

“SPOKEN WORDS”

ON

Profitable Themes

JOHN BROWN

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“Nothing kept back that is profitable,
“neither
“have we shrunk from declaring unto you
“the whole counsel of God.”—*Acts xx.*

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BY

JOHN BROWN,

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FOREWORD.

ROSENEATH, BUCKHURST HILL,
ESSEX, *25th December, 1926.*

DEAR MR BROWN,

I can only express my thankfulness to God for the appearing in print again of the remarkable addresses given by yourself in London in 1886.

At that time I was only three years saved, and in God's gracious dealings with me I became acquainted with the little volume of these addresses.

I thank God I ever did.

They opened up to my vision and heart fresh light from God, and I have no hesitation in saying that they, under God, exercised such a converting power in my life that they formed the base of a line of teaching which has, in God's goodness, brought joy and gladness into my life, and have given me that greatest of all help, viz., a help to help myself.

Not only have I been blest and helped myself, but I have been led by them into a large place in the mind and will of God for His people in these days, and thus they have been the means of enabling me to help others.

It was in 1889 when I first became acquainted with them. Then I was quite a stripling in the things of God. And from what they have been to me in my own soul, I have no hesitation in saying :—

I wish them God-speed in their re-issue, and may they abundantly prove to many others what they have proved to me.

I follow them with my prayers, and wish them God's blessing indeed.

Sincerely Yours in His Service,

J. CHARLETON STEEN.

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THE
Leading of the Holy Spirit :
How Discerned.

THE subject for this evening's consideration is
"The Leading of the Holy Spirit, how discerned."

We shall have occasion to look at a good many scriptures, so turn with me, firstly, to Rom. 8. 14 : "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are sons of God ;" from which we learn that none but such as are indeed "sons of God" can possibly know the blessed reality of being led by the Spirit of God. Turning to Gal. 3. 26, we shall learn who are the sons of God : "For ye are all the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus." Therefore every believer in Christ Jesus is a son of God ; and every believer is privileged to know what it is to be led by the Spirit of God.

Then Gal. 5. 25, says : "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." Every Christian is expected in his living to live in the Spirit, and every one who lives in the Spirit is expected to be careful and diligent to see that he also walks in the Spirit ; for living in the Spirit is altogether God-ward, and walking in the Spirit is altogether man-ward. The Christian who lives in the Spirit, but who walks not in the Spirit, is often to be known by this : his Christianity is of the most negative character ; he is a child of God who is satisfied with this, that against him not much can be said that is worth listening to. But, beloved children of God, our God wishes us to have a positive Christianity, and, therefore, He wants us to "walk in the Spirit," so that walking it will not be so much what cannot be

said against us, as it shall be what can be said for us : and our life of positive obedience to the will of God concerning us will evidence that we are indeed walking in the Spirit.

Look back to verse 16 of this same chapter (Gal. 5. R.V.) : " But I say walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust [the desire] of the flesh." Do I think myself as a child of God to be walking in the Spirit? Here is God's test to my conscience, whereby I may prove to myself, whether I am indeed walking in the Spirit or not. For he that walks in the Spirit fulfils not the desires of the flesh. In the child of God there is the flesh, as in the child of God there is the Spirit ; and we read in verse 17 : " For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit"—the word lust only expresses intense earnest desire, " the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, that ye may not do the things that ye would, but if ye are led by the Spirit ye are not under law." Thus you see living in the Spirit and walking in the Spirit, which is the birthright portion of every son of God, is directly connected by God Himself with being led by the Spirit.

From these Scriptures thus far we learn, that to be led of the Spirit is a blessed reality ; and that a Christian ought not to be satisfied except as he experimentally, consciously, knows this leading day by day. And having thus sought to establish the reality of the leading of the Holy Spirit with the subjects thereof, viz., every child of God, we will now address ourselves directly to the question : How to discern when I am, and when I am not, led of the Holy Spirit.

Turn with me first to 1 Cor. 12. 1 : " Now concerning spiritual *gifts*," you notice that "*gifts*" is in italics, the reason of that is, that in the original there is no word corresponding thereto ; and to make an English reading communicate, as the translators believed, the mind of God, they supplied the word "gifts." The reason they put "gifts" and not "gift" is because the word

“spiritual” is plural and not singular. A translator, rightly accredited with competence as a scholar, and one I judge worthy of credit in this matter as a Christian conceiving the mind of God from the words written, borrows the word we find in verse 7 and reads, as I think correctly, “Now concerning spiritual *manifestations*, brethren, I would not have you ignorant,” but whether you read “gifts” or “manifestations,” please remember that what the Spirit, through Paul, would not have us ignorant about, but would have us in full understanding of, was “spirituals”; and in order that we should not be ignorant thereabout, He proceeds to speak as we here read.

“Ye know that when ye were Gentiles ye were carried away unto those dumb idols, howsoever ye might be led.” Every unconverted person is led by a spirit, and that the spirit of the evil one; who, alas! is more multifarious in his manifestations and operations than is the Blessed Holy Spirit of God; of whom it is written in the Book of the Revelation, “The seven Spirits which are before His throne,” expressing a sevenfold operation, a sevenfold manifestation, the power and sufficient supply of the one Holy Spirit of God (contrast Mark 5. 9). But indeed the flesh always seeks to outstrip the Spirit. If, for example, you read in Galatians 5., you will find the works of the flesh are eighteen in number, while the fruit of the Spirit is but nine-fold; and thus the flesh, that always has weight with the carnal through the bulkiness of its show, outstrips the Spirit, as eighteen doth twice repeat the number of the Spirit, which is nine. Again, if you turn to 2 Timothy 3. and there read about the way of the flesh religiously, and also in that chapter learn of religious life according to the mind of God, you will find that the religious works after the flesh are double in number of these which characterise religious life according to the Spirit. For as the works of the flesh in their VILE character, as enumerated in Galatians 5., are eighteen in number, so are these RELIGIOUS works of the flesh eighteen also; and as the fruit of the Spirit

in Galatians 5. has nine characteristics, so there are nine marks of religious life after the mind of God in 2 Tim. 3.

Now, in order that all that call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ in every place (1 Cor. 1. 2) should not be ignorant concerning spiritual manifestations, the Spirit of God through the Apostle asks them to look back, and to remember what their experience was when they were carried away unto dumb idols, even as they were led by the spirit that then worked in them as sons of disobedience (Eph. 2. 2). In contrast to which DUMB idols, and in contrast to which *unholy* spirit we who are sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus are called to hear the VOICE of the living God, and are called to know the operation and leading of the *Holy* Spirit of God. Moreover, that which guided us when we were yet strangers to grace and to God, when as yet we were led about by the evil spirit, that which guided us in our convictions, and which regulated us in our outward manifestation in life, God means should be a help to our understandings, unto our discerning the operation of the Holy Spirit in us ; and as to the outward manifestation of the inwrought conviction of the Holy Spirit. I repeat that the unconverted life is here definitely brought to remembrance, as that which will help us into a simple, clear understanding of the leading of the Holy Spirit and how to discern it.

Ere saying more, read with me the following verses :
 " Wherefore, I give you to understand, that no one speaking in the Spirit of God saith, ' Jesus is accursed,' and no one can say, ' Jesus is Lord' [literally, no one is able to say ' Lord Jesus'], but in the Holy Spirit." Let us understand this, we are not able to say " Lord" in truth, excepting as we are in the Holy Spirit. Now that the Holy Spirit of God is in me, and that I, as a child of God, am in the Holy Spirit, are widely different things. No man can be a Christian, no man can be a son of God—much less can any know the leading of the Spirit of God, except there be in him the Holy Spirit of promise. But that the Holy Spirit in an individual doth not carry with it of necessity that he or she is in the Holy Spirit. He may live, but not in the Spirit ;

he may walk, but not walk in the Spirit ; he may behave himself in ways of life, as he will not and cannot be led by the Holy Spirit, and yet have in him the Holy Spirit of God.

The Holy Spirit is in us each who are God's people in virtue of the unconditional grace of God to us who have believed in Christ Jesus : but in order to be in the Holy Spirit we must be obedient to the will of God concerning us ; so Eph. 5. 18, says : " Be not drunk with wine wherein is riot, but be filled in the Spirit." Does it not strike you as something exceedingly marvellous that, side by side with " be filled in the Spirit," God puts " be not drunk with wine." He has put these things in contrast to help our understanding of what it is to be filled in the Spirit. You know how a man becomes drunk with wine, filled in wine ; how we say of the drunken, " 'The man is in strong drink,' " " That is not the man, the man is lost in the drink." How is that ? Through the drink, being in him till it fills him —so are we to yield ourselves, spirit and soul and body, up unto the Holy Spirit, Who is in us. And as strong drink, taken by a man in excess, doth captivate, doth dominate, doth prevail over the entire man, and causes him to act according to its power upon him ; so, too, if we thus yield ourselves to the Holy Spirit, spirit, and soul, and body, we shall be dominated by Him, we shall live in Him, and in Him we shall walk.

As was said of a well-known Christian man, whose name I need not give. He was seen one afternoon going along the street of the village where he resided, and carnal eyes beheld him as he walked along like a drunken man, and presently the story goes from their carnal lips, " Do you know that we saw So-and-so to-day the worse for drink ? " " Impossible ! brother So-and-so the worse for drink, impossible ! But," added he to whom the story was told, " you say that you have just seen him going that way, he must have been going home ; let us go and see him in his home, and thus determine whether what you say is true or not." And to his home they went ; they found him sitting at the book, the Bible ; and they who had spread

the story being satisfied, sat down and wept, wept that so readily of such a standing-to-the-front, exemplary, God-fearing man they should have uttered such a thing ! And as they thus wept they must needs tell him why they were there at such a time. He said, indeed they had made no mistake at all, except that they were mistaken as to the wine wherewith he was filled. " For," said he, " I was walking along in communion with God, and thus and thus were my meditations ; and I doubt not, that, being so absent from things seen and temporal, I may in that have given them occasion to think that strong drink had the mastery over me." So, it seems to me, in the mind of God, as given in Eph. 5, 18, so simple, yet so significant : easy of understanding and yet expressive. Be not filled with wine, be not drunk with it, but be filled in the Spirit. Let Him dominate you, let Him captivate you, let Him prevail over your spirit, and soul, and body, and thus shall ye indeed be filled in the Spirit.

Turn back now to 1 Cor. 12. 4 : " Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit, and there are diversities of ministrations [that is, services], and the same Lord, and there are diversities of operations [that is, inward workings], but the same God who worketh all in all ; but to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal. For to one is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom ; and to another the word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit ; to another faith, in the same Spirit ; and to another gifts of healing in the one Spirit ; and to another workings of miracles ; and to another prophecy ; and to another discerning of spirits ; to another divers kinds of tongues ; and to another the interpretation of tongues ; but all these worketh that one and the same Spirit, dividing to each one severally, even as He will." All these manifestations here enumerated confessedly do not exist to-day, and as I judge are not according to Scripture to be expected to exist to-day : in proof of which, hearken to what is written in Heb. 2. 4-6 : " God also bearing witness both with signs, and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts [that is,

distributions] of the Holy Spirit ACCORDING TO HIS OWN WILL." And if the will of God were to-day that such distributions of the Holy Spirit should be given as are so fully named in 1 Cor. 12, unquestionably we should have such among God's children, and very especially among such as are gathered into the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, by Himself, to walk in the ways that be in Christ.

These words in 1 Cor. 12. are meant by God to enable us to discern when we are and when we are not led of the Holy Spirit. In the leading of the Spirit every manifestation is given to profit. Some of the Spirit's manifestations are to the profit of him to whom the manifestation of the Spirit is given. Other manifestations of the Spirit are given to servants of God, that through them others may be profited ; and if they act in the manifestation as they are led of the Holy Spirit, it will yield profit to those to whom the manifestation is made.

Moreover, in the discerning of the leading of the Holy Spirit we are to understand that, being in the Spirit, there are diversities of gifts, diversities of services, diversities of inworkings, though all are the outcome of the operation of the one God, Who worketh all in all, of the one Holy Spirit who divideth of His own to each one severally as He will. To help you to see what God would have us understand by these His words in 1 Cor. 12., let me give you an example.

There was a godly young fellow gathered with others into the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, to know the ministry that is of the Holy Spirit when children of God are gathered together in assembly.* One Lord's Day morning he was greatly constrained to give out a hymn. He waited, and at last was so constrained, that, being exercised in heart before God, he judged the Lord would have him so to do. He gave it out. That it was a manifestation of the Spirit, that it was profit to

*Or "in church," so in 1 Cor. 11. 18, 14. 19, 28, 35, where there is no word "the," the reference being to when the church (the assembly) has come together on the first of the week, having been gathered by God the Holy Spirit into the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to keep the feast of remembrance till He come.

all, was abundantly clear : the whole assembly was bowed down before God by the words. Two weeks rolled away, and the same brother was again exercised before the Lord in similar circumstances. There was a pause in the meeting ; he remembered how much the assembly was broken down and built up by the hymn he gave out a fortnight ago, and so he thought it was quite in place to give it again, and out it came. It was sung, but as if by statues rather than by living persons ; and in tears at the close of the meeting he came to some of us inquiring what was wrong. “ Don’t you remember, brethren,” said he, “ how confessedly the Lord blessed that hymn when I gave it out a fortnight ago ? ” “ Yes, brother, we remember it well ; clearly it was of God.” “ Well, I gave it out to-day, but, oh ! what a difference ; what was wrong ? ” “ This, the first time the Lord evidently led you to do as you did ; but to-day is not this the truth, that you judged *because* it proved a benefit then, and there was a pause and apparently a heaviness in the meeting this morning, that this would come in and help the whole assembly in the will of God, as and because it did then ? ” “ That,” said he, “ is just how I reasoned with myself,” and we tried to show him that he should be careful to discern betwixt the operation of the Holy Spirit within him in what was meant for himself, to distinguish betwixt this and what was meant for others through him. And to his closet he went yet in his tears, that he might learn there before his God to know when he was and when he was not led of the Holy Spirit to act in manifestation at such a time as when saints are gathered together in church.

Again, here is a company of God-gathered saints, and in it is a brother who evidently is led of the Holy Spirit to give out a hymn, and he reads the hymn, the whole assembly enjoy the words of it as he reads, and then take it up to sing with all their hearts. Here is a brother sitting by who is not fitted to *read* a hymn ; not fitted, he may stammer through it, but his so doing destroys the whole effect of the hymn. Was he led of the Holy Spirit ? That he erred in attempting more than he had ability for is clear ; but that evident mistake

does not prove that he was not bidden of the Lord to give out the hymn ; the hymn may be perfectly in place and of the Lord, and his reading it aloud entirely out of place and not of the Lord. And ministry, like all else, is accepted according to that we have, and we are expected to do after such sort as God has given ability. That one brother who gives out a hymn of the Holy Spirit's leading reads it out, does not carry with it of necessity that you must be able to read the hymn that you give out.

There are diversities of gifts, there are diversities of services, there are diversities of inworkings. Yet you may have saints gathered together on the first day of the week at the call of the Lord, professedly waiting on a living God, seeking only the manifestation of the Spirit in their midst, and from January to December the character of their meeting will be the same ; say a hymn, a prayer, perhaps a hymn again, and then another prayer ; or perhaps after a hymn and prayer, reading, and after reading, perhaps a hymn and then prayer again. Now what I want you to see is this, that saints are too apt to drop into ruts ; not understanding that, in the leading of the Holy Spirit, Whose manifestation is to profit if He be submitted to and His manifestation be known among us, there will be diversities of gifts, diversities of services, diversities of inworkings. But the Spirit will give His manifestation, whatever it be, unto the profit of those, among whom, and to whom, the manifestation is made.

In the matter of service again : a brother hearing me speak privately on the leading of the Holy Spirit and the blessedness of it as a reality that we ought to be experiencing, said, " Well, now, what would you have done in such circumstances as these ? The other Saturday I spent the greater part of the day in prayer to God as to which of two places I should go." He is a brother given entirely to prayer and the ministry of the word. " All day Saturday I waited on the Lord, weighed up the two places, but could not distinguish betwixt the one and the other, and the last train would be at the village station presently, and I felt I must decide. I

went back again to God in my closet, and still could not decide to which I should go, and it came to this, I had to go to one of them, and I had a most miserable day indeed." "Now," said he, "what would you have done?" "Why, dear brother," said we, "didn't you hear the Lord saying, 'Stay where you are'?" He replied, "I never thought of that!" He had made up his mind, forsooth, that he must go somewhere; two places loomed out before him, and he could not be in both; he chose one, and the Lord brought him to know that he had made a mistake.

In the leading of the Holy Spirit there must, firstly, be this: an inward conviction wrought by the Word of God, or an inward conviction in the light of the known will of God, wrought by the Word of God; and then unto that conviction leading to a manifestation in public, there must be, and ever will be, a fitness for that which is about to be manifested. First, I repeat, there is an inward conviction, after waiting before God, after dealing with Him, after seeking to hear the voice of the living God, and I conclude in my heart that thus and thus the Lord wants me to do. Well, if I am right, there will be in the outward circumstance in which I am placed, a fitness for that which I am going to manifest. How many times, for example, a spiritual man has revelled in soul before the Lord in the morning of the first day of the week, when he with others is gathered to remember the Lord, in some lines of a gospel hymn, or perhaps the whole gospel hymn. But who would think of getting up to give out a gospel hymn at such a time? Yet the soul might be in sweetest, deepest, truest communion with God, and enjoying what is really a manifestation of the Spirit through the truths expressed in the gospel hymn, though its unfitness for the occasion would keep him from giving it out then.

No manifestation of the Spirit, if real, will ever involve the sacrificing of any part of the will of God concerning me. Every leading of the Holy Spirit and every manifestation to others, will agree with all the will of God concerning me and concerning them. Thus

a man, who judges he is led of the Holy Spirit to go and preach, to go and teach, to go and labour in any way you please for the Lord, and yet in so doing is neglecting his family, or neglecting his work, or neglecting his own soul's need ; is a man, however well meaning he may be, that may settle in his heart that he has erred in thinking himself to be led of the Holy Spirit so to act in ways of life. For the manifestation that is indeed of the Spirit of God never clashes with any other part of the will of God, but is in most perfect harmony with the entire will of God concerning him to whom the manifestation is made, and in a very special sense with the will of God as he knows it.

To help us then to discern the leading of the Holy Spirit in us, it is said : "Ye know when ye were Gentiles ye were carried away unto those dumb idols howsoever ye might be led." A homely, a simple, and yet to me a forcible illustration of that is this : say, I am an unconverted man, and am at a tea-table with a number of friends ; perhaps I am able to crack a joke, or sing a ditty of words that will be very acceptable to the company. I sit at the tea-table, the evil spirit works in me as an unconverted one, I am sitting there, my face is brightened with smiles ; evidently I am enjoying something, and the company say to me, "Well, share with us your joy." Perhaps that ministry of the unclean spirit within me is of such a character that I dare not, would not, name it out ; yet I enjoy it. Why do I not manifest it, why won't I express it ? Because I judge it unfit for those with whom I am. On the other hand, something is given me by the evil spirit ; a good joke, if you like, and I utter it to the enjoyment of all. Why do I utter it ? I have weighed in my mind, will this take with them ? What effect will it have ? And I make the manifestation to be in keeping with the circumstances, and the occasion, and the persons with whom I am. Just so in the discerning, when I am led of the Holy Spirit to make a manifestation, and when I am led by Him to keep things to myself. There is an inward conviction wrought by the word of God, not by feeling, not by theory, not by

dreams, but by a veritable word of God. First, this inward conviction and then a manifestation after well weighing what profit it will be, what fitness it has here, to and with the persons among whom I am.

