptures are taught. This, indeed, is all the more alarming seeing it occurs in days when there is a desire on the part of the authorities to "religionise" the people.

ULTIMATE JUDGMENT

But God, although long silent, will not interminably remain so. He will recompense. The scarlet-dressed woman will be thrown off the Beast and burned with fire. The Beast will itself be judged at His hand. The day of vengeance will surely come. He will avenge His elect, the blood of all who have suffered will be required then. Judgment will commensurate with the crime. In the place where the dogs licked the blood of Naboth they would lick the blood of both Ahab and Jezebel. Though silent now God is not ignorant. The eyes of the Lord run to and fro through the earth. His eyes are in every place beholding.

THE SHORTEST CHAPTER IN THE BIBLE

by **MARK H. PRIOR, Chichester**

PSALM 117

Coming so close to the longest chapter in the Bible (Psalm 119) we are apt to overlook this little gem of God's Holy Word, or, perhaps, to give it but scant consideration owing to its diminutive size; sometimes little things, however, may more than make up for their size by their sweetness and the magnitude and range of their subjects. So it is with Psalm 117, even as it is also with the shortest verse in the Bible—John 11.35, "Jesus wept"—what a weight of sympathy and Divine compassion is expressed by those two words!

Psalm 119, with 176 verses, deals with the important subject of the Word of God, and is by far the longest chapter in the Bible. Numbers 7, with 89 verses, is next in length, and a very important chapter it is—describing the dedication of the Altar. I wonder how many have troubled to read it through from beginning to end, without skipping over the many times repeated sections.

Psalm 117 comprises but two verses. Paul quotes it, with great delight, in Romans 15.11, and states that one of its objects is "that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy". So we see how important he considered the Psalm to be. In Acts 26.22, Paul states that in his witness for Christ he said, "none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come . . ." In his unfolding of the Gospel in the Epistle to the Romans he makes 26 or more direct quotations (including this one from Psa. 117) from the Old Testament to substantiate his teachings.

Three times the word "praise" is mentioned. The Psalm opens with "O, Hallelujah", or "O Praise the Lord"—so that we see it is a gladsome song.

Now there are three letters in the English alphabet that can be used by themselves as words. There is the indefinite article "A", lacking indeed in depth as compared with the definite article "the", or the possessive pronoun "my".* Then comes the personal pronoun—that great capital "I", which so often, with us, is bursting with quite unnecessary pride and self importance. The letter "O" is very expressive, and may be used as a word (sometimes spelt "Oh") as a cry of pain; a groan of sorrow; a form of address—as "O Lord"; a deep down desire of the heart; or as expressing great wonderment.

I think the "O" of this Psalm expresses both the last named uses of the word—a deep desire that men, everywhere, would praise the Lord, but perhaps more than this, a very great wonderment that this poor world which had crucified Him, should be the objects of His merciful kindness. Well may we exclaim, "O"! as we see the display of His matchless grace towards us.

Let us now consider the range and magnitude of our little Psalm. We find that everything is in the superlative, until at last breaking over all degrees of comparison we come to Him Who is beyond compare—peerless and supreme.

I

The most blessed occupation. Praise! Surely this is one of the loftiest privileges of sinners saved by grace. Possibly "Worship" is a higher thought, but the greater includes the lesser, and there is nothing that we can do that is more blessed than Worship and Praise. When we praise a person we tell out his beauty, his worth, his fame, his excellent greatness, his deeds, his words, etc. We may thus tell these things out of full hearts into the ears of God our Father, when it is a valuable adjunct to worship; or we may praise Him before men, when it has the character of service.

II

The Lord. The One Who "is, and was and is to come", the Almighty. The One, Who in great humility came down and was

* An excellent example of its use is found in Exod. 12.3-5: "A Lamb"; "the Lamb" and "your Lamb".

manifested in flesh. Fairer than all the children of men. The writer of the Song of Solomon sought for great and wonderful things with which to compare Him so as to bring home to our hearts His greatness, His glory and beauty, but finding them all inadequate he exclaims 'Yea, He is altogether lovely'. Supreme He is and beyond compare. We read of Him that God has set Him "at His own right hand in the heavenlies **far above** all principality all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come". And again, "He ascended up **far above** all heavens" and again, "God also hath given Him a name above every name". To what a glorious Person then does our Psalm lead us, and our Praise is to be about Him and directed to Him. Paul calls on the Gentiles to glorify Him (Rom. 15.9), and we know that whoso offereth praise glorifies Him.

III

All ye Nations. Thus the largest possible number of Gentiles are invited to praise Him. Alas! only too few avail themselves of this high privilege. The Psalmist seems almost to anticipate the words of the Lord, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature", for they could not praise Him unless they had heard of Him.

IV

All ye people. The entire nation of Israel, too, is comprehended in this small Psalm, and the extensive commission that the Lord gave to His own in Acts 1.8 readily springs to our minds.

V

His Merciful Kindness is great towards us. Surely grace is the greatest of all reasons for which to praise God. When we think of how the world treated Him when manifested here below, the marvel is that it was not swept by judgment, but instead grace reigns through righteousness in a way that is truly Divine.

VI

The Truth of the Lord endureth for ever. Surely it was that grace and truth came by Jesus Christ; so that this Psalm celebrates this wonderful fact. Truth is the very basis of all God's dealings with this sinful world and His truth endures for ever. Therefore, the Psalm covers the longest time—Eternity.

To summarise we have :—

- 1.—The deepest heart's desire.
- 2.—The loftiest occupation.
- 3.—The One Who is Glorious beyond compare.
- 4.—The largest number.
- 5.—The greatest theme.
- 6.—The longest time.

and all of these in the shortest chapter in the Bible, which concludes, as we now conclude our little short study, with the beautiful word 'HALLELUJAH'.

THOUGHTS OF CHRIST

(for the busy Housewife) No. 7

BY ERIC G. PARMENTER, BASINGSTOKE

On the eve of Calvary when the hearts of men were being revealed, the heart of the chief priests, elders and scribes: the heart of Peter and of Judas (Matthew 26), the Spirit of God illumines the darkness with another heart that was altogether different — the heart of the woman who brought the alabaster box of very precious ointment to anoint the body of the Saviour.

Against the background of Judas Iscariot who had experienced the kindness of Jesus but whose heart was only for money, he had no heart for Christ. The deepest depth of his being was ever moved by the thought of gain. The woman who had a heart for Christ is introduced. She may have been a sinner, but her eyes had been opened to see beauty of Jesus, which led her to consider that nothing was too costly to be spent on Him. She had a heart for Christ, the lonely Man, the lowly Servant, the lovely Son of God. While the chief priests, elders and scribes were plotting against Christ — she was anointing His body, pouring out the precious contents of her alabaster box upon Him who was the all absorbing object of her heart. He was worth ten thousand worlds to her. Because she had a heart for Him, she felt that nothing was "waste" that was spent on Him. Others might murmur but she would worship and adore. Happy woman! Loving, Admiring, Adoring at the feet of Christ, captivated by His blessed person.

"HE MUST INCREASE, BUT I DECREASE"

(John 3.30)

by R. J. PANTLIN

These are noble and startling words! They are the more so because of the person who uttered them. Was it some humble believer, living an obscure but godly life, deeply conscious of failure and weakness and unimportance? It was not!

The man who uttered these words was publicly commended by our Lord as no one else has been. It was to this man that the Saviour turned as a witness and said that "the witness which he witnesseth of me is true." We wonder whether our testimony merits similar commendation!

It was, moreover, this man who had the amazing privilege given him of baptizing with his own hands the Incarnate Son of the Living God. Our Lord declared him to be the greatest up to that time born of woman, and He publicly owned him as His forerunner.

It was such a man as this who uttered the above words, and who dare question his sincerity? The fearless John Baptist was not given to the deceit of false modesty.

But what personal advantage accrued to him by reason of this declaration? Judged according to man's standards, none whatever; indeed, quite the reverse! John was then enjoying popularity; to be baptized of him "there went out Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region round about Jordan"; even numbers of the bigoted Pharisees and Sadducees sought him out. He was without doubt in the public eye with consequent distinction.

Yet he seemingly forever shattered all hopes of increasing personal prestige by these humble and simple words: "He must increase BUT I Decrease." Here we see John Baptist's mission in its truest light; he had come to focus public attention not on himself, but UPON CHRIST. At a time when such attention was becoming increasingly given to him, he diverts it to a greater than he—our Lord Himself.

And this was not a grudging admission, wrung regretfully from the heart of a man acquainted with the inevitable. It was, rather, the warm glad testimony of a servant to his Master, of a faithful forerunner to the One whom he was to announce, and, above all, the sincere and humble confession of a man who recognized his Saviour and God.

For even when he announced that Blessed One to be the "Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," did not his own heart rejoice that his own salvation depended upon the fact and truth of his own utterance; and, though wonderfully privileged himself, to be numbered amongst His humble but adoring subjects?

These words were from one who was conscious of his own failure and worthlessness, yet conscious of the glory and pre-eminence of his Lord. These words were John's life motto; they were the expression of his own private godly desires and they are, at the same time, a Divine pattern for every follower of the Master.

If it is to be He or I, there can be no question as to God's answer; if He is to increase in my life and understanding then He will do so only as this poor self shall decrease. Two cannot occupy the first place; it must be He or I. What are our desires? He or I? Are others to see in me myself with all my imperfection and sin—or Him? Am I to hold the reins—or He?

Nay! rather shall our deepest conviction, desire and practice be;—HE MUST INCREASE, BUT I DECREASE.

Make this poor self grow less and less,
Be Thou my life and aim;
Oh, make me daily through Thy grace
More meet to bear Thy name!

A STUDY IN JUDE'S EPISTLE

by TOM WILSON, New Zealand

The writer of this short epistle describes himself as "the servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James". James was an eminent leader of the Church at Jerusalem (Acts 15) and half-brother of the Lord (Matt. 13.55). The writer, then, would be well known among the believers, and no doubt highly respected.