Now turn with me to the book of Job 32. 8, 16 :—

“ But there is a spirit in man :
And the breath of the Almighty giveth them understanding.”

* * * *

“ When I had waited (for they spake not,
But stood still, and answered no more) ;
I said, ‘ I will answer also my part,
I also will show my opinion.’ ”

“ When I had waited,” he, who is seeking to know the leading of the Holy Spirit, can always afford to wait. He does not need to sit like a jack-in-the-box waiting for an opportunity to get on his feet. He who is going on in the mind of God, seeking to have only the manifestation of the Spirit of God, will rather, in the fear of God, be doubly sure that he ought to act, than act before he is quite satisfied in soul that God would have him so do.

“ For I am full of matter,
The Spirit within me constraineth me,
Behold, my belly is as wine which hath no vent ;
It is ready to burst like new bottles.
I will speak, that I may be refreshed ;
I will open my mouth and answer.”

He who is led of the Holy Spirit, and will make manifestations that are of the Spirit, will have an experience with his inward conviction like this : Not, “ a pause and I will act ;” but, “ I am full of matter,” “ I am like a well of living water that is springing up, bubbling up, it has no vent. I must speak or I shall burst. I must give vent. The Spirit within me constraineth me. I am urged on ; urged on in the solemn conviction that this is in keeping with the word of God ; in the solemn conviction that this is in keeping with the circumstances and with the persons with whom I am, I want to speak that I may find relief (R. V. margin) ; I will open my lips and answer,”

And further, he who thus seeks to know the leading of the Holy Spirit will add (verse 21) :—

“ Let me not, I pray you, accept any man's person.”

He will not be hindered by the presence of some well-taught brother ; neither will he be provoked to act by the presence of some sister. “ Oh ! So-and-so is present to-day ; what thoughts will he have about our meeting, if such and such things be not done ? ” “ Let me not accept any man's person.” “ Why, there is Mr — come in from the city to look on ; we must have things to go in some orderly shape this morning ; we must have things with some show about them.”

“ Let me not, I pray you, accept any man's person,
Neither let me give flattering titles unto man.
For I know not to give flattering titles ;
In so doing, my Maker would soon take me away.”

Thus is the Spirit oft-times grieved, thus is He sometimes quenched ; and thus do saints betimes err, who really in heart desire to know what it is to be led of the Holy Spirit.

Turn, please, now to Acts 16. 6 to 10. Which may we hear as in direct keeping with our subject, and to help us in the understanding and discerning of the leading of the Holy Spirit. “ Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia ”—how the Spirit forbade them we are not told. “ After they were come to Mysia they essayed to go into Bithynia : but the Spirit suffered them not. And they, passing by Mysia, came down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night ; there stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, ‘ Come over into Macedonia and help us.’ And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel unto them.” But now the vision was no more a factor in their deciding to go into Macedonia than were the two interferings of the Holy Spirit ; Who forbade them to preach the word in Asia, and suffered them not to go into Bithynia. The

Spirit's way with them as to Asia and Bithynia, were two as important factors as was the vision given to Paul. And from these things they assuredly gathered that they were called to Macedonia. They were serving a living God and not dumb idols, a living and a real Holy Spirit. Spiritual Christians, they waited, they weighed this with that, and that with this, and gathered assuredly where God would have them preach the gospel, and thither they essayed to go in the will of God.

Thus we want to know whether we ought to go here or go there. Why am I in London and not in Greenock? Why did I leave my wife and family, my business, my work in Greenock owned and blessed by the Lord? Because I assuredly gathered that the Lord would have me come to London. Yet, peradventure, spiritual ones say to me; "We judge you have made a mistake." Shall I quarrel with them for so saying? God forbid. I ought to go back to my God, at whose bidding I judged I came, and ask him to evidence whether or no I had come at His bidding. But being clear in conscience before Him, argue not, contend not, but go down before such as would be faithful to me, being friends; and judge myself, not them; find no fault with them, but look to see, if peradventure, there may be fault with myself. Still having assuredly gathered that I should come here, here in all good conscience before God I am.

Why, too, have I named such and such subjects for your consideration? It is because I have waited on the living God, to hear His voice in the matter. For indeed it is the chiefest joy in the ministry in the Spirit, not, firstly, "what can I talk about?" But, "O Lord, what ought I to speak of or do?" and this discerning, see what by His grace and help we can say or do. I remember taking a Christian, a well-meaning man, to the railway station; he had been with us for a fortnight; said he, "I have so enjoyed my visit, but I shall be so glad to come back again, as I have thirteen addresses I have not delivered!" One could only bleed in heart for him, and say, "God multiply them, dear

brother." Whether it be thirteen or thirteen hundred, the principle is the same. For "every scribe instructed unto the reign of the heavens is like unto a man a householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old" (Matt. 13. 52). Things old to give acceptance to the new, and things new to give freshness to the old. You may preach from John 3. 16, six consecutive times, but if you only repeat the same things six times, I hold that you are not in fellowship with God, or guided by the rule of the heavens. For the ministry of him who acts in fellowship therewith, ever is characterised by this : that there are things new, and there are things old. I for one sometimes say when I have done speaking, "Please God, next Sunday afternoon, at half-past two, we shall meet here again, and I shall speak from the same words." And yet if going and speaking, as I have often done, from the old words, I only utter the same things, I should have to go back to my closet, to humble myself before God, for my carnal ministry that lacked the new, albeit that it may have much or all of the old. For he who ministers in fellowship with the Spirit of God, gives in his ministry things new and old. New to give freshness to the old, and old to give acceptance to the new. That which is altogether new is not from God, and that which is altogether old is not from God either.

We should wait on the Lord, then ; for our business, as I said, is never, firstly, what *can* I speak about ; our business, firstly, ever is, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do? What wilt Thou have me to do to-day?" And assuredly gathering what He would have us to speak about, then get all the help we can in His presence, to utter forth that which we would speak. But it is, firstly, what ought I to speak about, and then, secondly, what can I say thereanent.

Now in 1 John 3. 20, 21, we read, "For if our heart condemn us [it is] because God is greater than our heart and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God." These verses lay down a great principle, I judge, in

discerning as to when we are led of the Holy Spirit. Here is a man that gathers he ought to do so-and-so. Well, so far as he knows, it is in perfect accordance with the will of God, but then he is not perfectly satisfied that he ought to do it. There is a grudge in his heart about it; he is not altogether happy about it. There is a something—well, he can hardly tell what it is, but there is a something. He is not just as clear about it as he would like to be. Should he go and do it? “Beloved, if our heart condemn us,” let us wait before God; “God is greater than our heart,” and let us wait on Him. Let us not act until we can act in faith and confidence toward Him, that thus and thus we ought to do. For “if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart,” and ’tis He who is seeking to hinder us thus. And, as I judge, spiritual men and women to-day are “suffered not” of the Holy Spirit as intelligently, as really, as directly, as were Paul and his companions when they essayed to go into Bithynia. Act with no grudge in your heart, better far not to act than to act in spite of a doubting heart. “Oh! it must be done.” “Somebody must do so.” Better it should not be done, than done lacking God’s approval.

Now, the well-known story of Abraham’s servant sent to get a bride for Isaac may further help. Genesis 24. 12: “And he said, O Jehovah, God of my master Abraham, I pray Thee send me good speed this day, and show kindness unto my master Abraham. Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water: and let it come to pass that the damsel to whom I shall say, ‘Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink’; and she shall say, ‘Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also’: let the same be she that thou hast appointed for Thy servant Isaac.” He sought direction from God in the spirit in which Gideon sought direction from God; and in the case of Eliezer and in the case of Gideon, God has written in these things aforetimes direct instructions to us who would know the blessed reality of being led by the Holy Spirit.

"O God," said Gideon, "if Thou meanest so-and-so let this fleece on the floor be wet with dew, and dry upon all the earth beside;" and taking up the fleece he wrings it in his hands, the bowl full of water. Then he says, "O God, bear with Thy servant, if Thou meanest so-and-so, let the fleece be dry upon the ground, and on all the ground let there be dew: "and lo! it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground." (Judges 6. 36-40.)

So Eliezer at the well's mouth says: "O God, there are many daughters in this city, I only want one, I want the one Thou wouldst that Isaac should have. Let her be the damsel that does such-and-such things." "And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that behold Rebekah came out," and he stood in the presence of God, and said to her, "'Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher,' . . . and she said, 'Drink, my lord. . . . I will draw for thy camels also.' . . . And the man bowed down his head and worshipped Jehovah" (verse 26), as well he might. BEING IN THE WAY, led of his God, God in His grace condescended to him that would be led by Him, in coming down to the very measure of faith that he had, that the woman who should come out, to whom he should say such things and so reply, was she whom God had designed. These were the marks of the measure of his faith, and to the feeble measure of his faith the living God came down; so answered He Gideon according to his faith. Shall that living God be more exacting with you and me who desire to be led of the Holy Spirit? I trow not.

These are His examples written for our teaching. Rom. 15. 4, makes this absolutely plain without all controversy, and they are direct teaching from God in His ways with those who would be led by Him. They are written that we may know how to discern between being led by God and not led by God.

For if we in the presence, and under the eye of the living God, seek to act with our heart united to His fear, and to act in His name, He then with this, and

with that, and with the other, will give us assuredly to gather what His holy will is for us to do, our inward convictions ever being regulated by His word. Yea, moreover, He will give us outward manifestations of His leading, coming down to the feeble measure of our faith, until we may know, our faith being such, a very Gideon experience ; as it were fleece wet, as it were fleece dry. A very Eliezer experience, that this one shall come forth, and shall say as we desire. So as David, when Hiram, king of Tyre, sent him timber of cedars (1 Chron. 14), as Eliezer, as Gideon, we also shall perceive the Lord's confirmation, and in this our strength we shall act. Act, according to that which is written, "We having the same spirit of faith [without it, it is impossible to please God] I believe, and therefore have I spoken ; we also believe, and therefore speak" (2 Cor. 4. 13).

And he who is spiritual, who is walking in the fear of God, conscious of nothing against himself as to having erred in a given matter, will never when corrected or challenged, stand up in fleshly arrogance nor yet in self-defence ; but will fall down as Moses did in Numbers 16. 4, and all who serve the Lord in His way may look for a like experience. "Ye take too much upon you." Would God the man could be found to-day that takes too much upon him for God. I have heard of one, who has preached in this hall, who went one thousand miles when in America yonder, to speak to a Christian who was exercised concerning the truth of God. I tell you I would go a thousand miles to-morrow to see the man who is taking too much upon himself for God. But the carnal and the worldly ever reproach the spiritual and the godly with this, "Ye take too much upon you." But like Moses, let such come back and fall on their face before their God. He shall step in and "show Himself strong on behalf of those whose hearts are perfect towards Him."

APPENDIX.

8th February 1923.

HOW pathetically interesting, as well as singularly edifying, is the example of being led by the Holy Spirit as revealed to and reported of the Lord Jesus by Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

These records afford real soul rest amid the great tragedies of Christian life, which too often, because apparently inexplicable, perplex unto very despair, as, alas ! also cast down into complete destruction.

These three chosen writers testify unequivocally that Jesus, Jehovah's holy servant and Son, was all-pleasing to God His Father. This He testified both to Him and concerning Him. Yea, and the Spirit Himself did also show His delight by coming (dove-like) and remaining upon Him.

How arresting, then, is the experience that befell this all-perfect One. Mayhap with Him as with Job—

“ God was moved by Satan unto this sore trial of faith.”

Let my reader here and now peruse prayerfully and carefully Job 2. 3. Linger well over the words

“ **without cause.**”

Transfer this, O child and servant of God, to thine own experience. See how the counsel of His will admits and permits what indeed is not His will.

So that even if thy life-story tells of days when prosperity seemed endless. These passed, and days and times came, and yet come, of sorrow upon sorrow marred by bereavements, by bodily suffering, by the ill-judgments of friends, whose mistaken conclusions do but misrepresent God and traduce thee, yet only call

for patient waiting for thy covenant-keeping God, who

“ abideth faithful.”

Him Whose ways—

“ Let the feet of His servant
To be hurt with fetters, and
The iron to enter his soul.”

Yea, He Who—

“ Until the word-of-His-arrangement
Comes, allows His spoken word
(On which faith ever rests) to try
His suffering yet beloved one.”

Wherefore, as with the Lord Jesus Himself, the truly led of the Spirit soul may find himself with the “ wild beasts,” may experience the pangs of hunger, may be tempted as to his relationship with God, as to his ambitions, ay, in a word, as to his unbroken obedience to only serve the Lord his God. This, too, despite

“ Then comes the mist and the weeping rain,
And life is never the same again.”

After all, there remaineth the threefold cord of abiding bliss described in the triplet testimony of Lam. 3. 25-27. Wherefore we conclude that the great reality of being led of the Holy Spirit calls for calm discerning because of the marvellous developments such “leadeth” or “driveth” into. While, notwithstanding outward appearances, His ministering messengers are never absent nor failing to supply all needed succour, though Satan may indeed oppose. See Daniel chap. 10, remembering Rom. 15. 4.

THE CHURCH ;

Its Constitution and Government.

THE subject that we have before us to consider to-night is that of "The Church ; its Constitution and Government."

The word "church" of itself is derived from two words that mean "called out" ; the consequence of which is, that they who answer to being called out, form an assembly, that is, a church.

One has published to the world that "all believers have been called by God out of death into life, out of darkness into light, out from the power of Satan into the kingdom of the Son of His love," then adds, "As these blessings are the common heritage of all believers, all are, in that sense, of the church as well as of the Body of Christ."

We reply that that sense is non-sense, being most contrary to the Scripture use of the word church, as well as contrary to that by which believers are brought into the Body of Christ, as also that by which these may or may not be in an assembly of God.

The proof that writer gives for his doctrine is an unlawful use of an imperfectly translated word in Acts 20. 28, where he confounds the word "purchased" with that of "bought," which it in no sense means, being

very different, for example, from 1 Cor. 6. 20, or 2 Peter 2. 1, while his footnote is unworthy of one proclaiming himself "a simple reader of the Scriptures."

In the Scriptures the word "church" is presented in four distinct meanings ; that is to say, it has a fourfold use in the Scriptures, and of itself the word "church" determines nothing more than a company of persons called out, and never a building IN WHICH persons may meet or congregate !

He who, or that which, has brought them together ever gives character to the church, and by Him that bringeth them together, or that which has brought them together, do we determine the kind of church in the given instance.

I wish to look at three or four Scriptures that show the fourfold use of the word rendered "church."

Acts 7. 38 : "This is he that was in the church in the wilderness ;" referring to Moses and the company of persons who with Moses were called by God out of Egypt and brought into the wilderness, and therefore were a church.

Acts 19. 32, for a second use of the word "church" ; where we find a company gathered in an Ephesian theatre, and of them in this 32nd verse we read, "Some therefore cried one thing and some another, for the *assembly* was confused ; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together." Then in verse 39, the Town Clerk of Ephesus, speaking to them, says : "But if ye inquire anything concerning other matters, it shall be determined in the lawful *assembly*." The word "assembly" in verses 32, 39, 41, is the translation of the same word that elsewhere is translated "church." [Looking back for a moment at verse 37 of this 19th of Acts we read, "For ye have brought hither these men, who are neither robbers of churches nor yet blasphemers of your goddess." The word "churches" here is NOT the same as the word elsewhere translated by the word "church." This word in verse 37 of Acts 19 is "temples"—"temple robbers."

Turn now to the Epistle to the Ephesians, c. 1. 22, "And gave Him [that is, Christ] to be Head over all to the Church, which is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all."

We have seen a third use of the word "church," the Church of which Christ is Head, which is His Body. Now we are going to look at an example of the fourth use that God makes of the term "church." 1 Thess. 2. 13 and 14: "And for this cause *also* thank we God without ceasing, because when ye received the word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe." In the 1st chapter we have the apostle giving thanks to God for this reason, that he brought a message of salvation from God to them, which wrought effectually in them as unbelievers, and made them through its effectually working in them, to believe the glad message of salvation preached, and thus they became saved by the Lord, and thus had the gospel come to them, not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit, yea, and with much assurance; but this second cause of thanksgiving that Paul here mentions in this 2nd chapter is, that those who had become believers had now the word of God brought to them, which they received as the word of God, and which wrought in them effectually as believing ones, and so effectually that the apostle says in verse 14, "Ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judæa are in Christ Jesus." This is the fourth use of the word "church" that God has been pleased to make in the Scriptures—churches of Himself in Christ Jesus.

Of course, to-night we wish especially to look particularly in detail into the two great and different aspects of the church as the same affects us who are God's people; for the church which He constitutes, which He governs, has a twofold, yet different, though related aspect, the first one being entirely to God-ward, its membership unconditional and eternal, always in Scripture kept clear, distinct, and intact; it is spoken of under the expression, "the Church which is His

Body." And so entirely is the Church, the Body of Christ, beyond the power of man or the Devil to disturb or to mar in anywise, that in the 5th chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, in that wonderful verse, the 23rd, we read : " He," that is, Christ Himself, " is the saviour of the Body," that is, He is the preserver of the Body, Our translators did us a good service when they printed the word " saviour" here with a small " s," and not a capital " S," because He is the saviour of the Body in the sense of preserving the Body, and that work He has never in any measure delegated to any of His servants, however zealous for Him and faithful to Him they may be. Would God that many of His beloved children understood this, for their fruitless, though well-meant, efforts would be avoided, and they be found occupied with godlier things if they knew this truth, that He Himself is the preserver of the Body ; and the Body is not a man-ward thing at all : the Body is ever and only in the Scriptures presented as a God-ward thing ; its membership, we repeat, unconditional, its membership eternal.

The latter aspect of the church which we have looked at in our example thereof, 1 Thess. 2., is just the counterpart of the Body. It is as man-ward as the Body is God-ward ; its fellowship is conditional and temporary. It is the very opposite of the Body, which, as I said (and surely this will enable all to remember it so that they can look at it again, and if it be God's mind, hold it as God's mind, and hold it to teach it as God's mind), is God-ward ; its membership unconditional and eternal. The church in its man-ward aspect, its fellowship is conditional and temporary.

Turn now, please, to the 16th of Matthew. In the Gospel of Christ according to Matthew we have the constitution and the government of these two senses of church very definitely given us by the Blessed Lord Himself. In chapter 16. we have the truth of the constitution and government of the Church in its Body aspect, and in chapter 18. we have the truth of the constitution and government of a church in its man-ward aspect. Look with me, firstly, then, at this in its

Body aspect. Matt. 16. 16—(the paragraph begins at verse 13): "And Simon Peter answered and said [in answer to the Lord's question, 'Whom do ye say that I am?'] 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God.' And Jesus answered and said unto him, 'Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father who is in heaven. And I say ALSO unto thee'" (mark the force of this word "also," the Father has revealed to thee, Simon Peter, that I am the Christ, the Son of the Living God, and I make known also to thee). "'that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever—'" mark the altered reading here—" 'and whatsoever thou mayest bind upon the earth shall be (bound), having been bound in the heavens; and whatsoever thou mayest loose upon the earth shall be (loosed), having been loosed in the heavens.'" This reading is that of Robert Young, to whose unequalled ability as a translator of the original tongue of the Scriptures the highest learning and greatest ability of this and other countries give one unanimous voice. Moreover, it is corroborated by Rotherham: and indeed, God would never bind Himself to endorse or to ratify what even an apostle would do. He required, on the other hand, that this Apostle Peter should only be found binding or loosing on earth that which heaven had already bound, that which heaven had already loosed.

There is one thing, I am sure, must be clear to the simplest mind, that whatever the Lord Jesus had been doing up till this point in His life of devoted service to God and to man—whatever, I say, He had been doing up to this point—there is one thing He had not been doing, and that was building His Church; that work of His was a yet future thing.

"I *will* build My Church." As we look more closely into these words of His, "and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against her," we ask, what may He have meant by such things? and in my spirit there rises up

this as an answer :—as He looked back to man in creation's innocency, He could recall how the counsels of Hades had prevailed against the will of God, and how man, in creation's innocency, was wrecked by Satan, through sinning against God, and was expelled the garden. Nay, more, he could think of how God gave to man, having fallen, conscience ; (for by creation man had not conscience, by creation man was innocent, he did not know evil and good ; that does not mean he did not know evil as distinguished from good, he neither knew good nor evil, he was innocent ; and when he fell by transgression against God, God gave to him a conscience), and conscience simply is, the power to know with ; *e.g.*, he knew himself a fallen creature, he knew himself unfit for companionship with his Creator God, and thus he sought to hide from Him, when in the garden his Creator sought him in the cry, "Adam, where art thou?" Moreover, it seems to me, the Lord Jesus thought of how after conscience was given, the gates of Hades again prevailed against God's will, so that it repented God that He had made man at all, and He brought the flood ; and He looked upon how God in mercy gave the law, and how God brought His people on to the glory of the kingdom in the days of Solomon, when silver was common as the stones of the street, and even there all the way along, the Gates of Hades, the counsels of Hades prevailed against the will of God ; and oh ! methinks the Lord Jesus, as He looked backward, thought of even the time when the Baptist had appeared among men, plaintive, and mourning, and lamenting, God seeking to reach them thus ; and yet the counsels of Hades prevailed, for men rested not until they had him beheaded ; and now with His own end drawing near, in this time of the 16th of Matthew, He sees the gates of Hades prevail until the very Christ Himself was rejected, and the cry was, "Away with Him ! Away with Him ! Crucify Him !" And thus the gates of Hades prevail against all the doings of God from Creation to Calvary. But now He says, "I will build My Church, and I will be the preserver of that Body of Mine, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against her whom I build."

There are four things here I would like the young Christians specially to notice. There is, first of all, the confession of Peter ; second, there is the testimony of the Lord to him who confessed Him the Christ, the Son of the Living God ; then, third, there is the purpose told Peter ; and, fourth, the promise given as to the keys of the kingdom of heaven being given to him. A moment or two here. It has been well remarked by others that keys are for opening doors, and if time permitted I would delightedly stay upon the expression, " the kingdom of heaven," never found anywhere else in the New Testament than in the Gospel according to Matthew, and there (though generally translated in the singular in our English Bible), in the original is always in the plural, and simply means the rule of God on high among men on earth. That is what the expression, " the kingdom," or " the reign of the heavens," means as found in the Gospel according to Matthew. It never means locality ; it never means a place : it always expresses the ruling of God for the accomplishment of His own purpose among men. There is a beautiful link here in the words " Peter " and " rock." The word " Peter " itself is a Greek word, meaning a bit of rock. " And upon this *rock* I will build My Church : " the word " rock " is the solid rock. Now that is just exactly what takes place in the Body aspect of the church. There is a solid rock, and we who, by the grace of God, become a bit of the rock, that is, a Peter, we become incorporated with Christ, as I will show you from a verse or two in Paul's 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, 12. 12, " For as the body is one [that is the natural body] and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body : so also is the Christ. For IN [not by] one Spirit were we all baptised into one Body, whether we be Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free, and have been all made to drink one Spirit, for also the Body is not one member, but many." We are not brought into the Body, nor do we continue in the Body, in obedience to any truth of God as believers. We are brought into the Body by the act of the Living One who baptizes in the one Spirit into the one Body, at the time of our obedience to God's

truth as unbelievers ; that is to say, the moment a soul believes the gospel of the grace of God to the saving of himself, that moment, and from thenceforth for ever and ever, he is in the Body of Christ, he is of the Body of Christ, and shall be so by the grace and power of God as long as God is God.

I am careful to impress this upon your serious consideration, that we neither become in the Body nor of the Body through obedience to any part of God's truth as believers. We become in the Body and of the Body for ever and ever in virtue of belief in, of obedience to, God's truth as unbelievers ; and the more you think of that difference, the more beauty from God will you see in it, the clearer will you keep distinct what, alas ! is yet too often confused in the minds of Christians, who make the Church, which is the Body, to be, if not in every respect, in most respects at least, the same as a church of God in Christ Jesus.

I should like much to stay in the 16th of Matthew, but time fails me, and therefore I ask you to turn to chapter 18. 15.

The Lord Jesus is speaking about trespass, telling what His mind thereabout is, and then in verse 17 He says, "Tell it unto the church."

This church that He names is accessible to the person that here is being guided by the Lord.

It is a definite assembly, it is a definite gathering, it is a definite church to which he CAN appeal, to which he CAN come, with which he can take counsel in the mind of God as to the given business on hand. Then in verse 18 He says : "Verily I say unto you," and here again the reading is similar to that we saw in chapter 16. "Verily I say unto you ;" and the wondrous unity that God expects to be found in His gatherings is brought out here by this word "you." "Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye may bind upon the earth shall be (bound), having been bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye may loose upon the earth shall be (loosed), having been loosed in heaven." Now

what did Peter do with the keys of chapter 16? In the 2nd and 10th chapters of the Acts you find him opening the door of the mercy of God, firstly to Israel in the 2nd of Acts, and secondly to the Gentiles in the 10th of Acts. What was the constitution of the Church in the 16th of Matthew? It was the operation of Christ Jesus the Lord Himself; He builds it. What was its government? The binding and the loosing according as the heavens had bound and the heavens had loosed. Therefore the constitution and the government of the Church, in its first aspect, is altogether in the hand of the ascended, glorified, coming Lord Jesus Christ, from its commencement by Himself until its consummation.

The government thereof in the Body aspect was to be in accordance with heaven's binding and heaven's loosing, and thus the Lord will go on building His Church, the Body, in the will of God, according to that which God hath bound, and as to that which God hath loosed.

In this 18th of Matthew read still, verse 19: "Again I say unto you, that if two of you"—two of whom? Why, Christians everywhere think that they ought to take this passage of Scripture to themselves. You would not get two Christians on the whole earth that would not claim that they ought to take these words to themselves. But these words of God are in a definite circle. These words of God are in the light of other words. "Again I say unto you," is in direct connection with verse 18, and verse 18 is in direct connection with verse 17. It is what the apostle speaks of in 1 Corinthians 5., for example, "In the name of the Lord Jesus, when ye are gathered together, and the *power* of the Lord Jesus." It is speaking of a gathering together in the name of the Lord Jesus, and it is speaking of the power of the Lord Jesus in that gathering, and to this gathering these words are said, "Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father who is in heaven. For"—here is the reason of the whole thing—"for where two or three are," always stop at the word "are," please,

because while an English boy would parse this sentence with the words "are gathered" united together as one verb, they are not so in the original. The word "are" is distinct by itself, therefore I beg of you in reading it and in quoting it, always be careful to stop at the word "are" for a moment. "For where two or three are, having been gathered together into My name, there am I in the midst of them."

See, we have four things here like the four things that we had in the 16th Chapter of Matthew ; and in this second aspect of church, the man-ward aspect, the four things are—the place, the subjects, their constitution, their blessing. Their constitution is the cause of their being where they are, and of their being who they are. Where they are and who they are, and He in the midst of them ; thus together is the effect from the cause of their constitution. Their having been gathered together into His name is the essential warrant for their being where they are, who they are, and only then warrants such in counting on the blessing that He is in the midst.

Here I ask you to note well. The Lord Jesus is not building all into the Body, neither is He gathering all together. Unto being builded in the Body there must be obedience on the part of the SINNER to the truth of God brought to him in the GOSPEL, and only such sinners as obey God in the truth of the gospel of the grace of God are baptized into the one Body.

Similarly, only such BELIEVERS as are obedient to God as is His will concerning them in Christ Jesus, are gathered together of the Lord Christ, and thus are found where they are and who they are, with the blessing—"He in the midst." Now, He being IN THE MIDST is not to be confused with the Lord being WITH His people, nor yet to be confused with God being FOR His people, because He is WITH each of His people, and He is FOR all His people, but He is not IN THE MIDST of all His people. To illustrate this from Old Testament type (and it was all written for our learning), when God brought Israel out from the land of Egypt, He went

before them in the cloud, He was WITH them. By-and-bye, when the hosts of Pharaoh were within hearing, and the mountains seemed to hedge in the way, as the sea barred their path onward, that cloud went from before them and came behind them, it came between them and the foe, because God was FOR them. WITH them, He went before them ; FOR them, He went behind them to protect them, but when did He take up His position IN THE MIDST ? When ? Not until they had made the sanctuary according to the pattern that He had showed in the mount to His servant Moses ; and when they made the sanctuary according to that pattern God had given, and not till then, did He take up the position IN THE MIDST of them.

So is it still. He is WITH His people, He is FOR His people, but He is only IN THE MIDST of His people as they build the sanctuary according to the pattern given them through the Moses of the New Testament dispensation, even Paul the Apostle of God to the nations.

The constitution of church, then, in its man-ward aspect, is that they who compose such are directly gathered together at the call of the Lord Christ. See Him as He stood and wept over the city of His life's labours, over the people for whom unweariedly He had toiled here, as He says in piteous tones, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." I would have gathered you, but ye would not. How does the hen gather her brood ? See that hen as she struts in the farmyard, or elsewhere, with her chickens about her. Does she want them gathered to her ? She cackles, she calls them to herself by a voice, and they have in them, implanted by their Creator, that which answers to their mother's voice. Think you that God has implanted less in us who are born of Him ? so that we should fail therefore to discern the call of the Lord Christ, who would gather us unto Himself. He calls us to Himself, and having gathered us to Himself, then we are where we are, and we are who we are, because

He hath brought us together ; and thus, having constituted us a church, an assembly, a gathering, we are where we are, we are doing what we do, because, from centre to circumference, He is Lord alone !

That is our constitution such as are in a church of God in Christ Jesus, who are in a church that he constitutes, and having constituted ought to be allowed to govern. And where is the government of this church ? Back at verse 18 you have it. Are you going to bind ? You will only bind what heaven hath bound. Are you going to loose ? You will only loose what heaven hath loosed.

How did Peter know what the heavens had bound, and what the heavens had loosed ? The Spirit came down upon them, as the 2nd of Acts tells us, and filled with the Spirit, and having utterance given of the Spirit, he spake the words of grace and truth that fell from his lips with power and acceptance to his many hearers, he who but a few weeks before had denied his Lord with oaths and curses. How hath, through his lips, the word such power ? It is the operation of the heavens. And, again, he is on the house-top, and falling into a trance, there came down from heaven, as it were a great sheet, knit at the four corners, filled with all manner of four-footed beasts and creeping things, and a voice said, " Rise, Peter, kill and eat." " Not so, Lord, for I have never eaten anything common or unclean." It is taken up to heaven, let down again, and taken up again, and let down again, and taken up again—three times, and a voice said to him, " What God hath cleansed call not thou common." " Behold, three men seek thee." Three men. The thrice let down and taken up sheet—three men seek thee—and he went, nothing doubting. But God had called him to do the fulfilment of the request that these three had brought him, and he went and spake the words that his God had bidden him speak, and lo ! the Spirit came down from heaven as at the first on these Gentile ones, and he bound and he loosed, as the heavens had bound, and as the heavens had loosed.

How shall we know what heaven hath bound and what heaven hath loosed? We are shut up to the revelation of God's will given us in the Holy Scriptures, which completely furnish the man of God unto every good work. Is it a question of being together as believers? We must have the call of the Lord Christ bringing us together where we are. An illustration here will help some. In a certain town in Scotland I have known this. A number of persons in a God-gathered church. For years these individuals acknowledged that this company was God-gathered. Some were brought out from this religious association, and some from that religious association (and when God separates from religious association He separates from, to keep us in the separated position and never to send us back. If Jeremiah would go back, God said, I will fetch thee again, and in 2 Cor. 6. His word is, "Come ye out and BE YE SEPARATE, and touch not the unclean, and I will receive you in." But it is vain to come out and not be separate. It is an utter delusion of Satan prevailing with far too many saints to-day who have come out but go back belimes to see, and thus, alas! some have encouraged, not only with their presence but with their pence, the unholy things from which, professedly at the call of the Lord Christ, they came out). In that town they had come out at the call of the Lord in order that they might have Christian fellowship, in order that they might practise Christian baptism, in order that they might have Christian ministry, in order that they might be in a position where the word and will of the Lord Christ was absolute from within to without in every circle of daily life of each one that was found together there. Several of these persons, however, found they could not get their own way, they could not do things as they would like to do, for this reason; the bulk of us with whom they were, said, "Brethren, we will gladly give in to what you wish us to do provided you can give us to see such is the mind of the Lord." They failed to satisfy us, we failed to satisfy them. We brought in accredited helps from sister assemblies, some from near, others from far. Patiently we laboured for their deliverance, seeking too

that if we were wrong we might be delivered. At length they got wearied and said, "It is no good waiting here, we will go out," and out they went. They took a hall, they got a table, put on it a white cloth, and with other Christians came together on the first day of the week to remember the Lord Jesus in the breaking of bread, determined to have Christian baptism and Christian ministry, and they said, "Is not the Lord in our midst?" We said, firmly yet humbly, "No, no!" "But how is that?" For this simple reason. "Had you the word of the Lord for being in the assembly from which you went out?" "Yes, of course we had," one said, "or I would never have left Dr. B.'s kirk." "Nor I this," "Nor I that," said others, "if I had not had the word of the Lord for being there." "Then, brethren, where is the word of the Lord that took you out, that gathered you in that place in opposition to this?" You may, like as in the days of Micah, lean back and say while you are keeping Ahab's statutes and Omri's judgments, the wicked, the self-ruling ones, you may lean back and say, "Is the Lord not among us?" and the answer of the Lord will be "No!" "What? All Christians, meeting to break bread on the first day of the week, and the Lord not in their midst?" Not in their midst, one whit; no more than He is in the rankest thing that is opposed to His mind, for He is only in the midst of such as are as a sanctuary builded according to the pattern given through Paul, the Moses of the present dispensation.

Is the question one of coming together? The word of the Lord Christ must be that which brings us together, and wherever we come from, as well as wherever we come to, must all be in accordance with heaven's binding and heaven's loosing. Heaven has loosed me from that; heaven has bound me to this, and here I must be, and thus and thus I must do, bound by heaven and loosed by heaven.

Is it a question of bringing into such a company? Then heaven has bound and heaven has loosed in that matter too. There is only one example of receiving into the assembly (there is no receiving into the Body)

that I know of in the Scriptures, and that is in Acts 9. 26, where Saul assayed to join himself to the disciples that were at Jerusalem; and what did they do with him? He was taken by the son of consolation, and that son of consolation learned not only that he was converted (thankful to God for that), but he learned what he had been doing since he had been converted, and then brought him to the men leading among the saints at Jerusalem, and as a consequence he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem. Mark the order. They are satisfied not only that the person is a believer, but they inquire as to what the person, as a believer, has been doing since conversion; they inquire as to why he wants to join the disciples; and such, if young and ignorant, or old and ignorant, are taught to know this: we are expected only to be found in answer to the Lord Christ calling us here, and so, if we are leaving there and coming here, we are leaving there and coming here at the call of the Lord Christ.

Is it a question of keeping in those who are already in? Then 1 Cor. 5. tells us who may not be kept in, though they are in.

Is it a question of remaining in when there is no power to deal with evil that is accepted? Then 2 Tim. 2. legislates for our own going out at the call of the Lord Christ.

Is it a question of those who trouble us within, concerning whom the Lord has not said, "Put them away from among you"? Mourn about them, 1 Cor. 5. 2, "If ye had mourned, this one had been taken away," and Gal. 5., "I would they would cut themselves off who trouble you"; and clearly, if inside there be troublers, and we would that they would cut themselves off, though they are believers, then if they are not in, we are not to bring them "within" in order to wish they would cut themselves off.

Thus we are if in a church of God in Christ Jesus.

What is the meaning of that? A church in Christ Jesus means, a church ordered in all its ways in ac-

cordance with the mind of God as in Christ Jesus. To help some to understand this, see the 18th of the Acts for example, the closing verses, "And a certain Jew, named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord, and being fervent in spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of Jesus, knowing only the baptism of John." He stopped short of the mind of God, though he taught and preached all he knew ; but godly ones heard him, they took him unto them and expounded unto him the way of God more correctly ; that is to say, they led him on in the mind of God from the baptism of John which God had superseded, into the mind of God as in Christ Jesus. And those churches of Judæa which the Thessalonian Christians imitated, they were assemblies of God in Christ Jesus, they were assemblies of God walking in their ways according to the mind of God as expressed in Christ Jesus. Such is the meaning of the word, assembly in Christ Jesus.

More than once since I came to London I have been asked, "Is it right for a church of God in Christ Jesus to gather on the Lord's day evening to remember Him in the breaking of bread?" I was asked this the last Sunday I was in Greenock. It seems to be spreading abroad as a matter of inquiry, and having been asked several times, I was bold to ask, "Is it practised in London?" and the answer I got was, "In some places." Well, if the churches of Christ in London (which together make but one church of God as the Scriptures show, in each several place or town), or the leading men who ought to stand before the saints in the Lord, will take the trouble to search the book of God, I judge they will find that even in the keeping of the passover *the Lord* kept it in the early hours of the day, though the law had said it should be killed between the two evenings ; yet the Lord kept it immediately after the beginning of the new day that began at six in the evening. The early hours of that day were the hours in which He kept the Passover. Then again, passing on to the 20th of the Acts, where they were

gathered together to break bread, it was in the early hours of the first day of the week they were gathered together to remember the Lord Jesus in the breaking of bread. From which, according to the analogy of The Faith, it appears clear to me, and I therefore bring it before you, not wishing to dominate your faith: but I would, as much as in me is possible, not only stem this seeking to remember the Lord Jesus in the breaking of the bread at times other than the first day of the week (which I have heard said is the minimum time for doing so, and it is the maximum time as well as minimum); but I suggest for the solemn and serious consideration of beloved saints the impropriety of having the weekly feast observed in any other time than on the EARLIEST PRACTICABLE HOURS of the first day of the week.

Thus have I sought chiefly to show you, beloved, the constitution and government of the church in these two different aspects, wishing particularly to have dwelt most upon the latter subject, that of our personal responsibility as believers. Now as time fails me, I can only count upon God perfecting in His grace the few words I have spoken.

Note.—No one who understands God's will would use the term "church of God" to designate other than those of any given town or such-like place, who are together of God, albeit these may meet at several houses or halls.

When towns are spoken of we must needs say "churches of God."

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January 1924.

ALTHOUGH the foregoing was first published about forty years ago, it was only last year that the writer had the painful experience of hearing one read 1 Cor. 10, 32, "Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, *nor to the Body of Christ.*" For sheer effrontery and daring mis-translation these italicised words could hardly be surpassed. Why, even when this verse is read as in Authorised Version, and assertion thereon is made (as seems common) that here mankind is divided into three classes. The mistake is clearly corrected by the fact that afterwards this same inspired Apostle speaks of "Greek," "Jew," "Barbarian," "Scythian" (probably the ten tribes of Israel), "Bond," "Free." The fact is, that Corinth being a commercial Greek city, therein were to be found such as were "Jews," "Greeks" (to be intelligently differentiated from the Barbarians, as see Rom. 1, 14 v.), and the church of God. Has my reader learned with understanding that this church was spoken to (the 2nd person) about (3rd person) a man in their city who was neither in nor of them who comprised that church of God, and yet evidently was *in* and *of* the Church which is the Body of Christ.