The tone of the letter is sharp and Jude's attitude is to face the problem he mentions directly and without equivocation. Although it had been his intention to write of "the common salvation", his priority now was to deal with the serious difficulty they were experiencing because of false teachers among them who were undermining the faith entrusted to the saints. They would have to be rebutted.

In a word, the problem was apostasy. The faithful among them

would have "to contend for the faith" — the key phrase in the epistle.

The first section (vv.1-16) exposes the problem; the second (vv.17-25) discusses how to deal with it. While Jude was speaking about a problem in his own day, around 66 A.D. or soon afterwards, what he has to say is most relevant to our day, increasingly so as we approach the end of the Church dispensation.

Why to Contend for the Faith, vv.1-16

Vv.1-2. In his opening remarks he mentions three aspects of the believers' position which would strengthen their faith. They were "sanctified", set apart as holy; "preserved" (or "kept"), upheld by God in every situation; and "called", chosen by Him through the Gospel. As they came to grips with the situation which confronted them, they would need three qualities which he also mentions: mercy, peace and abundant love.

V.3. This is the key verse — his purpose in writing. He puts aside his original purpose of writing about the salvation they shared to urge them to take a stand against apostate teachers — "earnestly contend for the faith once (for all) delivered unto the saints".

It is important to understand the difference between apostasy and heresy. A heretic is one who holds a belief, or beliefs, clearly contrary to Scripture; an apostate is someone who has not only forsaken the beliefs and principles he or she once held, but opposes them. Apostasy is much more subtle than heresy. Invariably, the heretic is clearly identified because he is outside the fellowship of believers. An apostate, on the other hand, may well be **among** the believers. He may well have professed salvation, been baptized, taken his place among the believers in assembly fellowship, won their confidence, and even be exercising a teaching and preaching ministry. Only gradually does his opposition and true position begin to emerge. Subtly, the "tares" begin to grow, gradually the truth is undermined and the testimony is torn asunder. What Jude is saying is that they have to take a stand — "earnestly contend for the faith".

V.4. He then develops the problem in graphic terms: "For there are certain men crept in unawares (by devious means)". They are ungodly because they oppose God's truth. They wantonly misrepresent the grace of God, denying the Lord God ("Sovereign Lord", Newberry) and our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is important to notice that these men were actually among the believers. The "enemy within" is more dangerous than those who oppose us from without. The tragedy is that there are those who are undermining the teaching of the Word, yet claim to be upholding it. Jude's epistle shows that this is no new phenomenon.

Vv.5-7. False teachers will incur the judgment of God. Jude substantiates this from their history as a people. The disbelieving Jews in the wilderness wanderings, the fallen angels (probably "the sons of God" referred to in Gen. 6.4), the immoral inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah are mentioned as cases in point.

Vv.8-11. Scathingly, he calls the false teachers "dreamers", "brute beasts" ("irrational animals", Newberry) and "corrupt". They are like Cain who rejected God's provision, Balaam who hired himself out to the enemies of God whom he purported to serve, and Korah who rebelled against God's authority.

Vv.12-16. He closes his profile of apostates with six fearful metaphors: "spots" (or "sunken rocks") in their love feasts, causing believers to founder; "feeding (sheperding) themselves", leaving the flock to wander; "clouds without water", giving no refreshment to the believers; "trees without fruit", devoid of spirituality; "raging waves of the sea", causing upset and shipwreck; and "wandering stars", drifting off in their vain imaginations into oblivion. At this point he quotes from a noncanonical book, The Book of Enoch, which foretells the emergence of such people and declares that they will be judged when the Lord returns.

Finally, we have Jude's own verdict: They are "murmurers, complainers (grumblers)", undermining authority, "walking after their own lusts (evil desires)". They love to be heard, using great swelling words, and flattery which is the stock in trade of all who wish to deceive.

We live in a pragmatic generation which would judge such pronouncements to be unduly harsh. But consider the offence committed by apostate teachers: wilfully opposing and misrepresenting the truth of God. Such a reprehensible act can only be exposed in the most stringent terms.

For us, the solemn lesson is clear: we must never go along with those who by abusing the Scriptures are effectively undermining the people of God. There are such today. Indeed, this is characteristic of these last times: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the

latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron" (1 Tim. 4.1,2). They are intolerant of the truth: "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (2 Tim. 4.3,4).

As we look out on our world we see radical change, resurgent paganism and rampant apostasy. Nothing is sacred. Even assemblies of the Lord's people are being affected by this rash of evil. The Epistle to Jude says to us that if we would walk in obedience to the Lord we will "earnestly contend for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints". (*To be continued*).

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Worry is a burden that God never meant for us to bear.
Heaven's delights will far out-weigh earth's difficulties.
To show His love, Jesus died for me; to show my love I must
live for Him.
Work done well for Christ will receive a "well done" from
Christ.
God says, "Don't wait!" Satan says, "Procrastinate!"
There are two kinds of Christians—those who wait on the
Lord and those who keep the Lord waiting.
Where the human spirit fails, the Holy Spirit fills.
A Christian never falls asleep in the fire or water, but he
often grows drowsy in the sunshine.
Backsliding stops when the knee-bending starts.
The word "easy" appears only once in the New Testament
and then in connection with "yoke."
You show what you know when you act on the fact.
Is what you're living for worth dying for?

—Anthony Orsini, Florida, U.S.A.

“PEACE, PERFECT PEACE”

EDWARD HENRY BICKERSTETH (1825—1906)

Edward Henry Bickersteth was born January 1825, at Islington and was named after his father and grandfather. His grandfather, Henry Bickersteth, had been a surgeon in Kirkby-Lonsdale, Westmoreland. His father, Edward Bickersteth, was a minister in the Church of England, a godly man who, after spending much of his life in the service of the Church Missionary Society, gave the last twenty years of his ministry to the parishioners of Watton, Hertfordshire.

Edward Henry grew up at Watton Rectory. His childhood there was packed with activity and was unforgettable. The “Recollections” of his sister, Emily, permit a look-in on life at the Rectory in those days, “At 5.30 every morning an alarm clock went off and Edward who tumbled half asleep into a shower-bath and soon roused all his sisters by vigorous knocks on their doors. In an hour’s time, all were downstairs, the boys at work with their tutor . . . The rector himself spent part of this time in a retired walk, engaged in his devotions. At 7.50 he returned from his walk and gathered his children into his study where each one repeated passages of the Holy Scriptures of their own choosing, some of them learning whole books of the Bible”.

During his days at Watton Rectory, Edward got to know the Saviour. On a Sunday afternoon, after months of spiritual hunger and struggle and while reading Krumacher’s “Elijah the Tishbite”, he committed himself to the Saviour for salvation and entered into the peace and joy of knowing that he belonged to Christ. He was then fourteen years of age and soon afterwards dedicated his life to the service of God.

Edward entered Trinity College, Cambridge when he was eighteen and after four years of diligent study graduated B.A. with honours in 1847. He gained his M.A. three years later. After ordination in the Church of England he held two short curacies from 1848 - 1852, at Banningham in Norfolk and at Tunbridge Wells in Kent. Then after three years as rector of Hinton-Martell in Dorset, he was appointed to Christ Church, Hampstead.

At Hampstead, Bickersteth entered upon his labours with enthusiasm and with diligence. The work was large and his days were busy. Nevertheless he found time for those things which lay close to his heart. The preaching of the gospel occupied much of his time. He personally proclaimed its glorious message both indoors and in the

open air and took a great interest in its progress in foreign lands. It was, indeed, a great joy to him when two of his sons gave themselves to overseas missionary service, one to India and the other to Japan. Thus busily, devotedly and faithfully, Bickersteth ministered to the people of Hampstead for thirty years and those years were fruitful for God.

In 1885, Bickersteth was appointed Bishop of Exeter and in that office he continued with all his wonted enthusiasm and diligence for fifteen years till ill health overtook him. This forced his resignation and he then moved to London. For over five years he suffered bodily weakness; nevertheless, through it all, his faith remained strong and on May 16th, 1906 he passed away from "earth's struggles" to "heaven's perfect peace".

E. H. Bickersteth was endowed with a fine poetic gift and throughout life devoted much of his time to the furtherance of hymnology. As a compiler his best work was his "Hymnal Companion", first published in 1870. As a composer, Bickersteth ranks among the finest of his day. His subject matter was diverse — some of his hymns were gospel, some missionary but most were written for the encouragement and comfort of the people of God. The features of his compositions have received fitting comment by Dr. John Julian " . . . there is a smooth plaintiftness and individuality in his hymns which give them a distant character of their own. His thoughts are usually with the individual, and not with the mass; with the single soul and his God and not with a vast multitude bowed in adoration before the Almighty. Hence, although many of his hymns are eminently suited to congregational purposes, and have attained to a wide popularity, yet his finest productions are those which are best suited for private use".

The best known of Bickersteth's hymns is "Peace, perfect peace". Though often sung by collected companies of God's people, it is a fine example of a hymn suited for private use; in this capacity it was a great favourite with Queen Victoria.

This lovely hymn was written by Bickersteth in August, 1875, during the period of his Hampstead ministry. At that time, the Bickersteths, as a family, had gone on holiday to Harrogate in Yorkshire. For some years the usual practice of the family at Sunday tea-time had been for each member to quote a hymn of their choosing and for father to conclude the session with one of his choice or of his own making. In the morning of the Sunday in question, Bickersteth had been to hear the vicar of Harrogate preach from the lovely text of Isaiah 26.3, "Thou wilt keep him in

perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee". In the afternoon he went for a solitary walk on the moors. The beauty of the phrase, "perfect peace" filled and flooded his mind. He then called on a sick relative and found him bravely fighting a terminal illness but ill at ease spiritually. Bickersteth's afternoon's meditation, "perfect peace", then took shape in verse and the sharing of it brought great comfort to his dying friend. Later that same afternoon at the tea-table he read to his family the lines of his completed hymn,

"Peace, perfect peace, in this dark world of sin?
The blood of Jesus whispers peace within.