Moreover, let it be maintained at all costs everywhere (see 1 Cor. 4, 14-17 v.), that the designation—

"church of God"

demands *plurality*. By the grace of God these are many, whereas the expression and existence of

The Church which is His Body

refuses and denies all plurality.

For she is one only Church "which He (Christ) loved and gave up Himself for, that having cleansed her by

the laver of the water in a spoken word, He might sanctify her and present her to Himself a Church glorious, having neither spot nor wrinkle, nor any such thing; but that she should be holy and without blemish " (Eph. 5, 25-27 v.).

Words of Wisdom about the word "Church."

"There are words whose history it is peculiarly interesting to watch. . . . The very word *church* is in itself an illustrious example.

"In respect to its primary heathen meaning, "ἡ ἐκκλησία (~~ἐκ~~-ἐκκλητοί) was the lawful assembly in a free Greek city of all those possessed of the rights of citizenship, for the transaction of public affairs. That they were *summoned* is expressed in the latter part of the word; that they were summoned

Out Of

the whole population, a select portion of it, including *neither* the populace nor strangers,

Nor Yet Those

who had forfeited their civic rights. This is expressed in the first. Both the calling and the calling-out are moments to be remembered when this word is used in its august (that is, its Christian) sense."

BISHOPS AND DEACONS:

The Persons and their Work.

OUR subject this evening, as most know, is
“Bishops and Deacons, the Persons and their
Work.”

The word translated “bishop” is derived from two words, which mean “to oversee.” The idea expressed, therefore, in the word “bishop” is, taking care with the view of protecting, of providing all that is necessary for the comfort of those who are thus protected, and the guiding of them in the due performance of that which is comely for them in their behaviour to manifest.

Bishops were never chosen by churches of the saints; bishops were never chosen by churches of God in Christ Jesus; bishops were never ordained even by apostles through the laying on of hands. So far as still the Scriptures are listened to by us we never find bishops made such by apostolic power, nor any power short of the direct operation of God, putting earnest care into the heart of His children, or the placing by the Holy Spirit as overseeing ones given persons in given companies of God’s gathered together ones.

Some, of course, will readily think of Acts 14, 23. We might look at it for a moment: “And when they [that is, Paul and Barnabas] had ordained them elders

in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord on whom they believed." We are told by some that the word here used regarding the ordaining of the elders is a word that means, "to vote by show of hands." Well, granting that that is so, the only hands that were shown in the choosing and ordaining of the elders here mentioned were the hands of Paul and Barnabas, and not a hand of any one in the given churches. It is a remarkable word this word "ordained," and it may interest especially young men Christians, to know, and for their sakes I mention it just in passing, though it is a digression from our subject, that the word "ordained," as found in our English New Testament,* is the translation of no less than 13 different Greek words, which 13 different Greek words occur in the New Testament 1,490 times, and out of the one thousand four hundred and ninety times that the words occur, the translators of the English Testament have rendered these words, only *nineteen times* "ordained;" that is to say, the word "ordained," as found 19 times in your English New Testament, is translated out of 1,490 times that God uses the words, translated "ordained." Thus you may see what a struggle the translators had to get the word at all into the New Testament, for you know, or if you do not, you may now, that King James required of the translators of 1611 that they should maintain ecclesiastical phrases; because he held if there be no bishop, there will be no king, or in his own words, "nae bishop, nae king," therefore retain "ordained" where it is possible, and retain a show of bishopric where it is possible, else the king himself goes, with your sending away from the pages of Scripture ordination and bishopric.

This is the only instance where we have the apostles pointing out elders; none but they ever did this. Titus was delegated to set them as we read in the epistles by Paul to him. Chapter 1, verse 4: "To Titus, mine own son according to the common faith: grace, and mercy, and peace, from God the Father and

* Authorised Version.

the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour. For this cause left I thee in CRETE, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain (*i.e.*, set) elders in every City, as I had appointed thee." Then follows the direction from the apostle to Titus in order that he might know whom he might "ordain" in fulfilment of his instructions as the apostle's delegate.

Not only do you get these directions minutely given to Titus, but you get the scope, or the range, in which Titus might exercise this delegated authority in the appointing of elders; for if Titus had gone outside the Island of Crete, demanding to be recognised as one authorised to ordain elders, the Christians of early day had rightly questioned his authority for so coming to them, and while to those in Crete he could produce the apostolic letter, the authority of God for this his doing, take him outside of Crete, and he had no power to do similar things, for he had no authority. I believe it has found its way into print that Timothy also ordained elders, but that is an unscriptural assertion, for the Word of God, so far from saying that Timothy did such, or should do such, says the very opposite.

The great contrast between the bishop that God makes and recognises, and the bishops that obtain too largely among God's people is this: man says, Be made a bishop, and then do bishop-work. Be appointed to the bishopric, then do the bishop-work. Be recognised as a bishop, and then do bishop-work. That is man's way. God's way is: Do the work, and so long as you do the work, you will be the man; but cease doing the work, and you will cease being the person.

Now in the 1st Epistle by Paul to Timothy we are told distinctly the object for which he wrote this letter. Read with me chapter 3, verses 14 and 15: "These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how one ought to behave oneself in the House of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." In this Epistle, then, that teaches us how to behave, you may read it from end to

end, and not find a word about ordaining bishops, nor yet a word about ordaining deacons, nor yet deaconesses, for while no woman may aspire to bishop work, every Christian woman may aspire to deacon work, and ought to ; and while none but such as do shepherd-work will get the crown of glory from the Chief Shepherd when He appears, sisters may lose a crown for faithful service to Christ as Lord if they refrain from performing deacon-work.

God's way for His people having bishops ; God's way for making shepherds among His flock, is given us in this 1 Timothy 3. "This is a true saying." God help us to lay it to heart. It is a true saying in the light of what you get in Acts 14, 23. when that was done they pointed them out, and in the light of what you get in Titus 1, 5, he was delegated to Crete, and in the light of what you get in 1 Timothy 3, 14-15, THIS I write that one may know how to behave oneself in the House of God. "It is a true saying, if a man desire the office of a bishop." Why say the office of a bishop? There is no word office. When God wants to speak to us of office He uses a word to express office. God's Word, like God's works, is far too precise, and is indeed too really the Word of God for us to allow the importation of terms that destroy the word that God uses, and thus we read, "If any one desires oversight:" that is, if anyone earnestly stretches after, which is the force of the word "desires." It is not a mere wish, but it is a wish in energy, as David says, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek to obtain." I do not know how you find it, but I find myself desiring a great many things, and never seeking to obtain. God help us to be like David ; we want to have the spirit to seek to obtain our desire. That is the word heré. "If any one earnestly stretches after oversight," no office of a bishop at all, it is oversight, or bishop-work. "If any one earnestly stretches after oversight he desireth a good " office? Is that it? Look at it ; "He desireth a good work ;" and the word "good " here is different from the word "good " as found in Romans 5 for example, "peradventure for

a *good* man some would even dare to die." A good man, you know, is different from a righteous man. If a man, for example, is a righteous grocer, and you are buying from him, say, a pound of tea, he will give you sixteen ounces for the pound ; but if he is a good man, and you are a poor person, and you go in for a penny-worth, he may give you three-halfpence worth for the penny ; for he is a good man. Peradventure for a good man ; they will say, "That is a good man, I will die instead of him." But that is not the word here. This word in connection with work, the work of overseeing is, "he desireth beautiful work." It is the same word as is applied to "The Good Shepherd," and everywhere and anyhow you look at Him as the Shepherd He is beautiful just like a precious stone the more you turn it over in the sunshine, the more beautiful it becomes. So is the work of overseeing, it is beautiful work. But it is a very humble, insignificant office, and because it is in fact no office at all, but diligent, laborious, heart-taxing, strength-taxing, love-proving work, the Lord holds out at the end of the course a crown of glory to him that does the shepherd work ; and none but shepherds will get from Him "the crown of glory that fadeth not away."

"A bishop [or, the bishop], then, must be blameless, the husband of one wife." That does not mean he must be a married man. There were men then who were not husbands of one wife, even as still in a part of British dominion (in the Island of Mauritius, for example) you will get a man living and there are three or four women in that place whom he has had joined to him in marriage, and whom he has, with the consent of British rule, divorced, so contrary to the mind of God ; and that is what this word here means, it was to save from the then prevailing custom, that alas I yet prevails to the disgrace of British dominion, as I have cited. And to show you this the more clearly : Let me suppose here is a brother ; he is a married man, and he has care put in his heart of God to shepherd the flock of God ; he goes in and out among the saints, and stands before them in the Lord beautifully ; verily, he

is unquestionably a shepherd. It pleases God at the end of ten years of his shepherd work to take his beloved partner home to Himself before He takes him. Must that brother desist from shepherd work because God has made him a widower? Must he indeed take unto himself another wife, in order that he may exercise himself in shepherd work? I trow not; and all that God is here saying in connection with the fitness of the bishop is:—if he be married he will be the husband of but one woman; “vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach—.” That does not mean he shall be able of necessity to stand and PUBLICLY tell out the mind of God as in Christ Jesus for His saints. “Apt to teach” means he shall be ready, quick of scent to give godly counsel when conferred with by any of the lambs, or the little sheep, or the sheep of the flock of God. If I were asked to prove this I would point to 1 Timothy 5. 17, where a distinction is made betwixt those who are overseers and those of them who *specially* labour in the word and doctrine, that is, in word and teaching. Chapter 3. 3: “not given to wine, no striker, but patient.”* “Not a brawler, not covetous [that is, not fond of money], one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity.” That does not mean that a man in whose heart God has put earnest care, and has a wife, if in the will of God he is not blessed in grace with children, therefore he must desist from shepherding, from doing oversight work; neither does it mean that if, as sometimes happens, God has blessed a man with children, and by-and-by, as he is going on in his labours for the Lord in bishop-work, with acceptance and accredance of God, God takes his children from him by death, that he must desist from overseeing work because it hath pleased God to deprive him of his children. No one would say so. Therefore, the meaning of God is clear, that if he has children he shall be “one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity, but [or, for] if one know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care

* The words that follow are left out in the Revised Version correctly.

of a church of God." Verse 6: "not a novice [not a new plant, not one newly come to The Faith], lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation [or, judgement] of the Devil. Moreover, he must have a good report from them that are without, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the Devil." The judgement of the Devil and the snare of the Devil, as spoken of in 1 Timothy 3., are the judgement and the snare into which the Devil himself fell. This snare of the Devil is not to be confused with, or thought to be the same as the snare of the Devil spoken of in 2 Timothy 2. : for that snare of the Devil is a snare laid by the Devil.

Here is God's standard ; let him bring himself up to this standard ; let him have a care to see whether he is vigilant, sober, etc. ; a man who by reason of use has his senses exercised to discern both good and evil ; a man that brings the word of God down to his own feet ; a man that brings the word of God down to his own hands ; a man that brings the word of God down to his own thoughts ; a man that brings the word of God down to his own wishes ; a man who uses the Scriptures, and who, by reason of use of the Scriptures in every circle of life, is a man using the Scriptures in his spirit, on his spirit ; in his soul, on his soul ; in his body, on his body ; and so has his senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Why are the children of God so far behind in discerning right from wrong? It is because they do not have their senses exercised through reason of use. They hear the Scriptures, but what practical use do they make of them? God help any who thus seek to do oversight work so to be and do. The men whom God precludes from stretching themselves forward to oversight work are such as answer to the word "novice," "newly come to The Faith," which simply is a new plant ; all men who are not novices, all who are not new plants, all having the moral character of 1 Timothy 3., may with earnest care in their hearts, for the glory of God, aspire to stretch earnestly forward to doing the beautiful work of oversight.

God has given a beautiful picture that helps in the

understanding of this. Turn with me to Zechariah 3. ; the first five verses are well known through being so often preached from in the Gospel, which they so aptly set forth ; I do not stay to speak thereof, but read verses 6 and 7, as showing what God expects shall follow conversion. Zechariah 3. 6 and 7 : " And the angel of the Lord protested unto Joshua saying, thus saith Jehovah of Hosts." Oh ! the beauty of this introduction, " Jehovah of Hosts." He has plenty who would gladly do His will, and yet He says to us, such as have heart to perform oversight work—" Thus saith Jehovah of Hosts ; If thou wilt walk in My ways, and if thou wilt keep My charge, *then* thou shalt also judge My house, and shalt also keep My courts, and I will give thee places to walk among these that stand by."

Why are the courts of God's House to-day not kept ? Why is the House of God not judged to-day after the mind of God ? Because in chief, the men who are stretching themselves forward in the exercise of overseer work have never learned firstly themselves to walk in the ways of the Lord and to keep His charge. Hence their slackness, hence their dimness of vision, hence their failing to discern right from wrong ; whereas God precludes all such from overseership, and wants such as would be overseeing men to walk firstly in His ways, to keep His charge firstly, and then thus adorning the doctrine of God as to His ways and His charge, they are fitted also to judge in His House, and also to keep His courts, so that none shall come into the House but such as He would have brought in.

1 Thess. 5. 12, 13, give us words from God to the rank and file of His flock, that is to say, words to such as are not themselves overseeing ones, and words that by God are meant to teach these how to behave themselves towards those that are indeed overseeing ones according to the mind of God. " And we beseech you, brethren, TO KNOW them which LABOUR among you and are OVER you in the Lord, and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their *work's* sake." Not their office's sake, but their work's sake. They

labour among you, they are over you (or stand before you) in the Lord.

There are some to-day that would be acknowledged over saints, that cannot be acknowledged, for they are not in the Lord in their ways. What is this word "are over"? It is the word of 1 Tim. 3. : "ruleth." But what does it mean that such "are over"? It simply means who stand before you, who stand before you in the Lord. They say, brethren and sisters, this is the way, we are ourselves examples of the flock, follow us, follow us who are over you, that is, who stand before you in the Lord and admonish you. "Esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake."

How may we know if we have got bishops?

You will know them if they do the work ; and God only holds us responsible to recognise them as they manifest themselves by doing the work. If they do not do the work, we may not, in the fear of the Lord, encourage them in paths of sinfulness by accounting them fit to be recognised as overseeing ones. Then follow words from verse 14 to 22, to the overseeing men themselves. From verse 14 to verse 22 there are words given from God to the overseeing men. Let us read the 14th verse : "Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly." What is the word unruly? It is a military term. It means literally "not keeping rank" ; but if the overseers themselves are not keeping rank, if the overseers themselves have been going on marching according to the bidding of the Lord for a time, and after a time have got wearied of His path of separation, wearied of the reproach of Christ, and seek to go back and mingle with that from out of which they were brought professedly by the call of the Lord Christ, how are they able to warn others that do not keep rank? And if they go out of the rank themselves in a body, or even individually, shall the saints of God follow them who are themselves not keeping rank? God forbid.

This 14th verse is an exhortation to those that are over others in the Lord, for did we not see the exhortation in verse 12 was to the brethren to know those who

admonish them? The word admonish is the same as the word warn.

In verse 14 it is clearly a word to the overseeing men. From verse 14 to 22 there are fourteen things enumerated that overseeing men ought themselves to be found doing as overseeing ones. And more than that, each and all of these fourteen things, if you read them carefully, you will discern, are things which overseeing men are not to do individually. They are things that overseeing men are to do unitedly after holy conference with one another, unitedly carrying out in the fear, and at the bidding of the Lord Christ, whatever is His will in the given matter on hand.

It would be to me delightful, and to you, I doubt not, it would be profitable, to dwell on each of these fourteen things mentioned in 1 Thess. 5., but time quite forbids us attempting that. Let us turn to Hebrews 13. 7: "Remember them that have the rule over you." These words "that have the rule over" are the translation of one word that simply means "leading." "Remember them leading" (or, as some would render it, "Remember them that led you,") for you know that while in this country the shepherds most commonly drive the sheep before them, in the Eastern lands, from whence the Lord's pictures are taken, the shepherd walks before the flock, and leads them after him.

"Remember them that have spoken unto you the word of God." I have marvelled at times how saints remember you when things are going well with them. When one comes to them and tells them the mind of God, they hang upon one's lips, they take in the word of God with such delight, many even go the length of expressing their gratitude to God, and to the speaker; but when things are not going so favourably with the same people, oftentimes they care not one whit for what he says. Compare Gal. 4. 11-18.

What though he spake of God with acceptance to them in days gone by; what though he told them the

truth in days gone by, they set at nought such as they gladly followed so clearly in the Lord before.

“Remember [saith God] those who have spoken unto you the word of God, considering the end of their conversation”—considering the drift of their manner of life ; what is the issue of their manner of behaviour ; whether seeking to make merchandise of you, whether leading you after themselves, or after Christ, to whole-hearted obedience to Him, or to cleave to Him with purpose of heart. And yet it is astonishing how twisted is the hearing of saints when they hear the truth of God. As I remember hearing a well-known servant of the Lord tell publicly in the town where, as a lad, I listened to His ministry. He said, “When I used to hear So-and-So teach the truths of God for His people’s present obedience, I thought the meaning of it all was, ‘Come and join the Brethren.’ But it flashed upon my understanding that when God converted me to Himself, and I became a son of His by faith in Christ Jesus, I became by new birth a member of His family, and so was joined to, and indeed was, one of THE BRETHREN. Then I said, ‘What do they mean?’ And the word of the Lord answered, ‘Go forth unto Him without the camp (Heb. 13.). And so soon as I understood it was to go forth unto Jesus Christ as Lord, I ran from the camp of ecclesiasticism according to man, out unto ‘Jesus only,’ and when I got to Him I found a whole lot of brothers and sisters who had got there before me, Hallelujah !”

That is it, beloved. When his own heart and his own vision were made clear and strong he heard aright, he understood aright, and he got right.

Yes, there is a gathering to Him to-day. Are *you* with Him? Have you come out from the camp? For if not, understand this: “He that is not WITH Me, is against Me.” You may fear Him, you may love Him, but if you are not with Him you are against Him. “And he that gathereth not with Me scattereth abroad.” Are you with Him? Thank God. Are you gathering with Him, child of God? If you are not with Him,

understand you are against Him. If you are not gathering with Him, you are scattering.

Heb. 13. 17 : " Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves ; for they watch for your souls." That is the work of the bishop, he is to be a watcher for souls ; he is to be as far as in him lies a speaker of the word of God, a man whose manner of life will lead unto Christ, who will lead to whole-hearted devotion to the will of God as in Christ Jesus.

Obey them, collectively together. Brethren aspiring to do oversight work take care to act together, take care never to appear before the saints with divided judgement. " Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves ; for they watch for your souls as they that must give account." That is their work—they watch for souls as they that must give account. They look on the lambs, the little sheep, and the sheep of the flock as the Lord speaks of His family in John 21., and they look on them as being responsible to the Chief Shepherd for each one. Think you that David went out after the lion that took away the lamb, for the prowess of killing the lion? Nay, verily. He went out after the lion for the joy of delivering the lamb. God help you, brethren, to keep the lambs out of the lion's mouth, and out of the paw of the bear.

Seek the lambs of the flock, defend, and protect them, guide them, and feed them. For it is the shepherd that feeds, who is the shepherd that leads, and He is the shepherd that bleeds for the flock of God.

Verse 24 : " Salute all them that have the rule over you." Do not be afraid of giving to such as are labouring among you high esteem, this God would have you do, and that for their work's sake.

What we have said about the bishops, we trust will be enough in the grace of God to show who the persons are, and what their work is. They are persons who are converted to God, not novices, and who, with earnest care put into their hearts, stretch forward to

oversee the flock of God, and they seek to make themselves the persons having the character of 1 Tim. 3., then they seek to do the fourteen things spoken of in 1 Thess. 5. : "Warn the unruly," etc., and they speak the word of God, they live an exemplary life, they are examples of the flock of God, they watch for souls as they that must give account, they tell the saints the mind of God unitedly that they may be obeyed in the Lord, they do the work of diligent labour among the saints and thus become known to the saints, loved by the saints, esteemed by the saints, and submitted to by the saints. Such are bishops, and such is their work, and such is their present place in the will of God, whereas their reward is that crown of glory He will give to shepherd ones only.

For Deacons, turn, please, to 1 Tim. 3. 8 : "Likewise must the deacons be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre"; that is "of base gain." They would not get any advantage at the expense of another—"not greedy of base gain." It is not money merely. It is gain that is baseful, low, contemptible, unrighteous gain. "Not greedy of base gain, holding the mystery of The Faith in a pure [a clean] conscience. And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon."

These six English words "use the office of a deacon," may be translated, as elsewhere in the New Testament the word often is translated, by five letters of the English language which are s-e-r-v-e, "then let them serve." There is no office about the deacon any more than there is office about the bishop. We said when God wants to speak about office he does it; for example in Romans 12. God uses a word to express office there, and if God wanted to speak of office in connection with this, He would have used it. Don't be trifled with, saints of God, understand what word God uses, "and let these also serve." "Even so, women;" not "wives," not "their wives," but it is women who may be deaconesses as we shall show presently. "Even so, women, grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things." Then he goes back to deacons, you see.

“ Let deacons be husbands of one wife.” If he had spoken about their wives, he would not introduce the deacon again and his wife.

It is all in the range of deaconship. “ Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife.” And so deaconesses wives of one husband. “ Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.” The same word “ruling.” Standing beautifully before. “ For they that have USED THE OFFICE OF A DEACON.”

These six English words are simply translatable (if in truth the word of God were translated) into a word of six English letters s-e-r-v-e-d. “ For they that have served *well* [that is, they that have served beautifully] purchase to themselves a good degree and great boldness in The Faith which is in Christ Jesus.”

The word “ deacon” is a Greek word Englishized. The word “ deacon,” like the word “ baptize” in the New Testament, is an untranslated Greek word, which word, when translated, is minister, servant, as elsewhere it is sometimes translated ; for example, Matt. 20. the first occurrence of the word “ deacon.” Matt. 20. 26, last part of the verse : “ Whosoever is great among you, let him be your minister ;” that is, your servant.

John 2. 5 : “ His mother saith unto the SERVANTS, whatsoever He saith unto you, do.” Verse 9 : “ When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was (but the SERVANTS which drew the water knew), the governor of the feast called the bridegroom,” and so on. The word “ servants” in verses 5 and 9 is the translation of the same word we get in 1 Tim. 3. deacon, and is the word in Matt. 20. It is derived from a word that means to serve. The radical thought, the stem, the branch, and the fruit thought of the word deacon is SERVANT.

Look for a moment at Acts 6. The word deacon occurs 30 times in the New Testament, and if any one here present thinks that I am making an unjust selection you are at liberty to call me in question while I am

speaking. It will be no interruption to me, and it need not be to the meeting. We affirm from first to last of the word it is ever radically in its meaning and signification, service. Acts 6. 2: "Then the twelve [Apostles] called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, 'It is not pleasing [the word is "pleasing," not "reason"] that we should leave the word of God and serve tables.'" The word "serve" here is part of the word "deacon." "Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this need. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry (that is, to the service) of the word."

Turn again to 1 Cor. 3: 5: "Who, then, is Paul, and who Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man." The word "ministers" here is the word "deacon"; they were deacons.

You know to-day the word deacon is thought by some to be an ecclesiastical officer whose business it is to care for the temporal matters of a church, but the word "deacon," as God uses it, while it covers that, distinctly means such diligent labourers in the ministry of the word as were the Apostle Paul and Apollos. They were deacons who carried to them the truth of God, and through whose deaconing these Corinthians had believed.

Turn back now to Romans, please. Rom. 15. 8: "Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision, for the truth of God to confirm the promises made unto the fathers." The word "minister" here is the word "deacon." Jesus Christ was a deacon of the circumcision for the truth of God. He deaconised the truth of God, and confirmed the promise of God in His deacon work.

Rom. 16. 1: "I commend unto you Phebe, our sister, who is a servant of the Church which is in Cenchrea." The word "servant" is "deacon." Phebe was a deacon, or, as an Englishman would more correctly express it, she was a deaconess of the church that was in Cenchrea. Hence it is, I judge, that we

have the words in 1 Tim. 3., teaching how the deacon man and the deacon woman are to behave themselves in the House of God.

Mark, the word deacon, as traced in all its occurrences in the Scriptures, teaches that the service is of a public, or seen, character. We speak of it chiefly in connection with the House of God, Church of the Living God, for the person who is allowed to open the door and to put persons into their places in the room or hall where a church of God is wont to have meetings, that person is a deacon, and that person ought not to be allowed to do such work unless he or she is a person answering to the description given in 1 Tim. 3. ; as to deacons and deaconesses ; nay, more, should in no wise be allowed to distribute hymn books at the door of the meeting-place, unless he or she has the requisite character attaching to public service in connection with an assembly of God.

Thus a man may not be allowed to give out a hymn in a meeting who lacks the character of a deacon enumerated in 1 Timothy 3. ; a man may not be allowed to lead in prayer who lacks the character of 1 Tim. 3. ; nor any allowed to open their mouth in connection with the gospel who lack the character of 1 Tim. 3.

Would God that His deacon ones and His bishop ones understood this : then much that prevails and obtains to-day would be stamped out, and we should have a ministry in the power of fellowship with God from the deacon ones, not necessarily old men, as is the case in I do not know how many places, and it is the same old men from one year's end to another. How is that ? Why do the young men uncover their heads ? If they have no exercised heart about pleasing Him who is the Lord and Christ, better they should keep their hats on, like the women.

But if there be an exercised heart to do what the Lord would have them do, let us strengthen these brethren to understand that they are in the way of the Lord. Let them learn to stand before the flock ; to be an

example of the flock. If the Lord does not come immediately we shall be gone, and who are to deaconise? Why, they who with us have been led out and on in the way in the fear of the Lord.

But let it be in His fear, and not by doing anything to fill a gap. Better to have a gap that brings down to tears before God, than to have it filled up by a fleshly act to the grieving of the Holy Spirit in oneself, and the quenching of the Holy Spirit in another.

And let the saints be careful not to discourage the Timothy-like one (Acts 16. 1-5), which often is done through want of thought, as, alas! sometimes also by want of heart. The accepted and desired labourer may also help, since he forgets not how at first he too stammered, and even failed to put his words together as he wished and now manages. Mother or teacher does not upbraid the irregular stitches, etc., in the work of the one they seek to bring on to usefulness.

“Making a difference” obtains all through the affairs of life and in the “things of our Lord Jesus Christ,” even nature itself teaches much. He therefore who is in the mind of the Master will gladly acknowledge, “She has done what she could.”

To the elder sister who is acting out Titus 2.: he who is on the mind of the Master will say, “God bless you, sister, and keep you from gossip and slander—God help you to be faithful in all things.”

Oh, beloved, it is a heart knitting, a soul joining, and a feet quickening work to pray the one for the other, by name to the Lord, by name to go over the gathering one by one, and if any need to do this, surely such as claim to be overseeing ones should be intensely careful to see that thus they do, and they of whom, and for whom, we have spoken to our God, if it should be that we go to speak to these about their doings or their mis-doings, we will do it in the fear and love of the Lord.

Why does the Lord preclude the novice from the bishopric? It is lest he fall into the snare of the Devil. It is for the blessing of the newly planted Christian.

Why does the Lord call all to deacon work? John 12. 26: "If any man serve Me"—if any man deacon Me—if any man deaconise Me—"let him follow Me: and where I am, there shall also My deacon be: if any man serve Me, him will My Father honour." Why is there a call to deacon work for one and all in the flock of God, men and women of the flock of God? The Lord designs our blessing, brethren, for "if any man deacon Me, My servant will be where I am, and My Father will honour him." He wants us to be honoured of His Father: He wants us to have His blessed companionship, and therefore he wants the men and the women in a church of God to be deacon-ones. Who, then, are deacons? Such as seek to serve the Lord Christ, being the persons who honestly strive to answer to the description of deacon given in 1 Tim. 3.

Shall we seek to ordain deacons? Shall we seek to elect them? Shall we seek to appoint them? If we do, let us know that in thus doing we are misbehaving ourselves, for unto deacon work being done the word of the Lord has been given in 1 Tim. 3. that we may know how to behave ourselves in the House of God, which is the Assembly of the Living God. He who would deaconise, or serve the Lord Christ, must be one who is to be careful that he is "not double tongued," not one thing in the church and another thing in the home, not one thing in the religious circle, and another thing in the world circle, not one thing to the saints' face and another thing to the saints' back, not double tongued, not two tongued; "not greedy of base gain," would never say a word about another to advantage himself; would never do a thing against another to set off himself; "holding the mystery of The Faith in a pure conscience" careful as to what he does, that he does not depart from the way of The Faith, careful that his temper, and his words, and his ways, all exemplify The Faith; so to do that if he is married and has a house he is standing beautifully before his house: that he is an example of the believers in speech, in manner of life, in purity, in *purity*, in PURITY. God knows how much that is wanted even among His people to-day.

May we be jealously careful, beloved saints, in each church of God, which is teeming with privileges of the most sacred character, and because teeming with such privileges is teeming with terrible temptations, against the which, if we be not fortified through the grace and truth of God in our heart, if we be not careful to maintain a clean conscience, we shall terribly, awfully fall, and instead of adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things, we shall cause it to be evil spoken of because of our ungodliness. That God may forbid such, and help us to be such as He would have us, let us now and ever pray.

QUESTION. Does the "public" character of deacon service justify a woman to speak in public, or at meetings for ladies only?

ANSWER. 1 Tim. 3. 14, says that the entire epistle was written to teach how to behave in the House of God. And by chapter 2. the woman is not allowed to teach, nor to exercise herself as man, but to be in silence. Then in Cor. 14. 33, 34, it is written, "*As in ALL the churches [assemblies] of the saints*" let the women (not *your* women, see R.V.) keep silence in the churches (assemblies) for it is not permitted unto them to speak, which is allowed to the prophets, verse 29. Yea, for the doing of which, Paul thanked God that he excelled every other one. And yet the world has been asked to believe that this speaking of 1 Cor. 14. (it is the *same word* all through the chapter) is "chattering" and such like. Fancy Paul thanking God because he chattered in a tongue more than all! Or the prophets told that they might chatter, but the women not !!!

But it is argued, "women prophesied," and prophesying means to preach, and therefore, a woman may preach the gospel or preach in a public meeting. Taking those who say so on their own ground, we have the distinct word of the Lord that "Prophe-sying serveth NOT for them that believe not, but FOR them that believe." (1 Cor. 14. 23.) We suppose that no born again person, *i.e.*, no Christian, will contend that "the gospel serveth not for them that believe not." The conclusion here is inevitably distinct. Is it not?

The "at home" sphere for Christian women is taxing enough for such as are spiritual without their exercising themselves as man. The picture of which is Deut. 22. 5, read in the light of Rom. 15. 4.

In Titus 2. that which becomes sound doctrine is enjoined upon "aged women," who are exhorted to cause the young women to be sober, or discreetly minded, and to be "home workers," (*not* keepers at home) which homework is beautifully set forth in, for example, the "goats' hair curtain doubled over the forefront of God's tabernacle-dwelling." For yet the woman has her work and sphere of honour from God. And, as in Israel, the wise, willing-hearted woman spun at home such as the Lord wanted; so to-day He brings her work, though not herself, into publicity. And thus "Her own works will be her praise in the Gates."

The woman professing godliness is exhorted to be adorned with good works. And was not Dorcas so adorned, Acts. 9. 39? Is not she, too, thus adorned, who fills up her own account, 1 Tim. 5. 10 with Phil. 4. 17?

But then, did not some women help, or labour with Paul in the Gospel? They did. And what they did, EVERY ONE in the church at Philippi was exhorted to do. See chapter 1. 27th verse. Does any one think, believe, or say, that each and all were expected to publicly preach? We trow not. Well; please understand that ALL were charged to do whatever these women had done, and this in connection with "The Faith of the gospel."

What Is The Bible ?

DOUBTLESS, to some minds, to go outside the Bible which we have in our hands in our own tongue to-day for evidence that it is from God, would be a most interesting and, perhaps, desirable thing, especially in this day, when The Faith is being increasingly corrupted and perverted by Satan and by his ministers (2 Cor. 11. bids us not to wonder at what they are doing) ; and not only do they seek to have The Faith perverted and corrupted, sad and disastrous as that is, but they are endeavouring with redoubled energy to destroy the very foundations thereof, and to shake the confidence of men in this book as being what it is—the Word of God. It has pleased God oftentimes to bring to nought the wisdom of learned and philosophical men when they have trusted and boasted to have undermined the authority of such a bulwark of The Faith as, for example, the book of Daniel. No part of God's word has been more bitterly and persistently assailed than has the book of Daniel the prophet. One of Great Britain's brightest scholars spent the best of his days in writing a book of 700 pages to establish—what do you think ? To meet the blatant assertion of the sceptic, the infidel, that the musical instruments mentioned in the book of Daniel the prophet were unknown in the world in the time in which Daniel is said to have lived. And when he has written

his book, and established the fact beyond controversy, what has he done? He has only met the assertion of the sceptic and the infidel, and has not drawn from one of them a line of apology!

There is a saying yet quoted by some (for some will not take shame and some cannot be made to blush; some seem as if they could not be muzzled, as Titus 1, 13, calls upon the servants of God to do with false teachers), up till some forty years ago, because Herodotus, who is called the father of secular history, attributed the glories of Babylon to another rather than to Nebuchadnezzar, of whom indeed he speaks nothing at all, the learned in this and other lands proudly boasted—that is, those who were sceptical—that such a person as Nebuchadnezzar had never lived, and they based their assertion on what Herodotus had written.* Well, then, as for Herodotus and his reliability as a faithful historian—which, till some thirty years ago, was continually in the forefront with the sceptical learned ones of this land and the Continent of Europe—when Layard went out yonder to the ancient site of Babylon, and began with his excavators to dig into the earth, what did he bring up? Brick after brick, on each one of which is stamped “Nebuchadnezzar, the son of Nabopalassar,” and men opened their eyes and their mouths and said—“Daniel is true after all.” Yet for hundreds of years there were some who were made to question the veracity of the book of Daniel as being inspired, and because a bit of sun-dried clay is brought up from the earth men are convinced by that, rather

* Like as others have based their assertions on what Porphyry said, who is one of the earliest and most celebrated sceptics the present dispensation has seen, that the book of Daniel could not have been written in the time in which Daniel is said to have lived. He held, forsooth, that the book of Daniel described things so minutely that no person could have written them unless they had lived in the days of the wicked Antiochus Epiphanes. What is God's answer to that? 300 years before the Christ was born, and 100 years before Antiochus Epiphanes was born, the Scriptures of the Old Testament, as we have them to-day, from Genesis to Malachi, with the book of Daniel among them, were scattered throughout the known world, and by this God silences the assertion of Porphyry; which, alas! some to-day are found quoting in their writings.

than by what all along has stood and will stand the assaults of the evil ones ; albeit there may be some who will have their confidence only established in the book by such manner of evidence.

I do not to-night intend at all to touch on that line of external evidence that God has been pleased in His mercy to allow to come to the forefront giving, as it were, a witness side by side with His revelation in the Scriptures that they are from God. Indeed, I wish rather to-night, in answering the question, "What is the Bible?" to stand behind the book, yea, to stand behind the Speaker of the book, and be the echoer of that which He says.

In the time when the blessed Lord Jesus went in and out among men the Scriptures of the Old Testament were as we have them, and without the Apocrypha. We know that the Apocrypha, which is in the Bible of the Romish Church, is not inspired of God ; we know it from Daniel's seventy weeks, of which we spoke a little last night ; * and not only from that, but we know from the testimony of the blessed Lord Jesus and His holy prophets that the books of the Old Testament, from Genesis to Malachi, as we have them to-day, were known, and used, and accepted, and presented by Him and by them as being the complete revelation of the mind of God, so far as they go, being the Old Testament expressed in the books from Genesis to Malachi. In His day the Old Testament was divided into three sections, commonly known as the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms. They so stand or fall together, as I hope presently to show you, that if the Lord quotes a saying from the Law He gives it as a saying from the Scriptures ; if he quotes from the Prophets it is as from the Scriptures ; if He quotes a saying from the Psalms He gives that saying also as from the Scriptures ; for whether it be the Law, the Prophets, or the Psalms they stand or fall together, they were one complete whole, which the Lord again and again called and presented and spoke of to those who listened to Him as being "the Scriptures."

* See "The Coming Again of the Lord Jesus Christ."

Turn with me now, that you may see this, to the Gospel according to Matthew. Matthew 21, 42: "Jesus saith unto them, 'Did ye never read in the Scriptures: The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?'" The only place in the Old Testament where these words occur is Psalm 118, yet the Lord speaks of that saying of the Scriptures as a part of the whole. He says, "Did ye never read in the *Scriptures*?" He does not define to the people to whom He spoke what the Scriptures were. When He used the term "the Scriptures," there was something raised in their minds; He did not define His words; He simply asked the question, "Did ye never read in the Scriptures?" Nobody asked Him, "What meanest Thou by the Scriptures?" What He meant they well knew, and what He says as from the Scriptures and in the Scriptures was to be found only in Psalm 118.

In Matt 22, 29: "Jesus answered and said unto them, 'Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God?'" Mark well, "not knowing the Scriptures"—"have you not read that which was spoken unto you by God?" What relation have the Scriptures to God? What relation has God to the Scriptures? He gives no definition; He gives no explanation; He speaks about the Scriptures; He asks them if they did not know what the Scriptures say; and when He appeals to the Scriptures He says: "Have ye not read what God spoke to you?" "Where?" "God spoke to you in the Scriptures, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." These words are only found in the book of Exodus, chap. 3. They are a quotation from the book of the Law, yet the Lord speaks of them as being part and parcel of the Scriptures, which Scriptures, He says, are the voice of God to you.

These words were spoken to Moses, yet He does not stay to argue, He does not stay to explain, He does not stay to define ; He simply makes the positive statement, " God speaks to you in the Scriptures," and the Scriptures in which God here speaks are a saying from the book of the Law.

Matt. 26, 54, says : " How then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be ? . . . But all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled."

Thus the Lord, in speaking to those that heard Him, as here recorded in Matthew, speaks of a saying in the book of Psalms, a saying from the book of the Law, and things spoken of in the book of the Prophets as being alike the Scriptures.

Turn now to the Gospel according to John, 19, 24 : " They said therefore among themselves, ' Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it whose it shall be ' : that the Scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, ' They parted My raiment among them, and for My vesture they did cast lots,' These things therefore the soldiers did." Verse 28 : " After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith, ' I thirst. ' " In His dying agony on Calvary's tree, that all written of Him at such a time in the Scriptures might be fulfilled, thus and thus He did, and the filling up of the Scriptures recorded in these two verses that we have just read, was the filling up of words that are only found in the book of Psalms. Then the 36th verse : " These things were done, that the Scripture should be fulfilled, ' A bone of Him shall not be broken. ' " Where is the Scripture that says, " A bone of Him shall not be broken ? " It is a saying found in the book of the Law. Verse 37 : " And again another Scripture saith, ' They shall look on Him whom they pierced. ' " And where is that Scripture found ? In the book of the Prophets. Thus in His life-labours He speaks of the Scriptures, binding together the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms ; and in His dying moments He filled up the Scriptures in a saying from the Law, in a saying from the Prophets, and in sayings from the Psalms.