Peace, perfect peace, by thronging duties pressed?
To do the will of Jesus, this is rest.

Peace, perfect peace, with sorrows surging round?
On Jesus' bosom naught but calm is found.

Peace, perfect peace, with loved ones far away?
In Jesus' keeping we are safe, and they.

Peace, perfect peace, our future all unknown?
Jesus we know and He is on the throne.

Peace, perfect peace, death shadowing us and ours?
Jesus hath vanquished death and all its powers.

It is enough: earth's struggles soon shall cease
And Jesus call us to heaven's perfect peace".

"Perfect peace" is the English rendering of the beautiful Hebrew, "Shalom Shalom" of Isaiah 26.3 and bespeaks the inner tranquility of the human heart stayed upon and kept by Jehovah. That uninterrupted blessedness was the portion on earth of the Lord Jesus, amid the vicissitudes of life. In a world of sin, away from home, amid earth's sorrows, subject to life's pressures, and even when overshadowed by death, His heart enjoyed its perfect rest. He called it, "My peace" and, as a precious legacy, bequeathed it to His own (John 14.27).

This inner peace of the believer is daily assailed and threatened. Bickersteth in his hymn, however, assures us that for each distressing perplexity that comes our way, there is a corresponding Divine supply. The opening six stanzas, each in the form of question and answer, speak of,

A peace amid earth's defilement through Jesus precious blood,
A rest amid earth's pressure in Jesus perfect will,
A repose amid earth's struggles on Jesus priestly bosom,
A serenity amid earth's separations through Jesus present
 keeping,
An assurance amid earth's apprehensions in Jesus perpetual
 control, and
A cheer amid earth's gloom because of Jesus personal victory.

The closing stanza points onward beyond this world to "heaven's perfect peace". The things that vex us now will then be no more — "no more curse" to blight that heavenly place, "no more death" to cast its long dark shadow, "no more sorrow" to crush the tender and broken spirit and "no more sea" to ever again cause another separation. The former things will have passed away; then God and the Lamb will reign supreme and every heart will know its "perfect peace".

ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY

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ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY



Contents

CHRIST IN THE APOCALYPSE

by John B. D. Page

ISAIAH'S PORTRAITS OF CHRIST

by J. Flanigan

FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTALS

by J. B. Hewitt

THE PROPHECY OF JONAH

by E. R. Bower

THE WILL OF GOD FOR THE GOSPEL WITNESS

by E. Coppin

THOUGHTS OF CHRIST by Eric G. Parmenter

A STUDY IN JUDE'S EPISTLE

by Tom Wilson

HIS UNCHANGING NAME

by Samuel Dawson

PSALM 23 by Nelson McDonald

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

by Anthony Orsini

THE ROMAN ROAD

by T. Cornforth Taws

HYMNS AND THEIR WRITERS

by Jack Strahan

GOD MANIFEST IN FLESH

TUNE : Sagina — "And can it be that I should gain"

Father to Thee our voice we raise,
Remembering Thy lovely Son.
The subject of our thanks and praise
For all He is and all He's done.
Image of the Invisible
Almighty God invincible!

Firstborn of all creation, He
Brought all things forth by powerful word.
The sky, the land, the mighty sea,
Upheld by Him as Sovereign Lord.
And yet this One of matchless worth
Was firstborn of a maid brought forth!

He, being in the form of God,
Equal with Thee in every way,
Yet as a Man this earth He trod
And glorified Thee every day.
"Behold a Son is given" to us
In servant form to please Thee thus!

Perfection marked His every move
And everything He did and said.
A Man of whom Thou did'st approve
By signs, as by Thy Spirit led.
He showed to men Thy heart of love
Delighting Thee his God above.

CHRIST IN THE APOCALYPSE (26)

by JOHN B. D. PAGE

THE INCOMPARABLE CHRIST (iv)

Reading : Revelation 22.16 and 5. 1-6.

THE ROOT AND OFFSPRING OF DAVID

On three past occasions, the glorified Christ has supplemented His ineffable Name with a metaphorical designation — three times with "Alpha and Omega" (1.8,11; 22.13), and once with "the First and the Last" (1.17) — now He does for the last time with another (22.16).

During His earthly ministry, the Lord Jesus followed this practice of amplifying His unutterable Name on seven occasions. For instance, He said, "I am the bread of life" (John 6.35), meaning that, 'as the "I AM", (I am) "the Bread of Life", and so I am able to impart eternal life to believers whose spiritual needs are met and satisfied for ever'. Similarly, now glorified, He speaks from heaven to the exiled seer and He explains His declaration of being the "I AM" with one or more metaphorical titles. On this last occasion, He styles Himself as "the Root and Offspring of David", and so He relates Himself to the Davidic dynasty. Upon hearing this unusual designation, the seer in the solitude of Patmos may have reflected upon several Scriptures in connection with the fall and future rise of the monarchy, although there were no visible signs of its restoration in his day with Israel subject to Imperial Rome.

Even before the downfall of the royal house, Hosea (3.4) foretold that "Israel shall abide many days without a king and without a prince", meaning that the nation would be without a king of God's appointment and without a ruler of its own choice, and this state of affairs had already prevailed for about seven centuries at the time of John hearing his Lord's pronouncement from heaven. Since then, another eighteen centuries have elapsed under such conditions.

A similar thought is expressed by Isaiah (11.1, RV), who says, "there shall come forth a Shoot out of the stock (stump) of Jesse and a Branch out of his roots shall bear fruit". Using metaphorical language the prophet indicates that the royal house of David, having become so degenerate, is likened to a tree that had been felled but

there remains the stump of Jesse, out of which a Shoot, referring to Christ, would grow, and He would become a fruit-bearing Branch. Isaiah continues with the idea of a glorious prospect in verse 11 where he foresees the "Root of Jesse", a Messianic title, standing for an ensign of the Gentile peoples and summoning them to Himself during the millennium for an era of rest. There is no contradiction between these two titles ascribed to Christ for the age to come — He is the "Root of Jesse", because He is God, He is the "Shoot . . . of Jesse", becoming a fruit-bearing Branch, because He is Man. This reasoning lies behind the glorified Lord's Self-ascribed title. Although the royal house of David had sunk into oblivion in Isaiah's day, the divine purpose was not for it to remain in insignificance, because there is the prospect of a glorious future for the monarchy in David's greater Son, designated here as Jesse's "Root" and "Branch".

Turning again to Hosea (3.5), who says, "Afterward shall the children of Israel return and seek the Lord their God, and David their king, . . .". Not only a national and spiritual restoration of Israel is foreseen but also a re-establishment of the monarchy. Commenting upon the phrase, "David their king" in *Prophet of a Broken Home*, Dr. F. A. Tatford says, "David was regarded as the prototype of perfect kingship (Ezek. 34.23; 37.24) and the Targum of Jonathan identifies him here with the King Messiah. The reference was, of course, to the Davidic dynasty and not to David personally. The ruler referred to would be one from David's line, the Lord Jesus Christ".

Later in Isaiah (53.2f), Christ is depicted as "a tender plant", or 'a pleasant sapling' in the eyes of Jehovah during the days of His childhood and growth into manhood. As the simile is of a tree when it is young and pleasing to behold, the first advent of Christ is in view. There is no thought of maturity about the tree and its branches, such as a fruit-bearing Branch (Isa. 11.1) which anticipates Messiah's millennial reign. In the same verse, He is likened to "a root out of dry ground" — what a contrast! It has been suggested that there is an allusion to the unattractive root of a shittah tree growing on the surface of arid and stony ground in its native wilderness, so descriptive of Christ as seen by men who, in their barren spiritual state, saw no beauty in Him to feel attracted to Him and so, despising Him, they hid their faces in repulsion from Him.

Such humiliation of Christ may be prefigured by the tabernacle in the wilderness in which only wood of the shittah tree was used.

These scriptures in Isaiah provide some background for understanding Messiah's Self-ascribed title, "the Root and Offspring of David". The divine Speaker anticipates the time when the Davidic dynasty will be no longer insignificant and lost in obscurity but it will be restored to a dignified position and held in esteem. Consequently, He describes Himself not as the Root of Jesse or as a Root out of dry ground but as the Root of David. He does not portray Himself as the Shoot from the stump of Jesse or as a pleasant Sapling, but as the Offspring of David. When Israel is seen figuratively as "branches" of an olive tree, Abraham is viewed as the nation's "root" in an ancestral sense (Rom. 11.16), but Christ, who was born more than ten centuries after David, is not David's Ancestor! Therefore, there is a deeper significance in the title, "the Root . . . of David".

Botanically, the root provides an unseen anchorage for a tree. If this botanical principle is applied to the family tree of the Davidic dynasty then, throughout the long centuries of oblivion and subsequent absence of the monarchy, Christ, as "the Root of David", has been, and still is, its invisible anchorage. Again, thinking of a tree, sustenance for maintaining its life is derived from the root. Humanly speaking, the Davidic monarchy is dead outwardly and there is no apparent prospect of its restoration even with the Jews now back in part of the promised land, because the independent State of Israel is not a kingdom but it is a republic. From the divine viewpoint, the monarchy is not dead and its life is sustained by "the Root of David" who, being Deity as the "I AM", is the Antecedent of David, and so the monarchy has a secure anchorage in Him besides being sustained by Him, making it unique among all others in the world where so many monarchs have fallen with no prospect of restoration.