In resurrection morning see what He did with His beloved disciples.

Luke 24, 44 : " And He said unto them, ' These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me.' Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures." What are the Scriptures? " These are the words that I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me. ' Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures."

These three divisions have been handed on to us by the writers of the letter to the Galatians and the book of the Acts of the Apostles. Read with me now Galatians 3, 10 : " For as many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse : for it is written, ' Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the Law to do them."

Acts 7, 42 : " Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven ; as it is written in the book of the Prophets."

Acts 1, 20 : " For it is written in the book of Psalms, ' Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein : and his bishopric let another take. ' "

Thus, again, is handed on after Calvary the divine Book that made up the Scriptures of the Old Testament, the book of the Law, the book of the Prophets, and the book of Psalms, which are the books, as I have said before, and wish yet to emphasize, the books of the Old Testament as we have them to-day.

Read now a verse in John 10, 34 : " Jesus answered them, ' Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?' If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken)." " What is the Bible?" An answer to that we are seeking to get to-night from the Book itself ; and while a master mind of men might be heard by us with appreciation, like the dying Sir Walter Scott—said he to his son-in-law, as he stood by his bedside, " Bring

me the book, my son." "Which book, father?" said the lad, and that master mind of men replied: "There is but one book, my son, bring me that—the Bible." I say, while we might hear such a thing as that with appreciation, and take that as a good and noble answer at such a time from such an one to the question, "What is the Bible?" we have higher, greater, more captivating words, as they fall from the lips of the Son of God Himself, answering to us to-night the question, "What is the Bible?" as here He speaks of the Scripture, telling that it came from God to men, that it is the Word of God, the word that has come from God and, moreover, a word that cannot be broken.

Turn now, please, to Heb. 10, 7: "Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the Book it is written of Me) to do Thy will, O God." In the volume of what book? There is but one Book that testifies of Him from first to last, and this Book, in the volume of which it is written so of Him, is none other than the Book for the understanding of which the blessed Lord, as we have seen, in resurrection morning, opened the understandings of them that loved Him and followed Him, even the Scriptures, expressed in the book of the Law, of the Prophets, and of the Psalms.

Turn with me now to the 1st Epistle by Peter 1, 10 (R.V.): "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow." The burden of the Old Testament Scriptures is "the sufferings of Christ and the glories that follow." Then, since the Christ has come, if the Scriptures of the New Testament be from God, they will be but the echo of, and in the happiest relationship to, the burden of the Old Testament Scriptures, which testified of a Christ to come, a Christ who, having come, would suffer, and a Christ who, having suffered, would have thereby glories to follow—glories that attach not themselves to the prophets and peoples of Old Testament Scriptures, but attach themselves to such as have the

gospel preached to them by the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven, "which things," this same Scripture says, "the angels desire to look into."

A verse from the 2nd Epistle by Peter, in connection with taking heed unto the prophetic word (and not only do we well to take heed thereunto, but we do well as we also take heed thereto until the day shine through and the light-bearing thereof arise in our hearts. How many children of God turn away from the prophetic word because of the wearisome and multifarious expositions that abound ; but God would not have us do so. He tells us we do well to take heed thereunto, until the light thereof shine through, and the day-star thereof arise in our hearts). 2 Peter 1, 20-21 : "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of private interpretation," or becometh its own solution. "For" (here is the reason) "no prophecy ever came by the will of man ; but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit." *

2 Peter 3. : "This second epistle, beloved, I write unto you ; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance : that ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of the Lord and Saviour through your apostles" (R.V.). Wherever you get prophets before apostles, carefully note, and you will see that these are prophets of Old Testament day, whereas when you get prophets following apostles, they are always prophets of New Testament times. These prophets, therefore, of whom Peter makes mention, are the prophets who wrote the pages of Scripture given in the Old Testament, and the apostles that are here spoken of, that gave the commandment of the Lord and Saviour, are the apostles of the New Testament Scriptures.

The whole chapter bears directly on our subject, but time forbids me reading it, and I therefore ask you to

*Not "holy men," as the Revisers will tell you. Indeed, Balaam was anything but a holy man, and yet, through him, God has uttered seven of the mightiest parables to be found in the Book of God, parables that, as I read, include all the other parables and revelations that God has been pleased to make in connection with prophetic truth of Old Testament Scripture.

go on with me to the 15th verse : “ And account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation ; even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you ; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things ; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the OTHER Scriptures, unto their own destruction.” Thus, Peter, as an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, instructs us to recognise those who communicated from the Lord His commandments, and he mentions Paul definitely, and puts his writings in the same circle as the *other* Scriptures, which Paul, indeed, claims for himself, as if you turn now to 1 Cor. 14 you will see. Verse 36 : “ What ! came the Word of God out from you ? or came it unto you only ? If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.” Here Paul is, like John in his writings, staying not to explain or argue, but contending with us in our conscience to receive such as commandments of the Lord, yea, as the Word of God through His servant Paul, these things that he is writing unto us, which are, as Peter says, on a par with the OTHER Scriptures.

Turn now to 2 Tim. 3, 13 : “ But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of *whom* thou hast learned them.” This word “ whom ” is in the plural (R.V. margin). It does not refer to God, as I heard a rather gifted man of God say within the last few days in public. “ Knowing of *whom* thou hast learned them,” is an allusion to the kind of persons of whom Timothy had learned these holy writings. It is a strange thing that the unbeliever should have so much weight with men. Paul here, in speaking to Timothy, and for our help and blessing, exhorts him to continue in the things that he had learned and had been assured of, knowing the kind of persons of whom he had learned these things, “ And that from a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make

thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

These holy Scriptures that from a child Timothy had known, were none other than the books of the Old Testament as we have them to-day, from Genesis to Malachi, these holy Scriptures that were able to make him wise, and us wise, unto salvation, "through faith in Christ Jesus." The Scriptures will not do this apart from Christ Jesus. They are designed to lead us to the living Son of God at God's right hand ; and one of the brightest evidences to the reality of the book being from God, outside of itself, and one of the strongest testimonies to the reality of the Christian religion that exists to-day that I know of is the day by day fulfilment by the living Son of God of that which He predicated of Himself, as in the Gospel by John only it is written, words from God that to-day by many are being cavilled at, and questioned, and rejected. In John 5 only the Lord Jesus is made to predicate of Himself, "The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God : and they that hear shall live" ; and these dead ones are men and women, and children, too, who by nature and practice are dead in trespasses and sins, and who, notwithstanding that, have, though dead, heard the voice of the living Son of God by the Scriptures, and they are alive to God in Christ Jesus. There are a hundred men in this room to-night, I doubt not, though I have not counted the number, sensible, sentient men, that would be accepted as credible witnesses among men anywhere, who are prepared to rise this moment in this meeting and testify :

" I heard the voice of Jesus say,
 ' Come unto Me and rest ;
 Lay down, thou weary one, lay down
 Thy head upon My breast ;' "

and who will further add, their eyes sparkling, and their faces shining, and their souls dancing within them :

" I came to Jesus as I was,
 Weary, and worn, and sad ;
 I found in Him a resting-place,
 And He doth make me glad !"

and yet, when you go outside the door and speak to a man whom you meet, and he pooh-poohs it, and because that he pooh-poohs it, you will dare to make light of it, even to question it, albeit a hundred men testify that they have experienced it.

It is not a feeling, it is not a theory, it is not a sentiment ; it is a real, living fact. If they know anything at all, they know they have passed out of death into life. Is it not so ? Of Himself the Lord Jesus thus did predicate, and He is proving every day in London that He is the life-speaking One, by the quickening of dead ones on every hand. See to it that ye be not left out, O unsaved hearers ! The Scriptures are designed by God to lead us to put faith in Christ Jesus, and there is no salvation possible, even from the Scriptures, apart from faith that is in Christ Jesus.

2 Tim. 3, 16 : " All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." The learned have quibbled about this. The Revisers have dared to tamper with it. Some of the arguments of the learned I might quote to you, but the glory of the gospel is this, that " to the poor the gospel is preached ;" and among the poor erudition and learning are seldom found, and the mysteries of God's book are given by God in such words as the poor can readily understand. And if I would mention any one at all, it would be as bright a scholar and perhaps as bright a Christian as the present generation or the past has seen, namely, the lamented Dr. Tregelles. He wrestled with the learned on this Scripture, and his sober, solemn conviction established with the learned is, that this text, as we have in the Authorised Version, is correct ; and while the Revisers will put in the authority in a different place, it is only trifling with the scepticism of the age, that, alas ! is increasing ; and for ourselves we take it as we have it here : " All Scripture is given by inspiration of God"—that is, " All Scripture is God-breathed ;" and so far as we have gone, the Book being witness for itself, this has been abundantly testified, whether in the words of Old Testament Scripture, or the words from the apostles of our Lord Jesus, or through His servant Paul, we have

seen that all Scripture is God-breathed. A beautiful word is this. I scarcely ever read it but I think of that scene spoken of in Genesis' early chapters, where we have Adam moulded and fashioned by his Creator God, and God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life ; and man became a living soul." The breathing of God made that clay to live, made him to stand up and to bow down and to worship his Creator and his Blessor. So is the Word of God. Let men allow this Word of God to pass through their souls, dead as they are, like unto Adam's yet unquickened clay, and His Word will make them to live. It has made thy fellows to live, many of whom are sitting beside thee, O unconverted, unsaved one, in this meeting to-night.

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God [is God-breathed], and is profitable for doctrine [that is, teaching], for reproof [that is, for conviction], for correction [that is, for setting right what is wrong], for instruction in righteousness : that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work. I charge thee therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom ; Preach the Word." What word? This expression, "Preach the Word," is like the Lord's expression, "In the volume of the Book it is written of Me." What word? He has spoken in verse 15 of Old Testament Scriptures ; He has spoken in verse 16 of New Testament Scriptures ; He has wedded them together for the complete furnishing unto every good work of the man of God ; and He climaxes the Old and the New as united thus together, with the command, "Preach the Word ; be instant in season, out of season ; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound [or, health-giving] 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."

"What is truth?" asked Pilate ; "and he went out."

We have sometimes felt constrained to say, "Would God he had waited, that the answer to his question

might have been given him and recorded for us, from the lips of the blessed Lord ;" but thanks be to God, though to Pilate the question was not answered, it was answered by the Lord Himself in His wondrous words given in chapter 17 of the Gospel by John, at which look for a moment.

Lose not sight, please, of what we have been reading in 2 Timothy 4, for we wish to connect the two together. Paul, in writing to Timothy here, has bidden him preach THE WORD, telling him that the time is coming when they will not endure sound doctrine, but shall have their ears turned away from THE TRUTH. Thus, there, the relation of the word to the truth, and the truth to the word is clear and absolute ; but I want to clench it by the words of the Lord Jesus given here.

John 17, 17 : " Sanctify them in the truth ; Thy word is truth." From what will they be turned away ? Says Paul, " They will be turned away from the truth, and in order that they may be kept in the truth, preach the Word." What is truth ? The Lord Jesus answers, " Thy Word is truth." Thus Paul, in his second letter to Timothy—one of the last he was permitted of God to write—echoes forth the Saviour's words, " Thy word is truth," namely, the holy Scriptures, the Scriptures of the Old Testament, the Scriptures of the New Testament.

To me it is deeply touching, as I go back again to John 19, and recognise that One in the midst, by this, to be indeed the Christ ; for what means the Lord by telling us so minutely about the lot at such a time ? Why was there fascination to the soldiers in the garment of the middle One, and not in the garments of the others, to arrest their attention ? That outer garment they look upon it and say, " It is all one, let us cast lots, let us not rend it, and let one of us get it whole as it is." Again ; why does He say to the thief, " This day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise ?" Why does the Lord speak to the thief in John 19 such things ? He has marks that lead us to Him, whereby we recognise in Him the very Christ of God ; for long before He appeared among men, in Isaiah 53, it was written,

“When Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin He shall **SEE** His seed.” He saw seed in the dying moments that His soul was an offering for sin. By that we know Him to be the Christ of God. Of the Christ it was also said that His garments should not be rent. Therefore thus these Roman soldiers did. They went forth and they brake the legs of that man and that man, but they brake not the legs of this One. And why? Hatred enough and delight enough they had in breaking the legs of those two—why are they restrained from this One? Because the Scriptures of God had said, “A bone of Him shall not be broken;” and yet, when they dared not break His bones, as though they must give vent to their enmity, and must spit forth their hatred against Him, a soldier took his spear and pierced His side, as if to say, “If I cannot break His bones I will break His skin,” “and forthwith there came out blood and water.” And why must he thus do? The Scripture had said, “They shall look on Him whom they pierced.” And what saith the closing book of the Word of God? What says the book of Revelation? Oh! to me it is deeply heart-moving as I read there in its opening words: “Behold, He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him, and they also who *pierced* Him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen.”

The last sight that the world had of Christ was on that tree with His body pierced and His bones unbroken, and His last cry in the ears of the world was the filling up of the Scriptures concerning Him at such a time, and God links on with His coming again, when every eye shall see Him, that very last Scripture fulfilled on Calvary’s tree; for, “Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also **WHO PIERCED HIM**: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen.” Thus shall God climax His holy Scriptures as being indeed the Word from Himself to men; thus shall God show, as it is written in John 10: “The Scripture cannot be broken.” Thus shall God show, as twice over is here repeated—once in John 17, 12, and once in Acts 1, 17—that solemn truth, “the Scriptures must be fulfilled,”

and that God should link on the writings of Old Testament Scriptures with the writings of the New Testament, and should link on the closing book of the Revelation given from God in the New Testament with the fulfilment of a prophetic word by the Lord Jesus Christ in His dying moments, is the binding together of this book from God as we have it, both old and new, and the answer to the question, "What is the Bible?" The book itself being allowed to be heard to speak that we may hear, testifies from first to last that this book which we call the Bible, which means "the Book," is from God to us, and that every particle of it must be filled up, no part of it can be broken; and in it God has not only told of many things that are yet to come, but in it God tells us of things that long, long ago were then yet to come, and which all have come about. Of those things that God foretold, in the days of Moses, for instance, all that have become ripe for fulfilment have been fulfilled. What is the meaning of that? What is the meaning, for example, of God opening the book of Daniel the prophet with a fulfilment of prophetic word? The very position that Daniel and his fellows were in was fulfilling a prophetic word by God through Jeremiah His prophet. Why did He thus begin? Is there not this clearly to be heard? "I spake ere these things came into being, that I would bring them into being. Learn from that, that I who am now going to tell you of things in a latter day yet to come, as I have done, so will I do."

How strange that men should only believe what their senses can grapple with. That Book stands or falls together. Men may not turn it into a lottery bag in which are to be found prizes and blanks. God help you if thus you treat His holy Scriptures. Every particle of it is from Himself, and God wants us to see in the use His holy One made of the Old Testament, that they stand or fall together, and to quote a part is to acknowledge the whole, as to acknowledge the whole is only, after all, the expressing of its many parts.

Thus may God give us each to hear, and to understand, and to value aright what the Bible is, and to

handle it reverently ; for are there not here to-night young men, Christians, who are specially liable to the seductive heresies that are abounding in these days ? Yonder in Greenock a great man from America recently was—(I hear he was in London ; God give repentance to His saints that entered the place in which he was allowed to speak !)—and in Greenock he spoke, with well-known Christian men on the platform beside him ; he spoke of that blessed book as being “ the noble old Jewish book ” ; and, as I said to some others afterwards, “ Just turn the sentence the other way, that book of the noble old Jew,” whereas that book says it is the outcome of one God, whose book it is, and from one God ; and yet a man unchallenged and encouraged is allowed to go by, saying thus of the book, “ The noble old Jewish book ! ”

Beloved, take care how you allow this Book to be spoken of, and handled, and used, knowing this, that, according to the words of Old Testament Scripture, you are permitted of God to read the very words on which the eyes of the Son of God, when upon earth, delighted to look, the words that the Son of God delighted to read, the words that the Son of God delighted to speak of, and to preach to those to whom He could, and tell me if this does not lend interest unto your valuing the Scriptures as yet you have never done, besides appreciating them and contending for them as being from God to us. May we have more and more in us wrought by Him that spirit that stands in awe of His word, and that trembles thereat. May we have our life in all its ways regulated thereby, and show forth, wherever we may be, that we esteem the Bible to be indeed “ The Word of God.”

May 1925.

P.S.—Another has well said :—

“ The original Scriptures have God for their Author,
Truth without mixture of error for their matter,
And Salvation for their end.”

HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE.

3 TRUST, with the grace of God, He will accept of our coming together to-day as an expression of the desire of our heart, "Oh! how love I Thy law."

I am sure as the spiritual one looks around here this afternoon, there is much to make one's heart glad, to see God's people gathered thus together at much personal inconvenience to many, that they might learn somewhat more how to study the wondrous Book that God has given us to peruse, that we may know Him, and enter with appreciation into these Scriptures of truth He has revealed for our present comfort and our eternal weal.

It has been well said in regard to the works of God, that the eye only sees, and the mind only appreciates, according to the power and measure that it brings with it, and what has been so well said of God's works, may be fittingly applied to God's word.

We only see, and we only appreciate, according to the ability we possess to discern and to take in. You know the reason why the unconverted find so much in the book of God to find fault with, is because of what he is as a natural man; as exemplified by the wasp and the bee that alight on the same flower for their own sustenance and their own purposes. What the wasp takes from the flower, he doth 'but convert into

poisonous venom, wherewith to do that which only he is capable of doing, whereas the bee converts that which she has taken from that same flower into that which sustains herself and is meat to mankind. So is it with the unconverted man and the child of God ; where the natural man only gathers that which is like the venom of the wasp's sting, the child of God gets that which he converts into honey for himself, and to share with others to their blessing.

I wish to read three Scriptures first to show how deeply we need the Bible as the children of God.

1 Peter 2, 2 : " As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby unto salvation." These two words, " unto salvation," found in the Revised Version, are in the Word of God as He gave it to us, therefore see how truly we who have been born again need the Bible, because it is only therein we can grow unto salvation, as God has designed we should grow, being His children.

2 Timothy 3, 16 : " All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness : that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work."

No Christian can be furnished unto every good work, as God designs we should be furnished, save as he is furnished by every word from God given in the entire Scriptures.

Romans 15, 4 : " For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning " (that is, for our use in teaching), " that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope." This verse informs us from God that every word of Old Testament Scripture was written with the direct view of our being comforted, and our being made patient, as God would have us to be comforted and patient unto pleasing Him and being profitable to Him and to all affectable by us in our sojourn here below.

These three Scriptures I have read for the purpose of showing how deeply we need the Bible, and how becoming it is to us therefore assiduously to study the Bible ; and if by our coming together we can be helped to know how to do it, then the end that God has in view in giving us the Scriptures will be the more speedily attained by us, and the same truly become our enjoyed possession.

I ask you now to read with me in John 14, 26 : “ But the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” In seeking to study the Bible, we should, as children of God, in faith in our living Lord Jesus, count upon fulfilment of this gracious promise of His, that the Holy Spirit would teach us all things ; but mark, the teaching of the Holy Spirit will be like unto the teaching of the Lord Jesus Himself, while on earth with His beloved disciples, that is to say, He taught them as they were able to hear, and he taught them as they were able to bear. So shall the teaching of us by the Holy Spirit be according as we are able to hear, and according as we are able to bear.

But further, please notice well, the unfailing remedy for a bad memory. “ He shall bring again to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you.”

In studying the Bible, covet above all things to hear the voice of the Lord Jesus to yourself, for whatsoever He has said to us, in the hour of our need the blessed operation of the Holy Spirit, bringing that word again to our remembrance, shall be our happy experience, in difficulty—as it was of Nehemiah for example, when he came in, bearing the king's cup, and the king saw from his countenance that something ailed his cup-bearer, and he said, “ That sorrow is sorrow of heart ; what is wrong ?” And ere he opened his mouth he lifted his heart in prayer to his God, and thereupon came to him words that God before had spoken to him, in the which, repeating to the king, he found acceptance. So shall it be with us ; as we hear, let us commit to the Lord

for us, with the prayer : " When again the same we need, O Lord, be pleased to bring again to our remembrance that word Thou hast spoken to us ;" and this, whether it be words for ourselves directly, or words through us to those whose help and blessing to the glory and in the will of God we may seek.

1 Cor. 2, 11. " For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so, the things of God no one has known, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God ; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." Therefore, to study the Bible is a comely thing on the part of every child of God, for God has given His Bible to reveal these things that He would have us to possess and enjoy, and respond unto ; and not only has He given us the Bible, but He has given us the Holy Spirit in order that we might *know* these things that are freely given of Him to us.

" Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual ones." Therefore, in the study of the Bible, we are not only to count upon, and directly to seek in believing prayer, the direct help and guidance of the Holy Spirit into all the mind of God, but in our gathering of the mind of God in such fellowship with the Spirit, we are to prove our conclusions by " comparing spiritual things with spiritual men," or " comparing spiritual things with spiritual ones." That is the force of the word in 2 Timothy : " Knowing of whom, of what manner of persons ye have learned these things, and have been assured of."

The Bible itself has many component parts, and, in the study of the Bible, an apprehension of these component parts must be a help ; and because it is such a help I judge the Lord has spoken as He has in Psalm 19—a Psalm that puts the works of God and the word of God in most happy contrast. I will not speak of the works as they are enumerated in the first six verses,

but ask your earnest attention to the six component parts of the Bible as given us here from God in this Psalm. "The law of Jehovah is perfect, converting the soul." The word "law" is from a verb meaning "to point out," and it covers, in a general sense, the entire revelation of God. The word "law" means "the pointings out of God," and wherever in the Scriptures you have the pointings out of God, therein you have the law of God ; and these pointings out of God are perfect, and their work is to turn the soul to God.

"The testimony of Jehovah is sure, making wise the simple one." The testimony of Jehovah, a component part of the Bible, is the witness-bearing of God as to whom and what He approves, and in contradistinction thereto, as to whom and what He disapproves. His testimony is His witness-bearing. For example :—The law of the Lord says that transgression against the will of God brings death. The testimony of that pointing out from God is, as in the Epistle by Jude, for example,—“He hath set forth Sodom and Gomorrah, an example, suffering the justice (not vengeance) of eternal fire.” There is the testimony of the Lord to His truth—the witness-bearing. That is the word “testimony.”

Then, verse 8 : “The statutes of Jehovah are right, rejoicing the heart.” The difference betwixt this one and the two that we have looked at is, statutes are the directing of the master to the servant. They look upon the immutable decrees of Jehovah, His directions for His servants to carry out, and he who would be a servant acceptable, finds, in his master’s directions, that which rejoices his heart. His rejoicing as a servant is not found in the issue or work accomplished by his message ; his rejoicing of heart is found in this, that he is doing what his master bade him.

Let those who seek to serve the Lord mark this well, now. “The commandment of Jehovah is pure, enlightening the eyes.” That is, the especial word from God tells me what I am to do as being His. His commandments affect me in every sphere and way of

daily life, and to help some to catch the thought in the word "commandment" as contrasted with the word "statutes," look for a moment in Proverbs 6, 20 : " My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother : bind them continually upon thine heart, tie them about thy neck. When thou goest, it shall lead thee" (that is, the commandment) ; " when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee ; and when thou wakest, it shall talk with thee. For the commandment is a lamp" (*or*, candle) ; " and the law is light ; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life." The commandment, you see, affects us when we are awake, when we are asleep, and when we are awake again ; it just tells us how to go on. In this is the commandment a candle, by which to take step by step ; for candles do not give a brilliant light.

Verse 9 : " The fear of Jehovah is clean, enduring for ever." And the fear of Jehovah, which is a component part of the Bible, teaches us as Psalm 34, 11-14 tells us, to walk humbly with our God, taking heed to the use we make of our tongue, and seeing that in our heart and lips there is indeed no guile ; and thus shall we, walking in the fear of the Lord, see and possess good days.

Then the sixth component part of the word of God is the last half of verse 9 : " The judgments of Jehovah are true and righteous altogether." That is the revelation of God as to what is right and what is wrong. His judgments tell us what is right and what is wrong, and they are true and righteous altogether. " More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold ; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is Thy servant warned : and in keeping of them there is great reward. Who can understand errors?" (no word " his"). " Who can understand errors? Cleanse Thou me from secret ones." For all the errors that are abroad are based in lesser or greater part on the word of God. Therefore the wonder here is raised, " Who can understand errors?" Yea, he who studies the Bible so that he will find out, not only " the pointings out of Jehovah,"

but will mark well "the testimony, the witness-bearing of Jehovah," as to whom and what He approves, and as to whom and what He disapproves ; who shall read in the Word of God to find "the statutes of the Lord," His directions to His servants ; who shall search in the Bible to find "the commandment of the Lord" that directly affects him in each hour of every day ; to know "the fear of Jehovah" ; to find in it "the judgments of Jehovah" : he is the one who shall indeed find that Word to be of greater value to him than gold, and of greater sweetness to him than are even the droppings of the honeycomb.

Now I ask you to turn to the book of Daniel the prophet, where God is pleased to give us a look at, and an account of, a student of His holy Word, from whom we shall learn indeed, if we listen to the Lord ; and that shall help us to know how to study the Bible so that in and by our study we shall have delight and real profit.

Daniel 9. : "In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans ; in the first year of his reign, I Daniel understood by the books the number of the years, whereof the word of Jehovah came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth and ashes."

To me there is intense interest in this introduction as to what Daniel did in his study of the Word of God. He did it when already he was well grown in years, and though he had grown to be the man of age that he was in the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus the Mede, still his delight was to be a student of the Word of God ; and as a student of the Word of God, he set his face to understand the will of the Lord ; he set his face to make his prayer unto the Lord, that he might get understanding aright therein.

If you ask, "How am I to study the Bible?" then learn from the Bible that you must be in earnest, you

must set yourself, you must set yourself by prayer and diligent looking at it. He set his face ; a thing upon which he wanted to look ; a thing into which he wanted to gaze ; and he is heard to cry as he looked towards his God, " Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold the wondrous things out of Thy law." For Daniel in this 9th chapter is, for himself, in the same position as the Apostle Paul was for others, as we read in chapter 1 of the Epistle to Ephesus, where he bowed his knees in prayer in order that the eyes of the heart of those of whom he spoke to God might be enlightened, that with their eyes enlightened they might know what was the hope of God's calling of them ; what was the riches of the glory of God's inheritance in the saints ; and what the exceeding greatness of God's power was to them as believers.

So with Daniel : he set his face and his heart to his God that he might know and that he might understand. But read on ; verse 13 : " As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us ; yet made we not our prayer before Jehovah our God, that we might turn from our iniquities and understand Thy truth." There is no real study of the Bible to profit possible apart from prayer, nor apart from holiness in life behaviour.

The understanding of God's truth is linked on here, no more with prayer, and yet no less with prayer than it is with turning from our iniquities. How to study the Bible ? We will have to be diligent and careful to see that we are godly in our manner of life, so that in prayer to God there is honesty in His estimate of our desire to know His mind ; for we want to know it that we may grow therein unto salvation ; and so shall we make our prayer to Him for His especial help, and we shall be diligent and jealous for ourselves to turn from our iniquities, and so shall we understand His truth. The turning (I repeat) from our iniquities to understand the truth is of the deepest, utmost importance.

Before we turn to the book of Ezra we might gather up thus far what we have seen.

We are to study the Bible in the light of believing the Lord's promise, that the Holy Spirit will teach us all things ; that the Holy Spirit will teach us as He taught His beloved disciples, that is, according as we are able to hear, and according as we are able to bear. Then in our learning thus, each one for ourselves learning His pointings out, His testimonies, His statutes, His commandments, His fear, His judgments ; to prove our learning, our conclusions, we are to compare them with spiritual ones ; and thus, in fellowship with spiritual ones, be confirmed or corrected by the word of the Lord, and thus shall we experience the fulfilment of that proverb that says, " Two are better than one." And having compared with spiritual ones our own conclusions, then we are to go on diligently seeing to it that we turn from our iniquities and continue in prayer to God, and thus seek to know His holy mind as He would have us know it from the Bible.

And now we come to another example from God as to how to study the Bible. Of course it goes without saying that since God so abundantly granted to Daniel understanding of His truth, the way in which Daniel studied the word of God was highly acceptable to God, as it was deeply profitable to Daniel ; and thus from Daniel we learn how acceptably to study the Bible ; and if, like him, thus we do, so, like him, we may conclude, shall God grant to us a large understanding indeed of His holy mind and will. So with Ezra, chap. 7, 10 : " For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of Jehovah."

How to study the Bible? It will have to be heart work, beloved. And there is no fear of the head if the heart, in love to God, is seeking, having prepared itself, to know the mind of the Lord. Depend upon it, the heart will captivate the head, the heart will captivate the hands, and our thoughts, and our walk ; and our thoughts being in accord with the heart which is learning the will of God from the Word, will all alike be acceptable to Him and profitable to ourselves, now and in the day of Christ, and a blessing will accrue to every

soul that is affectable by us through our thoughts, through our walk and through our works.

Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of Jehovah. It is said by travellers that the waters of the Nile are so deliciously sweet that those who live in that eastern land actually take salt in order to create thirst, that they may have the pleasure of drinking the delicious waters of the Nile. What is the truth of God's word? Is it not salt? And God means that all the truth of His Book shall but create in us greater thirst for more of these delicious waters, the living oracles of the living God, that are indeed appreciable to him who with set face and with prepared heart seeks to know them. He finds them not only, as we have said, of more value than gold, but sweeter than honey. And thus he goes on before God, like Ezra, who not only prepared his heart to seek the law of Jehovah, but he prepared his heart "to do it." How to study the Bible? As we learn it, we must, in our measure, seek honestly to obey it; for it is only as we obey we are fit to go on learning.

Nay, more. Whose need was met by the blessed Lord when he tabernacled among men? Those who, conscious of their need, came to Him for it to be met.

To whom will the Lord reveal His mind and will? To whom, but to them who feel their need of it, and who, in their need, come to Him in faith; and as surely as need and faith were ever by Him satisfied when He tabernacled among men, so surely will need and faith be satisfied, if we come to Him, desiring to know His mind, that we may do it.

Not only that—How to study the Bible? We are not only to study it with prepared heart in order that we may have the joy of doing it, but like Ezra, who prepared his heart, not only to seek the law and to do it, but also "to teach"; so, as we study, as we learn, we are, as far as to us is possible, to be diligent in teaching what we learn. The woman in her private sphere, the man in his private and in his public sphere alike. All of us who have studied the Bible, who know the mind of God in any measure, firstly, are

responsible to do it ourselves, and secondly, are responsible to teach it to others, so far as access to others we have ; and indeed, what is the experience of those who study the Bible? They find that as they give to others, in order to continue able to give to others, they must needs come back to this never-failing treasury, that is full with boundless stores of grace and truth ; and thus, as we are diligently scattering abroad, our scattering, while it may seem to impoverish us, will bring us back to the great fountain head ; and thus, in our study of the Bible, as we do it and teach it, we shall have the fulfilment of that Scripture which says, " There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth " : while, if we learn, yea, and even do, yet teach not, we shall experience in our study of the Bible, " There is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to poverty." Let us then, each one, see how to study the Bible. We are to study it, not only to know, that we ourselves may do it, but to study thus to know it, and thus to do it, that we may be able, with acceptance, to teach it to others, that they too, knowing the mind of God, may do it. Thus shall they and we together fulfil that word of the Lord, " Be ye imitators of Christ ;" for of Him in Acts 1 it is written, " All things that Jesus began to do and to teach." " Both to do and to teach."

Brethren, are we doers of the word? Thank God. Are we teachers of the word? Then God help us to see, if we are not, we ought to be. How terribly little of aggression there is on the part of the people of God who are somewhat instructed in the mind of God. Looking round and seeing so many fellow-saints in associations and ways that are so unscriptural, that are so positively hurtful to the child of God, I say, how lamentably little is being done for the deliverance of such. We are to study it, seeking to do it, but know that this is not all. Not only to do it, but to teach it, and thus aggressive, whether in a tramcar, in a railway carriage, or in the street, or visiting each other's homes, or Christians' houses, we are to be diligent to make each other to know the mind of the Lord ; their doing it is their business, but to teach it to them is certainly ours.

Another thing I will add as to how to study the Bible. I remember, as a young Christian, attending meetings like these, and I often left them with this thought as in my own closet I would say, "Father, Thou knowest I have some little heart to do Thy holy will, I want to please Thee. Would God I knew how to." A little from my own experience will help the younger ones. I learned this: What am I? Am I a child in my parents' home? Then, how to study the Bible? Come to it as a child; see what children ought to be and ought to do as God has revealed His holy mind in the matter of children. Am I a parent? Then come to the Book of God and see what God says the father is to be and to do as a father. Come to the Book of God and see what the mother is to be and to do as a mother? Come to the Book of God to see how parents ought to deport themselves as parents. Am I a servant? Come to the Scriptures and learn how God has said a servant ought to deport himself or herself, and thus seek to behave myself as a servant. Am I a master? Come to the Scriptures and see what God has said about masters. Get every word of God that bears on the master, and hear Him speaking to me, then seek to practise and to live them out to His glory and pleasing. And thus through all the spheres of life.

How [to study the Bible to real profit is: Firstly, study it for yourself and myself in every relationship of life; study it in fellowship with God, as we have seen; study it as that which you cannot get on without; study it as that which is needful—more needful than your necessary food; for while it may not be necessary that you and I should live, it is *solemnly* necessary that while we live we be obedient to the will of the Lord Christ concerning us every moment of every hour that He privileges us to pass on earth, ere we rest with Him in the coming glory. Thus it is that the Word should be esteemed by us, as it is written in the book of Job, more than our necessary food, and thus, Jeremiah like, we shall be diligent to find the words of God, and finding, to eat them; and so will they be to us the joy and rejoicing of our heart.

Sometimes they will be that, and sometimes they will be what Ezekiel said, "I did eat it as He bade me. It was sweet in my mouth, but in my inwards, oh! what bitterness." Let us not mistake in our study and learning of the Bible, for albeit in the mouth it is bitter, eat it up; in the inwards it will be sweet: and while we are more apt to take what in the mouth is sweet, don't think you make a mistake because, when it gets to the inwards, it is very bitter. Let its bitterness grapple with you in your whole manner of life; in your world relationships; in your church behaviour. Don't think it is not of God, because it is bitter; for that which is bitter in the belly is sweet in the mouth, and that which is bitter in the mouth is sweet in the belly.

Thus doth our God seek our blessing, and seek our comfort, and thus shall He get His glory, as we study His precious Book, for ourselves firstly; and then from ourselves shall be fulfilled that Scripture which says, "Cast thy bread upon the waters, for after many days thou shalt find it." Yes, beloved, the word that you and I are scattering by our speaking, by our manner of life, we may have to eat it all again.

The bread we eat to-day is, in regard to a portion of it, the harvest of some former sowings of ours.

God help us to sow, so that in all our scattering, whether by speech or by action, we be only scattering the precious Word of God, the giving, as it is in the Word of God, the holy will of God, in heart obedience thereto; for in all the days that follow the days of that scattering we shall find our bread again, and eat it with delight, as we get again the fruit of our own labours.

Thus may God add His perfecting blessing to our endeavour to show from His Word, "how to study the Bible" to His glory and our eternal profit.

APPENDIX.

Since the foregoing was first published much has happened that reasonably has raised the query, "Which, or What is the Bible?" Notwithstanding such, the answer is plain and satisfying. To the fully-informed this is abundantly certain. The pros and cons that lead to such "Scripture of truth" (see Daniel 10, 21 very carefully). "Thy Word is Truth," John 17. The "all God-breathed" that maketh wise unto salvation (pause and consider salvation—From whom and what? into salvation—To whom and what?) through faith (Romans 10, 17-18) which is in Christ Jesus. Those pros and cons are accessible to him who would walk around Zion. Mark well her bulwarks, and tell her towers and consider her palaces. Whose God is ours for ever, and our Guide across death. To many, reasons not a few make such more or less difficult. Wherefore we add—How to study the Bible as being indeed such. Let the born-again student in whom is the Holy Spirit of Promise (comp. John 7, 39, chap. 16, 13, Acts 13, 27, with Eph. 4, 21, Heb. 5, 12-14); let, we say, such student take the Authorised Version as well known, the Revised Version of 1881, and the genuine edition by Thomas Newbury, published by S. Bagster & Sons, London, he will then have data that give him the Bible indeed. Moreover, this student will find that the relative value and importance of these three we have named to the many others by individual scholars, or those in joint labours, are each and all more or less coloured by the individual bias of either their theological, ecclesiastical, or personal beliefs, whereas that by King James's revisers (the Authorised Version) was as probably perfect as material within their reach made possible.

But since then much (oh, how very much!) has been given to men unto knowing in very deed "the Sacred Writings." When one thinks of how the learned Dr Tischendorff published no fewer than *eight* successive translations of the New Testament in order that the

truth might be assured, surely felt-gratitude to God for such kindnesses must possess the heart. Yet, he is only one of many. The combined labours and research of such are well gathered into the Revised Version of 1881.

Then Mr Newbury, by his marking out the especial precisions of the languages of the Old Testament and the New, puts the ordinary English reader in the possession of materials which the most careful, critical student can command. Nay, most eminent authority testifies of Mr Newbury's work as : " It will, I think, enable the English reader thoroughly to understand the original, and places him as near as possible to that of a Hebrew scholar." While Mr T. Newbury himself encouragingly and truthfully says : His labour's prominent features " Lead the attentive reader on, almost imperceptibly, into an acquaintance with the elements of the Hebrew language," and are intended to place the English reader in a position as near as possible to that of a Hebrew scholar, being a fac-simile of the Hebrew Scriptures in English.

Of the New Testament prepositions
he observes : " The Greek prepositions express
" exact

" geometrical relationship, and are mathematically
" precise."

The secondary meanings are evolved by regular laws from the primary. His closing sentence is weighty as it is solemn :

" An arbitrary change of prepositions, therefore,
" is to be carefully avoided, and is FATAL to
" exact interpretation."

Which witnessing is true.

JOHN BROWN.

May 1925.

Immortality, Not The Synonym of Eternal Life.

THE subject, as we have named it, is, “Immortality, not the Synonym of Eternal Life.” The word, synonym, simply means “the same as.” For example, “here” and “there” are not synonyms, because “here” means in this place, and “there” means in that place; therefore “here” and “there” are not synonyms. Similarly, immortality does not mean the same as eternal life. Eternal life is as different from immortality, as “there” is from “here;” or as different, if you like, as “yes” is from “no.” Yes and no are not synonyms, no more are immortality and eternal life.