"The Offspring of David", which is the remaining part of, and complementary to, the first part of this compound title, signifies that Christ, in becoming Man, is the Descendant of David. Implicit in this title is the truth of His Incarnation — as God, He *was* the Antecedent of David; as Man, He *became* the Descendant of David. Therefore, "when the fulness of the time came" not a moment too early or a moment too late but at the time fixed in the

counsels of God in eternity, "God sent forth His Son", who was, and from eternity had been, the Son of God, "born of a woman, . . ." (Gal. 4.4, RV), which expresses the method of the Incarnation, so that Christ did not come 'into the flesh', that is, into an already existing man, as taught by the Gnostics, but He came "in the flesh" (1 John 4.2), partaking of flesh and blood (Heb. 2.14), and so He possessed true Manhood. His human line of descent is traced back to Adam in the genealogy recorded by Luke (3.23-38).

For His *humanity*, unlike all other human beings who are the seed of men, He was the Seed of the Woman who would, in the consummation of the ages, bruise fatally at the cross the head of the serpent whose diabolical intention was to thwart the divine plan of redemption (Gen. 3.15). For His *nationality*, He was the Seed of Abraham (Gal. 3.16, cited from Gen. 13.15, or 21.12) and so in Him, as the Child of Promise, all families of the earth will be blessed (Gen. 12.3). For His *royalty*, He was the Seed of David (Rom. 1.3), and so Matthew, who introduces Him as "the son of David", gives His legal line of royal descent in a genealogical table (Matt. 1.1-16), and consequently He is the Heir of the promised kingdom which means that "the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David, . . . and of His Kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1.32ff).

The Lion of the Tribe of Judah

Messiah, whose royal lineage is in view, was not only of the house of David but He belonged also to the royal tribe of Judah as indicated early in the book (5.1-6) when the seer gazed upon the Occupant of the throne in heaven in whose right hand there was a seven-sealed scroll, and he saw there was no celestial, terrestrial or infernal being able to loose the seals. Then one of the twenty-four elders around the throne directed his attention to One, standing between the throne and the seraphim, whom the elder called "the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David", for He had the ability to unloose the seven seals of the scroll. In spite of these regal titles, the seer saw no richly-clad monarch but instead "a Lamb as it had been slain" (5.1-6) — there could be no greater contrast than a lamb and a lion!

No wild animal is mentioned so frequently in the Bible as the lion, for it abounded in the land, making its lair in the forests or in the tangled thickets of the Jordan valley or in the mountain crevices (Jer. 4.7; 5.6; 12.8; 49.19; S. of S. 4.8).

Several Hebrew words are used in the Old Testament for describing a lion, such as

gur, translated 'a whelp', which the lioness nourished and trained to catch its prey until it was fully grown (Gen. 49.9; Ezek. 19.2ff; Deut. 33.22);

kephir, that is, 'a young lion' which, having its teeth grown, is able to hunt for its food (Jer. 25.38; Psa. 58.6; Judg. 14.5);

ari, the most frequently used word, denotes 'a fully grown lion' (Gen. 49.9), and it was a beast of prey, lying secretly in wait ready to pounce upon its victim, devouring it ferociously (1 Sam. 17.34; Psa. 7.3; 10.9; 22.13; Isa. 31.4).

The "lion . . . is strongest among beasts, and turneth not away from any" (Prov. 30.30), says Agur for Solomon who, as a recognized authority on wild beasts (1 Kings 4.33), saw the lion as a symbol of strength and courage, not fearful of any predatory animals. This may portray the lion-like might of Messiah, Who will not turn away from His foes but He will vanquish them, when He comes again with power and great glory.

As a probable admirer of the lion as 'king of beasts', Solomon made a great throne of ivory overlaid with gold and its arm-rests had two lions whilst its six steps were flanked with twelve lions, so that there was no comparable throne in any other kingdom (1 Kings 10.18-20). In this symbolical way, Israel's greatest monarch emphasized his unequalled regal majesty to his courtiers who attended upon him and to visiting dignitaries who had an audience with him. Such matchless royal splendour applies to One Who is greater than Solomon when He takes the reins of government as "the Lion of the tribe of Judah".

Not surprisingly, the lion, as a symbol of strength and grandeur is used figuratively of Babylon, the greatest of Gentile world empires (Dan. 7.14; cp. Jer. 4.7; 50.17).

This king of wild animals is used metaphorically of Israel, which is yet to be the greatest of nations. Like a great lion about to rise up were the Israelites encamped east of Jordan, as seen by Balaam, and they would lift up themselves as a young lion in its strength, ready to attack the prey west of Jordan (Num. 23.24). In his next parable, Balaam pictures the Israelites, after their military victories in Canaan, crouching and lying down like a great lion

satisfied in its triumph — no one would dare to "stir him up"! (Num. 24.9). Such words, applied not to the royal tribe but to the whole nation, are prophetic of Israel's imperial greatness, still future, even as the Lord told the nation, "thou shalt reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over thee" (Deut. 15.6) and, at that time, "the Lion of the tribe of Judah" will be Israel's King. No Gentile nation will be able to withstand the strength of that little nation and its mighty Monarch.

Upon hearing this royal designation, "the lion of the tribe of Judah", John would have been familiar with these scriptures depicting the majestic splendour of the lion but he would have undoubtedly recalled the divinely ordered layout of the Israelites' encampment in the wilderness. Pitched around the tabernacle, the twelve tribes were arranged in four camps, each with its own standard. On the east side, Judah, after Moses and Aaron, occupied the place of honour in front of the entrance to the tabernacle together with two other tribes, Zebulon and Issachar (Num. 2.2-9). The camp emblem for Judah's standard was a lion, probably based on the blessing that Jacob pronounced upon his son, "Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as a lioness; who shall rouse him up?" (Gen. 49.9, RV). A lion was Judah's emblem, so the aged patriarch said, and he applied it to his son personally and tribally. Judah was like a lion's whelp, which had gone up from the prey, and like a young lion, full of strength, and like a lioness, dangerous to arouse. David came from the tribe of Judah and the whole Davidic dynasty belonged to it. The Lord Jesus himself came from Judah's line and descended from the house of David.

Whilst Judah's emblem appears to be founded on scripture, the emblems for the other three camp standards, apparently based upon tradition, were a man for Reuben, an ox for Ephraim, and an eagle for Dan. In his vision of the glory of the Lord, Ezekiel saw four living creatures each with four faces which, remarkably, were like these four camp emblems (Ezek. 1.5,10). Centuries later, John saw in a vision four living creatures with similar faces (Rev.4.7, RV), but in contrast to the exiled prophet in Babylon who mentions "the face of a man" first to stress the Humanity of Christ, the Patmos seer places first "the living creature like a lion" for emphasis upon Messiah's Kingship. Even in the Israelites' march out of the Sinai

wilderness, the camp of Judah with its lion embellished standard was in the lead (Num. 10.14), foreshadowing the foremost position of "the Lion of the tribe of Judah" in a coming day.

Hearing these illustrious titles from the lips of the elder, John would have observed that the descriptive "the Lion of the tribe of Judah", representing Christ not only in His Manhood but primarily as Israel's King, takes pride of place. Next, as "the Root of David", He is David's Predecessor because He is Deity. Then He is distinguished as "a Lamb as it had been slain", signifying that He has made peace through the blood of His cross, reconciling all things unto God in the age to come. Consequently, when the lion and the lamb shall lie down together in the coming age of peace, then He, who was the Lamb once slain, will be the Lion of the tribe of Judah enthroned. (*To be continued*).

ISAIAH'S PORTRAITS OF CHRIST

by J. FLANIGAN (Belfast)

8—"MESSIAH"

Isaiah 61 evokes precious memories of Nazareth. After His baptism and the temptation in the wilderness, our Lord returned to Galilee and to His home town. What wondrous grace it was that He should have chosen to be brought up in Nazareth; to be called a Nazarene. "Can there be any good thing come out of Nazareth?" It was a town of ill repute. It was a stopping place on the road south from Damascus and from the Lebanon and beyond. Merchants, traders, soldiers, and a variety of travellers lodged here overnight, and they made it infamous for immorality and vice. Here, in this environment, for thirty years, our Lord lived and laboured, humbly and sinlessly.

He would have been so familiar with the Nazareth Synagogue. It was the centre of learning, the meeting place for devotions and for daily discussions. On Sabbath days it was His custom to be there, and as an adult Jewish male it was His right and privilege to be involved in the public reading of the scrolls. The Sabbath referred to in Luke 4 was one of those days. But it was to become a memorable "Shabbat". Our Lord stood up to read. He took the scroll from the attendant. He quietly and confidently, with holy

familiarity (Psalm 1.2), found the place which we now know as Isaiah 61, and having read the appropriate portion, He rolled up the scroll, returned it to the attendant, and sat down.

"Gracious words" were spoken, says Luke. They marvelled at His exposition. It was an historic, remarkable day, when the ancient Isaiah prophecy was being fulfilled in their midst. Messiah had come. He had lived amongst them unknown. He had for thirty years been with them unrecognised. A carpenter, and a carpenter's son, His Messianic glory had been veiled. But now the veil was to be lifted; He would present Himself to them and to the Nation.

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me", He read. "He hath anointed Me". Our Lord was the true meal offering. His lovely life had been a perfect blending of every desirable moral feature. Fine flour indeed; the finest of fine flour to be presented to Jehovah. Now the oil had been poured upon the flour. The offering had been anointed. He had stood in Jordan and the tender Dove had settled upon Him and marked Him out. As Israel's prophets, priests, and kings had always been anointed into their offices, so too had our Lord been anointed. Now, this day, in the Nazareth Synagogue, He would reveal Himself as the anointed Messiah.

From this day He would be a preacher of the gospel to the poor. He would herald the riches of the glad tidings to those of meagre resources. To men unable to pay, He would offer the wealth of the heavenly message. To poor sinners, morally and spiritually bankrupt, He would proffer the gold of a precious pardon and forgiveness. That is, if they, on their part, would but acknowledge their poverty. This, however, was not to be.

He had healing too, for the broken hearted. It was a divine characteristic (Psalm 147.3), that He should bind up the hearts of those who were wounded with grief. But with the men of Nazareth, as with Israel in general, there would be a notable absence of sorrow for sin. There was little heartache for either individual or national guilt. Nevertheless, there would be some who would grieve, and the anointed One had come with healing.

There was deliverance too, for the captive. The Emancipator had come. Not that the yoke of Roman bondage would yet be lifted. That was a secondary thing. Men were in fetters worse than that. The chains of sin were strong. Man was helpless to

entangle himself from such. The people, though many knew it not, were imprisoned by their own sinful thoughts and deeds. They were captives to their habits and vices. But the Deliverer was here. For those who knew their bondage, and the reality of the captivity in which they were bound morally, the Redeemer had come.

But how blind they were. He had come to give them new vision. If only they could know how blind they were. But like men blind from birth, they did not, could not, know the beauties and glories to which sin had blinded them. This very blindness was, in fact, a form of imprisonment too. Messiah in their midst had deliverance from that too.

Indeed, they were Blind, Bruised, Bankrupt, Brokenhearted Bondmen, but they knew it not. And in the humble confines of their local synagogue stood the Christ of Isaiah 61, as Prophet, Priest, Potentate, Benefactor, Healer, and Redeemer, and they knew not this either. The day which should have been a day of gladness and rejoicing was shrouded in sadness. Their day of visitation had begun and they did not and would not know it. It was the acceptable year of the Lord. He had there closed the book. In gentle, tender grace, He Who knew the hardness of their hearts would not yet announce the day of vengeance which would one day be their portion.

Their eyes were fastened upon Him as He read. Their ears had heard the gracious words as He spoke. But their hearts were hard. Could Joseph's son really be Isaiah's Christ? Could one from their own country be the Messiah for whom they had waited? In questioning disbelief they heard His rebukes, backed with stories from the ministries of Elijah and Elisha. Sidonians and Syrians had been blessed in those days, in a ministry that had by-passed lepers and widows in Israel. History would repeat itself. They were filled with wrath. They rose up. They thrust Him out. They led Him to the brow of the hill, not knowing that three years later, in national rejection of the ministry that had just begun, they would lead Him, outside Jerusalem, to the brow of another Hill.

But His time had not yet come, and passing through the midst of the men of Nazareth, He went His way to Capernaum.

The day of Vengeance would inevitably come, but, in grace, not yet.

FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTALS

by J. B. HEWITT.

(53) PEACE

Peace is one of the thrilling notes of the Gospel, "preaching peace by Jesus Christ" (Acts 10.36). He is "the Lord of Peace" (2 Thess. 3.10). Job reminds us that peace comes through submission to the will of God (Job 22.21). In this restless age men and nations yearn for universal peace.

There are many aspects of peace in the N.T. and the three Persons in the Godhead are united in providing perfect peace for every believing soul. The Father is the God Peace (1 Thess. 5.23); the Lord Jesus is the Prince and Personification of peace (Isa. 9.6; Eph. 2.14), and the Holy Spirit provides the Fruit of peace (Gal. 5.22).

RECONCILIATION Col. 1.20,21. This is our need as sinners. The work of the Lord Jesus at Calvary secures our peace. The claims of God's holy justice have been fully met, and blood-brought peace is the portion of the believer in Christ (Rom. 5.1). The work on the Cross reconciles the sinner to God (2 Cor. 5.19,20; 1 Pet. 3.18). Peace is proclaimed in the Gospel (Acts 10.36).

UNIFICATION Eph. 2.14-16. The divine work accomplished a change for both Jew and Gentile. Now the believing Jews and Gentiles would be mutually at peace and at unity. The Jews and Gentiles were separated in unbelief by "the middle wall of partition". The barrier was removed by Christ. The ceremonial law has been annulled or rendered inoperative. "One body" has been made from believers extracted from the two opposing parties, a living unity with Christ as Head (Eph. 3.6; Col. 1.18). He procured peace (v. 16) preached peace through His apostles (v. 17) and is our Peace (v. 14). He is also our peace in Resurrection (John 20.21).

We have been brought into all the wealth of a covenanted privilege. We are brought into the fellowship of the church as the body of Christ (v. 19). The church as a spiritual entity, is precious as seen by God (v. 21,22).

JUSTIFICATION Rom. 5.1. We are free from any charge of guilt, and have a righteous standing before God. The righteous act of the Lord at Calvary (v. 18), has procured our acquittal from guilt (v. 15,16). This all comes to us through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. This justification is perfect and permanent. There are no degrees in justification. All is ours freely by grace (Rom. 3.24); instrumentally by faith (Rom. 5.1). Study the blessings of justification in verses 1-11.

SANCTIFICATION Phil. 4.7. We need peace of heart within us as well as peace of conscience (Rom. 5.1). Not all saints enjoy peace within. We fail to enjoy our inheritance in Christ. Peace comes through sobriety — gentleness (Phil. 4.5). "The Lord is at hand", beholding us, as well as upholding us, enabling us to be tolerant and considerate when troubles assail us.

The secret of serenity depends upon three conditions (v. 6). Be careful for nothing, be prayerful in everything and be thankful for anything. Praise, prayer and peace are good friends. Tranquility is ours for Peace will stand as a garrison round our heart. Peace as a sentinel guards us as a sentry guards a palace. The God of Peace in His presence and defence (v. 7,9). Is this experimentally true of us each day?

ARBITRATION Co. 3.15. The "peace of Christ" RV. Let this peace govern there, as an umpire deciding all matters of difference among you. Peace with God is our privilege, peace with our brethren is our duty. This peace must regulate our relations one with another in the local company. Where this peace arbitrates, and the Word of Christ permeates there will be acclamation of the Person of Christ and everything done in the Name of Christ.

PERFECTION Isa. 26.3. This chapter looks on to a restored and converted Israel. What assurance — "Thou wilt keep him" — what abundance "in perfect peace". Nothing to disturb it, invade or destroy it. It passes all understanding. The mind may enjoy peace as it is stayed on Him. Our attitude "stayed on Thee, trusteth in Thee". This is the secret of tranquility in any storm that might upset us. As we hearken to God's word we can have "peace like a river" (Isa. 48.18).

AFFECTION Psa. 119.165. This great peace is the fruit of faith, and the motive of obedience. The practical influence of faith is wholehearted obedience (v. 166). The highway to happiness is

love of God's Word (Ps. 119.16,47,97). Our communion is sweet and our confidence assured. This is a law of obedience, as we walk in the light we will go on to the full enjoyment of peace. This peace is an incalculable blessing (Isa. 54.13). "nothing shall offend them" is translated, "to them is no stumbling block". There are many things to stumble us; fiery trials, daily cross-bearing and temptations all around us. This is the consolation to the faithful lover of God's word, "The work of righteousness shall be peace". (Isa. 32.17).

BENEDICTION Heb. 13.20,21. This prayer is frequently and appropriately, used as a benediction. Here is a word of cheer for persecuted saints. For my troubled heart — "the God of peace", for my trembling soul — the power of God in "raising our Lord from among the dead". This great act guarantees our peace for time and eternity. My tendency to wander — the pastoral care of "that great Shepherd". For my tender conscience — "the blood of the everlasting covenant". We are eternally secure and have eternal life.

The God of purpose — "to adjust thoroughly"; I need this for my daily life, equipped "to do His will", how necessary (Col. 4.12; 1 Thess. 4.3; Eph. 6.6).

We can bring pleasure to God in all that we do (Col. 1.10; 1 Thess. 2.4; 1 John 3.22). All God's work is "through Jesus Christ", He is the Lord of glory, may we daily glorify Him and magnify Him in our bodies (Phil. 1.20). Amen.

THE DEPOSIT

by Matthew Cordiner, (Kilwinning).

It's given to you to keep today
With honour and integrity — THE WORD OF GOD
You must not add or take away
But teach with all authority — THE WORD OF GOD.

There are things which the church may try
Which cannot be supported by — THE WORD OF GOD
It's up to folks like you and I
To stand for truth and to apply — THE WORD OF GOD.

For very soon we'll all be gone
And one thing will abide alone — THE WORD OF GOD
So when our work for God is done
Will we to younger ones pass on — THE WORD OF GOD?

"THE PROPHECY OF JONAH"

by E. R. Bower.

INTRODUCTION

(A) *The meaning of prophecy.*

Before entering into the book of Jonah — a book which would appear to be chronologically the first of the books usually referred to as 'the prophets' (not the first of the prophets!) it will perhaps be of help to find definitions for a prophet and for his work.

It has been said in "Life and words of Christ" (by Geikie) that "A prophet, in the Jewish point of view, was less a seer than a fearless preacher, from whom, (to use the words of Clement of Alexandria), the truth shone forth, as the light streams from the sun. He might reveal the future, but his great characteristic was, that he was the mouthpiece of God, to utter, by resistless impulse, the rebukes or commands of the Almighty, as His ambassador, and the interpreter of His will to men."

The word 'prophet' in the Hebrew is 'nabi', from 'naba' to 'boil up' or 'boil forth'— hence to pour forth words with the fervour and inspiration of a prophet. A prophet can be (1) one who foretells future events by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (1 Pet. 1.10,11). This is the accepted sense of the term. (2) One who reveals the mind of God to man by way of reproof, exhortation, warning, expostulation etc., This includes all the words of the prophets while under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. (Matt. 11.13). (3) One who makes known things already done, the declaration of which shews more than human knowledge, (e.g. Luke 22.63,64). (4) One who speaks with a divine afflatus (inspiration or impulse) though not amounting perhaps to what is commonly called inspiration. (Luke 1.67-69). (5) One who gives expression to the praise of God in musical form (1 Chron. 25.1-7). Noting here (v.5) "the words of God". (6) One who declares or expounds Divine truth under the influence and with the aid of the Holy Spirit. (Matt. 7.22; Acts 19.1-6; 1 Cor. 11.4-5; 13.2,8,19; 14.1-40; Rom. 12.6; 1 Cor. 12.10).

Prophecy was one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and its chief design was to comfort, exhort and testify from the Scriptures, for the edification of believers. (Acts 15.32). See 1 Cor. 12.28; Ephes. 4.11. (John Brown's Bible Dictionary).

(B) *Jonah the prophet.*

Jonah was the son of Amittai (Jon. 1.1; 2 Kin. 14.25) and a native of Gathhepher in the tribe of Zebulon (Josh. 19.13; — Gittahhepher). He prophesied during the reign of Jeroboam (the second) king of Israel, and was contemporary with Amos and Isaiah. In Judah, Uzziah was on the throne. He predicted the success of the struggle with Syria and the subsequent restoration of some of Israel's ancient territory. Gath-hepher was about three miles north of Nazareth which, in turn, is in Galilee. Thus the Pharisees were incorrect in saying, "Search and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet." (John 7.52).

(C) *Jonah, the book.*

It has been described as "this book of unknown authorship, of unknown date, of disputed meaning, but of surpassing interest." Its literary character, or the various opinions concerning it (e.g. that it is fiction, not fact; a parable; an allegory; a poetical myth; literal history; a dream; an embellishment of an historical narrative etc.,) is outside the scope of this present study, except perhaps to note that the allegorical nature of the narrative finds some support, according to which Jonah is a symbol of Israel as a nation entrusted with the oracles of God, and a witness to Divine truth. Israel shrank from the commission, and often apostasized. It was 'swallowed up' by Babylon. In exile, it sought the Lord, and was afterwards restored to its own home. One other allegory may be seen later. Whatever the arguments may be among the learned, one thing is certain; the Lord Jesus Christ Himself referred to the Queen of Sheba (an historical fact) and at the same time said, "The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment . . . because they repented at the preaching of Jonah" (Matt. 12.40; 16.4; Luke 11.30). How can those who are myths arise in the judgment?

The book of Jonah kept alive in the minds of the people an incident which in due time, as a signpost on the road, would be a sure and certain sign to them of the presence of the Messiah. "No sign shall be given . . . but the sign of the prophet Jonah."

Here, it may be, is the key to prophecy fulfilled and unfulfilled, that many things were written which appeared as "dark sayings" and their meaning was only seen "as through a glass darkly", but when "the fulness of time was come" then by all the sign posts along the road, by all the descriptions given, was the event recognised.

Of the 'improbability' of the story of Jonah's miraculous release from the deep, and despite what some commentators say, but one comment is really necessary — that of our Lord who said, "As Jonah was three days and nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." Some have suggested that Jonah actually died, but was resurrected alive, and by so doing became a true sign of the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord. The sign was twofold — (1) As Jonah was three days and three nights . . . SO SHALL the Son man be . . ." and (2) As Jonah was a sign unto the Ninevites . . . SO SHALL also the Son of man be . . ." (*to be continued*).

HE IS COMING

He is coming, for our peace,
Every Saint shall share release,
Trouble not your hearts, at all,
He is coming, for us all.

He is coming, let us work,
Always abounding, nothing shirk.
Stedfast, firm, it's not in vain,
He is coming back again.

He is coming, sorrow not,
Precious Hope, O murmur not.
Find much comfort, hear Him say,
He is coming, perhaps today.

He is coming, watch and pray,
We'll be like Him, wondrous day.
Meanwhile, may we be kept pure,
He is coming, that is sure.

He is coming, forward look,
What a meeting, read His Book,
We shall meet Him in the Air
And to be forever there.

—James Neilly.

THE WILL OF GOD FOR THE GOSPEL WITNESS

by E. COPPIN

The proclamation of the Gospel is an ever-present responsibility of the Church, a trust committed to every Christian. Whatever the reactions of past generations, we of this one must face up to the tremendous need, accentuated by the apparent imminence of the close of this Gospel day.

Our work is not to make better a God-hating world, but to beseech as many sinners to repent and be saved as we can; not to bolster up the hopeless derelict, but to invite people into the Lifeboat. The Gospel of Christ is the power of God unto that end. (Rom. 1.16).

Our Master was Himself the Great Exemplar

in the winning of the souls of men. Any time or place was to Him an occasion. Tradition and convention were ignored when a needy soul was at hand. His love for the perishing was manifested in His miracles, and throbbed in His earnest message. Preaching may cost little now-a-days, His message cost Him His life.

In a Pharisee's house where He was invited to dine He healed a palsied man; tired and weary, beneath the burning noon-day sun, when others might be taking siesta, He reached the heart and conscience of a sinful woman; when others had retired to bed He devoted His sleeping-time to leading Nicodemus to God; He stopped a funeral procession to bring life and salvation to a dead young man and his broken-hearted widowed mother; and in a cemetery one day He brought salvation to a poor demoniac who was the terror of the district.

His passion for souls never waned, and on the cross of shame, enduring inexpressible agony Himself, His love was transcendent—right there He won the soul of a dying thief. Now if we claim to have the Spirit of Christ,

Would His Spirit act differently in our lives?

We have much doctrine which finds little expression in our life. We believe in a Heaven where we expect to be for ever, but apart from our relatives and a few others we are not specially anxious to take people with us. More strange still, we believe, or say we do, that there is a hell for the unsaved, yet we have not

been concerned about our neighbours going there. Is there not something wrong with a heart like that?

The Risen Lord said:

"Ye shall be Witnesses"

(Acts 1.8; Luke 24.48); and witnessing begins at home (Mark 5.19; Luke 8.39; Acts 1.18). Have we witnessed to every person in our home, and shown in our life what it means to have Christ? Are there not many in our street we have not yet visited? Or where we have visited, were we so earnest that they thought in some way they had seen Him?

One Hour's Gospel Meeting A Week

does not discharge all our responsibility either to the Saviour or the sinner. The Gospel is the Christian's full-time work, not a spare-time occupation. The degree of our interest in bringing the Gospel to the perishing nearby is surely a measure of our love for the Saviour who died for us and for them.

Divine love cannot be worked up, and we do not possess it by nature. It is the Holy Spirit's prerogative to shed the love of God abroad in our hearts, and He will do that in our case if we are willing to pay the price. Christ wants all — all we are and have. Our bodies with their members and organs, He will accept as His weapons of righteousness unto God (Rom. 6.13), if we will yield them. The Holy Spirit requires human lives through which to display Christ, lives to be used up or burned out in the work of reaching the perishing. Every Christian should yield to God, and acknowledge the new Ownership (1 Cor. 6.19-20).

This experience of the fulness of Christ and Divine Love is just as necessary for speaking to the man or woman over the back-yard fence as it is for going to the so-called heathen.

The New Testament Assembly

is the best place in the world to be, yet we are far from what we ought to be. When assemblies grow cold they desire some substitute for power, and multiply machinery to maintain declining efficiency. The last thing, alas, is prayer. The unsaved must be attracted? so we play instead of pray, or organise instead of agonize, entertain instead of entreat and turn to the world instead of the Word, when we should retrace and repent (Rev. 2.4-5).

The Gospel message should be preceded by

The Preaching of Repentance.

So did Paul preach "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20.21). A clear definition of the Gospel is in 1 Cor. 15.1-3: "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures . . . was buried . . . rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." Paul preached the Gospel to the Thessalonians with power which produced faith; in the Holy Spirit who produced love; and in much assurance, which produced hope. The converts were "ensamples." Every one must have been a winner of souls, for he could say of them, "We give thanks to God always for you ALL." In under two years they evangelised more than all Greece.

In the face of this we must confess we are only lukewarm; but there is

No Need to Regard This as Inevitable.

Why not take our Lord's advice and "Remember," "Repent," and "Do" (Rev. 2.5).

Remember the joy of our early Christian life. We wanted to tell everybody of Christ.

Repent—change our mind about our cold-hearted formal profession.

Do—the "first works" of faith, hope and love, and seek heart-fellowship with Christ in all that concerns Him.

Let us look again at the

Unchanging Terms of Christ's Commission.

(Matt. 28.18-20; Mark 16.15-16).

1. The Gospel witness has the highest authority: "All power is given unto Me. Go ye, etc."

2. The widest possible scope, and the nearest possible starting point—"Into all the world."

3. A complete policy: Salvation from sin, Satan, the world and wrath, and public identification with Christ by baptism "into the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

4. Definite terms to proclaim: "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned."

5. A new rule of life to propound: "Teaching them to observe all things, etc."

6. Unlimited Power and Sufficiency: "Lo, I am with you always."

7. No "out of season" periods: "All the days, even to the end of the age."

The Gospel's long view is of eternal salvation. Its immediate aim is the "calling out of a people to the Name of the Lord" (Acts 15.14). The complete terms require to be honoured and obeyed. They include directions for the formation and continuance of

One Distinctive Form of Gathering.

To join with any "movement" which failed to observe the "all things" of the commission would be disloyalty to the Lord, which grieves the Spirit and loses power. Better it is to go in the way of the Word of the Lord, and receive the blessing and approval now and in that day when every man's work shall be tried. (2 Tim. 2.5).

THOUGHTS OF CHRIST

(for the busy Housewife) No. 8

BY ERIC G. PARMENTER, BASINGSTOKE

What beauty and power is found in the Saviour's words "Come ye yourselves apart" (Mark 6.31).

The place was busy "for there were many coming and going", and the Saviour would have His own retire with Him into a desert place to rest awhile in the secret of His presence. To come apart with the Saviour gives opportunity to empty our whole hearts to Him, tell Him of our service, our joys, and cast our whole burden at His feet.

In this desert place with the day far spent His disciples would not only find rest for themselves, but learn also the depth of the Saviour's compassion and the resources of divine power to meet the need of a hungry multitude. They said of the multitudes — "send them away": He said "give ye them to eat". In this lovely setting we learn the ways of the Lord as he corrects the selfishness of their hearts by making them the channels through which His grace may flow to the multitude.

"Come ye yourselves apart" — "Give ye them to eat", is still the message of the Saviour: He who had furnished a table in the wilderness would not send a hungry multitude away.

What profit to contemplate the sympathy and grace of the Saviour — to His own, and to the hungry multitude.

A STUDY IN JUDE'S EPISTLE (cont.)

by TOM WILSON, New Zealand

Having vividly exposed the danger caused by apostate teachers among the believers, Jude now turns his attention to how they should deal with the problem. The danger in confronting those in error is always that we adopt a purely negative attitude so that instead of presenting the truth with grace, with mercy, peace and love (cf. v.1), we simply argue the case.

Paul warned against this when he spoke of those who had come among the believers by "cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive". They were to be corrected in love. In this way, the believers would themselves grow spiritually as they contended for the truth, "(growing) up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ" (Eph. 4.14,15). This is the same point that Jude takes up as he nears the end of his epistle.

How to Contend for the Faith, vv.17-25

Vv.17-19. First, he reemphasizes that the emergence of false doctrine had been anticipated (cf. vv.14,15). As Enoch had predicted it, so had the apostles. This probably refers to previous oral ministry by the apostles whose preaching must have been widespread among the early churches. They had predicted that "there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts". They would "separate themselves," causing division. These people, says Jude, are "sensual" (lit. "soulish," "unspiritual"), and in spite of all their claims to superior knowledge, do not have the Spirit.

Vv.20,21. While it was important to contend with such people, they were to be careful at the same time to maintain their own spiritual growth. It is easy to become overwhelmed by problems, even at the assembly level; how important that we should continue to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ"!

Notice the different tone as Jude compassionately addresses the faithful in Christ. Twice he calls them "beloved" (vv.17,20), a very personal word of endearment. Then he encourages them with a fourfold exhortation :

1. To build themselves up in their "most holy faith." They would

do this personally, and corporately through the study of Scripture and by remembering the Lord at His table.

2. To pray in the Holy Ghost. The thought here is that the Holy Spirit helps us to intercede for others in prayer, however weak we may feel in ourselves (Rom. 8.26; Eph. 6.18).

3. To keep themselves in the love of God. This they would do by being obedient to the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ — "If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love" (Jn. 15.10). There is little value in reading the Word, if we do not subject ourselves to its authority!

4. To look for the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. In other words, they were to anticipate His appearing when they would be removed from the world and its problems and ushered into His immediate presence for all eternity.

These are still the means by which God "stablishes, strengthens and settles" His people — not by the activities of the flesh (religious or otherwise).

Vv.22,23. The writer redirects their attention to the immediate problem of those who have been affected by the false teaching. Verse 22 probably refers to some who were at odds with themselves over what was being taught by the apostate group. The faithful believers were to treat them compassionately as they opened the Scriptures to them. They were to "make a difference (distinction)" between that group and others who were more deeply entrenched in the false teaching and would have to be "pulled (snatched) out of the fire." Jude speaks of "hating even the garment spotted by the flesh." A possible inference here is that of allowed, maybe even promoted, immoral behaviour. In any case, they would have to be careful that they themselves did not become affected. May we also be warned: certainly we must reach out to those in error and in need, but we must never forget our own natural weakness. We must "save with fear."

Vv.24,25. In the light of verse 23, how apt is this great doxology! He is able to keep us from falling (stumbling). And indeed, when we appear before Him, we shall be faultless, clothed in His own perfect righteousness. What joy! So we unite with Jude's readers in the final paean of praise to the only wise God.

Here is the secret. We must certainly "earnestly contend for the faith once for all delivered unto the saints." But at all times our eyes

must be on the Lord. He is our sufficiency. He knew that the ungodly would creep in among the believers, in Jude's time and in ours. Just as surely as the event has taken place, so will His judgment follow. As we seek to rescue those who have been turned aside from the truth, we must always be careful to keep ourselves in the love of God. Our Lord says to us, as did the nobleman in the parable of the pounds, "Occupy till I come" (Lk. 19.13).

HIS UNCHANGING NAME

by SAMUEL DAWSON, Banbridge

It is of interest to notice the Names that God gave to people in the Scriptures and what they mean, but we somehow become more interested and inquisitive when we read of their names being changed. In some cases the names were changed by God at a particular time in their lives, others were changed because of the desire of the ruling Monarch as with Daniel, or even by a request from the person themselves as in the case of Naomi.

We shall look at some of the names which were changed. In Gen. 12 God called Abram with the promise to make of him a great nation, but in chapter 17 the Lord changed his name to Abraham and declared, "a father of many nations have I made thee." Then in v.15 God changed the name of Sarai to Sarah for "she shall be the Mother of nations." Next in chapter 32 we have Jacob blessed on different grounds than before, for he acknowledged his true name and then had his name changed to Israel. Then in chapter 35 we have Rachel bearing a son, she would have him called Benoni "Son of my Sorrow," but his Father called him Benjamin the "Son of my right hand." In the Book of Ruth we are introduced to Naomi who left the House of Bread, lived in Moab, and returned. She has, however, learned a bitter lesson and said "call me not Naomi (Pleasant), call me Mara" (Bitter). In chapter 1 of Daniel, he and his friends had their names changed by the monarch. However, he did not accept his new name (nor food either) for he often referred to himself as "I Daniel". In chapter 5 Belshazzar inquires, "art thou that Daniel" and Darius in chapter 6 says "Daniel O Daniel."

We come to Saul of Tarsus as he was known when he was breathing out threatenings, but Paul, as he fought a good fight until he finished his course. Finally Luke chapter 1 where Elizabeth

brought forth her son whom the neighbours would have called Zacharias, nevertheless according to the mind of God, his father and mother called him John.

In the Old Testament, even from Genesis, we have been told of the many Titles given to our Lord Jesus Christ and one of the sweetest things to notice about them is that God does not take one Title from Him in order to give Him another. In Matt. 1.21 we read His Name shall be called Jesus, and in v.23 He is called Emmanuel so He carries both names and is none less one than the other, being both Perfect Man and Very God. His Titles and Names bring comfort and encouragement because they, like Him, are unchanging. We have an Advocate; a High Priest; He is coming for us as the Lord from Heaven; and in a further day the King of Glory, the Lord of Hosts. We rightly gather that God has a programme, and One to carry it out to His glory, as the poet said. "Monarch of the smitten cheek, Scorn of both the Jew and Greek, Priest and King Divinely meek, He shall bear the Glory."

How encouraging to appreciate the changeless One "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today and forever." Truly we sing "I change — He changes not!"

PSALM 23

by NELSON McDONALD, Scotland

In Psalm 23 we have the **Christian's Full Government**. That is one of the reasons I have never visited the polling booths since the Lord saved me. I have a full government in the Lord who is my Shepherd.

Verse 1 : The Prime Minister

The Prime Minister is the leader of the people and the Lord is the Leader or Author of His people, for there is none so stable or strong as He. We think of the power of His hand — Ps. 89.13 'Thou hast a might arm: strong is Thy hand, and high is Thy right hand.' Refer also to Isa. 9.6,7; Heb. 12.2; Rev. 1.8,17,18; Isa. 42.4, 'He shall not fail nor be discouraged.'

The Chancellor of the Exchequer

'I shall not want! Never was there a Chancellor like the Lord Jesus, constantly controlling to attend to the needs of His people. Deut. 2.7 'They lacked nothing.' Ps. 37.25; 1 Thess. 4.12 and Phil.

4.19 remind us that He shall supply all our need, not our greed, nor all our wants. These at times, are many and often inessential but all our need shall be met according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Verse 2 : The Home Secretary

His position is to see us all settled down and at peace with one another. Thus we have the green pastures, the waters of stillness or unruffled calm and quietness and assurance. These thoughts are seen in Ps. 4.8; John 14.27; 16.33; 1 John 5.4. The victory that overcometh the world is the victory that believes the world has been overcome.

Verse 3 : The Minister of Health

Our Minister of health gets to the root of the trouble — He restores the soul first. Ps. 103.1-5, 'Bless the Lord, O my soul . . . who healeth all thy diseases.' Refer also to Matt. 12.15,22. He healed all and never asked one of them to come back for a check up — What a Minister!

The Foreign Minister

His job is to lead us in right paths in connection with other nations. The right path — the path of life, the presence of joy, the pleasures for evermore, Ps. 16.11 — the path of plainness because of those who observe me, Ps. 27.11.

Men are not reading the Bible nowadays but they are still reading the Christians, to see if we are walking in paths of righteousness.

"You are writing a gospel, a chapter a day,
By deeds that you do, by words that you say,
Men read what you write, whether faithless or true,
Say, what is the gospel according to you?"

Ps. 119.105 it is the path of light while Prov. 4.18 the path of the just is being led in paths of righteousness.

Verse 4 : The Minister of Propaganda

His position is to boost the morale of the people, and the Lord encourages His people by verses like this, 'Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death.' He takes fear from us by assuring us of His Presence with us in the valley experiences of life. see 2 Tim. 4.17; Ps. 119.50; 2 Cor. 1.3; Eph. 1.3; Ps. 37.4,11,23.

Verse 5 : The Minister of Food

Now He is preparing a table for us—Job 23.12; Jer. 15.16; John 6.32,33. The table is well furnished, fully laden with all that God

Himself enjoys. Thus in John 6 'the Bread of God,' Ps. 78.24 'the Corn of Heaven,' Ps. 105.40 'the Bread of Heaven,' it is all the fulness of Christ for our sustenance.

The Minister of Joy

In every circumstance we can have a 'cup running over.' Ps. 4.7; 16.5,6; John 15.11, 'My joy' and 'your joy full.' If we enjoy His joy in our lives then our cup will be running over.

Verse 6 : The Minister of Compassion

Goodness and mercy following us. Our God is a good God and doeth good, Ps. 119.68. Not only is God good but He is merciful as Ps. 136 reminds us twenty-six times 'His mercy endureth forever.'

The Minister of Housing

We have no problems with our housing either in terms of shortage or requiring renovation — John 14.1-3; 2 Cor. 5.1. Goodness and mercy following us and the lights of home ahead.

We have thus a full government, a Great God, and an assurance of glory.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

One cannot be envious and happy at the same time.

A religion that gives nothing, costs nothing, and suffers nothing, is worth nothing.

Christ was lifted up that He might lift us up.

The world is not interested in our views . . . it needs the good news.

TRUE WORSHIP acknowledges the **TRUE WORTH-SHIP** of God.

Don't save your breath when it is time to breathe a **PRAYER OF THANKS**.

God does more than hear words; He reads hearts.

He who is good to others is good to himself.

When we recognize Jesus' Lordship, we'll give Him our worship.

He that will not command his thoughts will soon lose command of his actions.

—Anthony Orsini, Florida, U.S.A.

THE ROMAN ROAD

by T. CORNFORTH TAWS, Leicester

A Study in the Epistle to the Romans

THE CHRISTIAN'S PATHWAY AND CHARTER

Key thought : "The Righteousness of God."

1. **Introduction : Ch.1 vv.1 to 17.**
 - (a) The Man, A Bondslave of Jesus Christ. v.1.
 - (b) His Mission, To the Saints of Jesus Christ. v.7.
 - (c) His Message, The Gospel of Jesus Christ. v.16.
2. **Condemnation : Ch.1 v.18 to ch.3 v.20.**
 - (a) Gentile 1.18 to 2.16.
 - (b) Jew 2.17 to 3.8.
 - (c) World 3.9 to 3.20.
3. **Justification : Ch.3 v.21 to ch.5 v.11.**
 - (a) Defined 3.21 to 3.31.
 - (b) Distinguished 4.1 to 4.25.
 - (c) Displayed 5.1 to 5.11.
4. **Sanctification : Ch.5 v.12 to ch.8 v.13.**
 - (a) Foundation 5.12 to 6.13.
 - (b) Fulfilment 6.14 to 7.6.
 - (c) Function 7.7 to 8.13.
5. **Glorification : Ch.8 v.14 to ch.8 v.31.**
 - (a) Announced 8.14 to 8.17.
 - (b) Anticipated 8.18 to 8.27.
 - (c) Assured 8.28 to 8.39.
6. **Consternation for Israel : Ch.9 to ch.11.**
 - (a) Condition Ch.9.
 - (b) Consideration Ch.10.
 - (c) Conversion Ch.11.
7. **Consecration : Ch.12 v.1 to ch.15 v.13.**
 - (a) Dedication 12.1 to 12.2.
 - (b) Devotion 12.3 to 13.7.
 - (c) Discernment 13.8 to 15.13.
8. **Conclusion : Ch.15 v.14 to ch.16 v.27.**
 - (a) Contemplation 15.14 to 15.33.
 - (b) Commendation 16.1 to 16.16.
 - (c) Concernment 16.17 to 16.20.
 - (d) Consolation 16.21 to 16.27.

“ALL HAIL, THE POWER OF JESUS' NAME”

EDWARD PERRONET (1726—1792)

E. P. Scott, a missionary in India, saw in the street one day an obvious stranger. On enquiry as to his identity, he was told that he was a member of a distant inland mountain tribe who had come down to the city of trade. On further enquiry, Scott discovered that these mountain people were heathen and had never been reached with the gospel but that to venture among them was very dangerous. The news caused Scott deep exercise of heart. He retired to his lodging, fell on his knees and cried to God in earnest intercession. But before he rose, he felt that God was calling him personally to carry the gospel to them. He packed his few belongings, picked up his violin and pilgrim staff and went to bid farewell to his fellow-missionaries. "We will never see you again", they said, "it is madness for you to go". "But", he replied, "I must carry Jesus to them".

He set out and after some two days of trekking over difficult terrain, located the tribe. Quickly the heathen savages surrounded him, every spear pointing towards his heart. In those tense moments Scott raised his violin, drew upon its strings and with upward face and closed eyes started to sing,

"All hail, the power of Jesus' name!
Let angels prostrate fall;
Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown Him Lord of all.

Crown Him, ye martyrs of our God,
Who from His altar call;
Extol the stem of Jesse's rod,
And crown Him Lord of all.

Ye chosen seed of Israel's race,
A remnant weak and small;
Hail Him, who saves you by His grace,
And crown Him Lord of all.

Ye Gentile sinners, ne'er forget
The wormwood and the gall,
Go, spread your trophies at His feet,
And crown Him Lord of all.

Let every kindred, every tribe
On this terrestrial ball,
To Him all majesty ascribe,
And crown Him Lord of all."

When Scott had reached the verse, "Let every kindred, every tribe", he opened his eyes and, lo, a wonder had taken place. Every spear had dropped from their hands and tears were streaming down their faces. They invited him to their homes and for two and a half years he lived and laboured in their midst. At the end of that period his health had so deteriorated that he decided he must go home. The tribe's people accompanied him for some thirty to forty miles on his journey. "Oh, missionary", they said in parting, "come back to us again. There are tribes beyond us that never heard the glad tidings of salvation". So, after restoration of health, Scott returned to their midst and there he spent the remainder of his days.

The hymn, "All, hail, the power of Jesus' name", sung by Scott on that memorable occasion was written by Edward Perronet some two hundred years ago. Edward Perronet was a descendant of a distinguished Huguenot family who, because of their faith, had suffered much persecution in their native homeland of France. Edward's grandfather, David Perronet, had come to England in 1680. Edward's father, the godly Vincent Perronet, was a minister in the Church of England and for over fifty years was vicar of Shoreham in Kent. He was an earnest evangelical, closely identified with the great revival of the 18th century and an intimate friend of John Wesley. Vincent lived to the ripe age of ninety-one and many were the occasions when John Wesley visited Shoreham on horse-back to spend time with this white-haired and respected saint of God.

Edward Perronet, the subject of this sketch, was born at Sundridge in Kent in 1726. He grew up at Shoreham rectory and there received his early education under a tutor. His upbringing was very much influenced by the traditions of the Church of England and there was every hope that Edward would, one day, become one of its ministers. As a youth, however, he had regarded John Wesley as his hero and, when he became a young man, identified himself with the Wesleys and the Methodist movement. For years, together with his brother Charles, Edward travelled up and down the country in their company and for the cause of the gospel of Christ, suffered much persecution.

The relationship between the Perronets and John Wesley, however, was not always harmonious. By nature Edward was passionate, impulsive, strong-willed and rebellious; besides he was a man of sharp intellect, of deep insight and of a critical mind. With

his facile pen he set about to expose the shortcomings of the Established Church, much to the displeasure of Wesley. Other differences arose and eventually the Perronets and Wesley parted company, Wesley entering in his record that Charles Perronet, "desisted for want of health" and Edward "for some change of opinion".

After rupture with the Methodist movement, Edward Perronet then became minister in one of the Countess of Huntingdon's chapels in Watling Street, Canterbury but after a brief ministry resigned from that charge to become pastor in a small but strongly evangelical chapel in the same city and there he continued for the remainder of his days. The ambition of his life had been to serve his Lord devotedly and faithfully, and at the close, in dying and yet undying words, he still sought only the glory of God.

"Glory to God in the height of His divinity;
Glory to God in the depth of His humanity;
Glory to God in His all-sufficiency,
And into His hands I commend my spirit".

Thus Edward Perronet passed away at Canterbury on January 2nd, 1792; he was buried in the cloisters of Canterbury Cathedral.

Edward Perronet was both a poet and a hymn-writer. His works received publication, often anonymously, in the later half of the 18th century; these appeared in several small volumes, as "Select Passages of the Old and New Testament versified" (1756), "A Small Collection of Hymns, etc., Canterbury" (1782) and "Occasional Verses, moral and sacred" (1785).

"All hail, the power of Jesus' name" is the crowning jewel of all Perronet's compositions. Its popularity now for over two hundred years bears ample testimony to its undoubted worth. It is a hymn that will never die. It first received attention in November, 1779, when its first verse, together with an accompanying tune, "Miles Lane" appeared in "The Gospel Magazine". Then the completed hymn of eight stanzas, as Perronet had originally penned it, was published in the following April and entitled, "On the Resurrection, the Lord is King". Some years later the hymn was recast by Dr. John Rippon and this is the form in which it appears in most hymnals today. In this modification some of Perronet's original stanzas were omitted, some rewritten and a closing stanza, entirely the work of Dr. Rippon, was added,

"O that, with yonder sacred throng,
We at His feet may fall;
Join in the everlasting song,
And crown Him Lord of all!"

There is a majesty about this hymn which is unique and nothing thrills the heart more than to hear it well sung by a large congregation to one or other of its companion tunes, either "Miles Lane" or "Diadem". Both these tunes were written by young men while still in their teens., — "Miles Lane" by William Shrubsole, a chorister in Canterbury Cathedral and "Diadem" by James Ellor, a hat-maker from Droylsden village in Lancashire.

The words of this hymn command attention. "**All hail**" — it was the glorious and joyous salutation of the risen Lord on the resurrection morning as He stepped out on the upward pathway to ever-increasing exaltation and glory. Edward Perronet in his hymn anticipates the final movement, majestic and triumphant; as at the first, so on that day devotion's response will be, "they came and held Him by the feet and worshipped Him (Matt. 28.9). "**Crown Him**" — the "crown rights", undisputed, undivided, universal and eternal belong to Jesus Christ; they are His by Sovereign's decree and His because of Calvary. His rights still await recognition; when that day comes no dissenting voice will be heard and gladly will we, His redeemed, join in the universal proclamation "He is Lord of all". (Acts 10.36).

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