Those who write and talk most in these days about immortality, usually speak in this fashion, they say: “If immortality be the natural attribute of every son of Adam from the very moment he breathes, what can be the meaning of such testimony as this” One and all of which speak of immortality as a future contingency, a thing to be sought for, a reward, a thing to be given, a thing brought to light through the gospel! How can you promise a man that which is already his own? In which questions, they make immortality the the same as eternal life, and thus, making the one to express the other (which God never does), they raise a structure, which, because it has a false foundation, is rotten from foundation to summit, and from centre to circumference.

These statements, or questions, are chiefly founded on two mis-translated texts of the ordinary Authorised Version of the English Bible ; namely, Romans 2. 7, where we read : " Who will render to every man according to his deeds : to them who by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life." The word "immortality" here, which has been caught at by the teachers of the destructive heresies that abound in our time, is a mis-translation of the word that God here uses, as in the Revised Version you will see the word is not "immortality," but "incorruption."

The other mis-translated verse that has been caught at, you find in 2 Tim. 1. 10 : " But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, Who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light, through the gospel." The word "immortality" is again a mis-translation of the word that God uses, and here, as in Romans 2, the word is incorruption, and so the Revised Version correctly reads.

The true word for immortality only occurs three times in the entire New Testament.

Fain would I stop to look at the questions raised by these teachers of destructive heresies, with an extract from whose writings I began, but time quite forbids it ; all I ask is that you will ponder their imposing words in the light of the two mis-translated texts, and the fact that the true word for immortality only occurs three times in the entire New testament.

The word "immortality" in itself simply means "Non-liability to death." Death, in the Scriptures, as applied to man, never means ceasing to exist. For "Man dieth and wasteth away : yea, man giveth up the ghost, but WHERE IS HE?" He is somewhere. He who was in the body, who has passed hence, is somewhere : and he is somewhere, because man, AS MAN, in God, lives, moves, and is, as Acts 17. 28 shows. "For, in Him we live, and move, and are." That is a statement concerning man, as man. And because man, in God, lives, and moves, and is, no man shall ever cease

to be, until God is not ; and the doctrine of the annihilation of man, the creature, is an arch attempt of Satan to undermine men's belief in the very existence of God, the Creator.

Some of these teachers of destructive heresies—most of them indeed—write and speak thus : “ It is perfectly true that God said to Adam, ‘ In the day that thou eatest thereof, dying, thou shalt die,’ and if you read your Bible,” they say, “ you will find that ‘ One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and if still you read your Bible you will find that Adam died before he had lived a thousand years, that is to say, he never lived a thousand years, he died inside a day with the Lord ;” that seems very logical, does it not ? “ In the day that thou eatest thereof, dying, thou shalt die.” “ One day is with the Lord as a thousand years.” Adam did not live a thousand years, and therefore he died in the day that he ate of the forbidden fruit. Isn't that very logical? It is very unscriptural, however, for if you turn with me to Genesis 5 5, you will hear what God says about Adam's dying. “ And all the DAYS that Adam lived were 930 *years*; and he died.” In the DAY that thou eatest thereof, dying, thou shalt die,” and “ All the DAYS that Adam lived were 930 *years*.” From which, he who listens to God is made to understand that, in the very moment of the day of the year, in which Adam partook of that forbidden fruit, that moment, dying, he died. He became dead, in God's use of the word, dead, as expressing the condition and position of a perishing soul, of a sin-wrecked being, yet he did not cease to be, nor has he ceased to be ; since Adam, in contrast with the beast, had the breath of Jehovah God breathed into his nostrils, by the which he became a living soul. The beast God created a living soul by the word of his power, but man was made to become a living soul, through the breath of Jehovah God being breathed into his nostrils. And herein lies the great constituent difference betwixt man and beast. The beast dies and is not ; man dies, and yet is ; for, in God, man lives, moves, and is ; and, in God, the beast is not.

The word "soul" is most tempting to me when speaking on such a subject as we have before us to-night, but time quite precludes my attempting to speak of it. I only repeat what I have elsewhere said, that the word "soul," both in the Old and New Testament, is used by God in a fourfold sense. Beware, then, of those who handle the word of truth in connection with "soul" that they mislead you not by mixing up and confusing one with another of these four distinctive uses that God makes, both in the Old and New Testament, of the word soul. And let me add: The word "soul" does not express the same truth as the word "living soul;" and soul, amid its fourfold uses, is ever kept distinctively from the beast as being an inherent, constituent part of man, as man, who has in him beside the soul, a spirit, whereby he is, having spirit, and soul, and body, a living soul, and sometimes is only spoken of as being a soul, that is, a person.

Some people are helped by contrasts, and I want to look at, firstly, the opposite of the word, immortality, before looking at the word itself. Turn with me to Romans 6. 12: "Let not sin, therefore, reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey the lusts thereof."

Romans 8. 11: "But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by" or (as the margin says), "because of His Spirit that dwelleth in you."

1 Cor. 15. 53-54: "And this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality."

2 Cor. 4. 11: "For we who live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be manifest in our mortal flesh."

2 Cor. 5. 4: "For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality" (the same word as we have seen elsewhere five times over translated mortal); "that the mortal might be swallowed up of life."

These six Scriptures, in which you have the word mortal, give you the opposite of the word, immortality, in each of which to the simplest reader, the meaning is evident and plain, that the mortal body and the mortal flesh is no other body than the body in which we now are, which is liable to death, and as liable to death, is a mortal body.

Immortality, as we have said, is the opposite of this, and means, non-liability to death. As for its three occurrences, look with me now at 1 Cor. 15. 53-54 : "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, 'Death is swallowed up in [rather unto] victory.'"

That gives us two out of the three occurrences in the New Testament. The other one is in 1 Tim. 6. 14 : "Keep the commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ ; which in His times He shall show the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords," Who is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ, as the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ twice tells us, and of Whom here, in verse 16, it is affirmed "Who only hath immortality ; Who dwelleth in light unapproachable ; Whom no man hath seen nor can see ; to Whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen."

Thus in 1 Cor. 15. we have the word, immortality, twice connected with mortal ones ; and in 1 Tim. 6. we have it connected directly with the Blessed Lord Jesus Christ Himself. The word, mortal, in the Scriptures, is ever only used by God to bespeak or to describe a condition of the body. The word, mortal, neither touches the spirit nor the soul of man. The word, mortal never grapples with the person, who is in the body. The word, mortal, is only used to bespeak body condition. So the word immortality, its blessed opposite, is ever only in the Scriptures used by God to describe, to bespeak a condition of body. The word immortality, too, does not look at the spirit, nor the soul of man ; it de-

scribes not the man who is in the body, but like its opposite, the word mortal, is ever only used by God to bespeak a body condition. I am indeed most careful to lay this in your spirit, in your understanding, on your heart, on your conscience, with such a definiteness of statement that no one here present may readily mistake that which I am seeking to utter.

1 Cor. 15. 51 : " Behold I show you a mystery ; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, for the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed "—the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we, we shall be changed— " For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." See, the dead in Christ, who are raised by the Lord Jesus Christ in His coming as Son of God, will not get immortality ; the dead in Christ will get incorruptibility ? And, pray, what is the word incorruptibility ? This word, like the word immortality, is used by God to bespeak condition of body, concerning those who have been put to sleep through Jesus ; concerning such as are dead in Christ. The word incorruption or incorruptibility, which is the correlative of the word immortality, bespeaks the condition of body which the dead in Christ shall get when the Lord Jesus shall come and shout them out from among the dead, and take them up with the living, who in mortal bodies shall get immortality, and shall go up, the dead and living in Christ, to Him, to be for ever with, and like the Lord. But see, the body that the dead in Christ have is a corruptible body ; the body that the dead in Christ will get, when they are raised by the Lord in His coming as Son of God, will be an incorruptible body. Therefore these words, corruptible and incorruptible, in 1 Cor. 15. only describe the condition of the body of the departed and glorified saint. As you look at them in the time that now is (ere He comes, Who shall come and tarry not), as to their bodies, they are corruptible ; when He shall come, as to their bodies they will get incorruptibility, their bodies shall be raised in incorruption.

The living in Christ will not get incorruptibility or incorruption. The living in Christ, in contrast with the dead, will get what 1 Cor. 15. twice over tells us, they will get immortality ; for immortality is the word that God chooses to describe the body condition of those caught up alive without death in the coming of the Lord Jesus, of such as are in Christ when He shall come as Son of God.

But then you say, the Lord Jesus died, and if the word, immortality, only bespeaks a body condition, how does it come about? If the word immortality has nothing at all to do with the spirit or soul of man, nothing at all to do with the continuance of existence of the person in the body ; what about the Lord Jesus "Who only hath immortality"? He died, and you have said that the dead in Christ never get immortality. The dead in Christ get incorruptibility. You have said that the living only get immortality. How then has the Lord Jesus immortality?

Immortality here spoken in connection with the Lord Jesus is a word that God uses to describe the condition of body which He, the glorified coming Son of God, has. He died. He died at the hand of man and God. He was buried, but though He died and was buried, yet God suffered not His holy One to see corruption ; and had the Lord's body seen corruption, He had never had immortality.* We speak firmly and plainly, not to dogmatise or to dominate faith, but to express our earnest conviction on the clear simplicity of the truth from God, which by manifesting, we trust we commend ourselves to every man's conscience that we speak the truth in Christ and lie not ; that we speak the truth from God, not handling the Word of God deceitfully.

Have you been able to follow thus simply, thus closely, that you see He only *has* immortality. The word, immortality, has nothing at all to do with the existence of God, as the Scriptures speak ; nothing at all to do with the existence of angels, as the Scriptures speak ; nothing

* The Lord Jesus Christ is said to BE incorruptible (1 Tim. 1. 17, R.V.) and to HAVE immortality.

at all to do with the existence of the Devil, as the Scriptures speak ; nothing at all to do with the existence of demons, as the Scriptures speak ; nothing at all to do with the existence of man, whether saved man or lost man ; nothing at all to do with his existence as man. The word, immortality, only found thrice in the Scriptures, is ever by God used most distinctly of a body condition.

And the saint will naturally ask, When the Lord Jesus comes as Son of God, and loved ones gone before are raised, and we are caught up with them, who have immortality given us because we are alive, He having come, what will the difference betwixt us be? None. No difference. Would you then say that all the glorified have corruption or incorruptibility, would you then say that all the glorified have immortality? No, for immortality and incorruptibility, as God speaks, only bespeak a body condition at that moment, and beyond that moment, in fellowship with God, we dare not go to bespeak a condition. This we know, that they, who are caught up in incorruptibility, and we, who are caught up in immortality, when we see Him shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

Immortality, thus we hold, and hold to have shown, has a definite meaning confined to itself, and that, to express body condition. That it never means eternal life ; that it is not synonymous with eternal life—you remember, that a non-synonym expresses the difference of yes and no, the difference of here and there. That immortality is as different from eternal life as yes is from no, we go on now to show.

All in Christ, whether it be the departed or the yet alive, have eternal life. Shall I need to turn up Scriptures to prove that we have it? A Scripture or two may help some. Who does not recall the last verse of John 3.: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." John 5. 39: "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think to have eternal life, and they are they which testify of Me." John 6. 53: "Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you ; except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth

My flesh and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life and I will raise him up in the last day." 1 John 5. 12, 13 : "He that hath the Son hath the life." Who have the Son? John 1 12 : "To as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the children of God, even to them who believe on His name." "He that hath the Son, hath the life. He that hath not the Son of God, hath not the life." (The Revised Version will show you so.) "These things have I written unto you." (I shall read here the Revised Version, as it is much the clearer)—13th verse : "These things have I written unto you, that ye may KNOW that ye HAVE eternal life, unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God." There are scores here to-night who indeed believe on the name of the Son of God ; who indeed believe on the Son of God ; and we have to-night the gift of God given to us as believers on His Son ; we have to-night eternal life.

I have two loved sisters gone before. In their days of life, as in their hours of dying time, it was their brightest testimony, their possession of the gift of God to them, which is eternal life. Yet these loved ones now with the Lord, now gone to be with Christ, who have eternal life, will never get immortality. Never ! Never ! For the dead in Christ get not immortality ; the dead in Christ get incorruptibility, when He comes for His loved and His own.

Eternal life I have as a believer on the Lord Jesus Christ. Immortality I may get. Immortality I shall only get if the Lord Jesus comes while I am in mortal body. If out of mortal body, in the will of God I am then, I shall never get immortality. But come what may, change what will, eternal life which I have, the gift of God to me, I shall have for ever and for ever.

So different is eternal life from immortality. None in Christ but have eternal life. Millions in Christ will never get immortality. And, oh ! how the Christadelphian or other teacher of destructive heresies staggers and totters as a drunken man, before the solemn, simple declaration of the truth of God, which shows that

eternal life is not the synonym of immortality, and immortality is not the synonym of eternal life.

“He brought life and incorruption to light through the gospel.” What is the life that is brought to light through the gospel? It is that the mortal being shall be swallowed up of life at the coming of the Son of God. What is the incorruption brought to light through the gospel? It is that the dead in Christ shall be raised before the resurrection of the last day. The dead in Christ raised in incorruption. That is the life, and that is the incorruption brought to light through the gospel. That is the mystery told to us by Paul, committed to no other servant of God, but to him, to tell us it from God direct. That God may add His perfecting blessing, let us now and ever pray.

NOTE.

The word “mortal” (*θνήτος*, adjective) occurs in Rom. 6. 12, 8. 11, 1 Cor. 15. 53-54, 2 Cor. 4. 11, 5. 4.

Its opposite “immortality” (*ἀθανασία*, noun) occurs in 1 Cor. 15. 53-54, 1 Tim. 6. 16.


The word “immortal” never occurs in the Scriptures except as a mis-translation.

φθαρτός, adjective, “corruptible,” occurs in Rom. 1. 23, 1 Cor. 9. 25, 15. 53-54, 1 Pet. 1. 18-23.

Its opposite, *ἀφθαρτος*, adjective, “incorruptible,” occurs in Rom. 1. 23, 1 Cor. 9. 25, 15. 52, 1 Pet. 1. 4, 23, 3. 14, and mis-translated “immortal” (incorruptible, R.V.) in 1 Tim. 1. 17.

Still its opposite, *ἀφθαρσία*, noun, “incorruption,” occurs in 1 Cor. 15. 42, 50, 53-54, mis-translated immortality (incorruption, R.V.) in Rom. 2. 7, and 2 Tim. 1. 10, and in Eph. 6. 24, where in the A.V. it is mis-translated sincerity (R.V., uncorruptness). Its occurrence in Tit. 2. 7, is cancelled by the Revisers. *ἀφθόρεια* (see Greek, R.V.) occurs in Tit. 2. 7, “uncorruptness.”

Is The Devil a Person, or What ?

 OUR subject this afternoon is: "Is the Devil a Person, or What?"

Christians are apt to ask this question in connection with such a subject as is before us to-day—"Of what profit can inquiry into such a thing be to us?" Speaking recently in Greenock on this subject, that question occurred to the mind of one who had once served in Her Majesty's army, and on reflection he came to this—I judge—wise conclusion, that it was in love for His people that the Lord Jesus as a wise General with His soldiers, has caused to be written in the Scriptures which are for the complete furnishing of His people, warnings against the seductions and wiles of that one in the Scriptures called from first to last, emphatically, "THE DEVIL." I need not take up our precious time this afternoon in repeating the varied designations found on the lips and from the pens of many as to what the Devil is. I wish rather to seek to use well the time at our disposal, by asking you carefully to follow with me in the book of God, what He has got to say, answering our question, as to whether the Devil is a person or what?

In the Old Testament, as in the New, you get the word "devils," but the words that in the Old Testament are translated "devils," and the word that in the New Testament is translated "devils," are words

that are never applied by God to the only person called in Scripture "*the Satan*"—" *the Devil*."

Will those, therefore, who seek to publicly proclaim the truth of God, be careful in their use of the word "Devil," and the word "devils."

In the Old Testament, Leviticus 17. 7 : "And they shall no more offer their sacrifices unto devils."

2 Chronicles 11. 15 : "And he ordained him priests for the high places, and for the devils."

These two occurrences of the word "devils" are from a Hebrew word that commonly is translated by the English word g-o-a-t-s. The same word occurs in Leviticus 16. thirteen times, and in each instance in that one chapter it is translated by the word "goat." The Hebrew word means literally, a hairy one.

There is another word translated "devils," in the Old Testament. Deut. 32. 17 : "They sacrificed unto devils, not to God."

Psalms 106. 37 : "Yea, they sacrificed their sons and daughters unto devils."

This Hebrew word translated "devils" in these two latter passages, occurs nowhere else in the Old Testament. Whatever it literally means, it does not mean God. It is the opposite of God. Consequently the translators of the Hebrew Bible into the Greek tongue, in the version commonly called the Septuagint, render the Hebrew word in Deut. 32. 17 and Psalms 106. 37, by the Greek word mis-translated "devils" in the New Testament, which word, I beg of you to remember, is never applied nor used to describe the evil one that is before us especially to-day, to determine whether a person or a thing is spoken of by God.

Turn to Job 1. In the Hebrew, and in the Greek, that is, in the Old and New Testament, the word for "Satan," who is also called the Devil, is an adjective, having a masculine pronoun preceding it. The word in the Old Testament for "Satan" occurs in the adjective form ten times, and when found without the article is, pure and simple, in translation into English, the word "adversary." Seventeen times the word with the

article is found in the Hebrew, and when the adjective, in the Hebrew and in the Greek, has the article joined with it, it is no longer an adjective, but a proper noun, that is, the name of a person.

To show you the difference of the word in its adjective form and noun form, I ask you to notice the occurrences of the word "Satan" here, as given in chapter 1. and chapter 2.

Job 1. 6 : "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them." "And the Satan," it is literally, "the Adversary." "And the Adversary came also among them." Then in verse 7 you get the name Satan twice. Then in verse 8 you have the name Satan. Then in verse 9. Then in verse 12 you have it twice. Then in chapter 2. verse 1, once. Verse 2, twice. Verse 3, once. Verse 4, once. Verse 6, once. Verse 7, once. And thus out of the seventeen times that the word occurs in the Hebrew with the article, you have it fourteen times in these two chapters of the book of Job, and never again is Satan mentioned in the Old Testament under this name until you come to the book of Zechariah the prophet.

Before turning to this, turn back with me for a moment or two to the book of Numbers, 22. 22 : "And God's anger was kindled because he [Balaam] went, and the angel of the Lord stood in the way for an adversary against him."

Verse 32 : "And the angel of the Lord said unto him [Balaam,] Wherefore hast thou smitten thine ass these three times, behold I went out to withstand thee" (or, as the margin says, "I went out to be an adversary unto thee") "because thy way is perverse before Me."

In these two Scriptures, verses 22 and 32, you have the word Satan, without the article, and here it is, pure and simple, an adjective. The angel of the Lord went out to be adversary to Balaam, but the angel of the Lord did not become "*The Satan*," that is, "*The Adversary*." Definitely, absolutely, only one in the Scriptures in Old and New Testament, is ever spoken of as "*The Satan*," or "*The Devil*."

Turn over now, please, to the book of the prophet Zechariah 3. "And he shewed me Joshua, the High Priest, standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan [the Satan] standing at his right hand to resist him. And the Lord said unto THE Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan, even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?"

Thus the fourteen times of Job 1. and 2., and the three times of Zechariah 3., are all the instances in the Old Testament Scripture where you get the Devil spoken of under the title of Satan. The name Devil, is not found in the Old Testament at all. The name for the one called "The Devil" in the New Testament, in the whole of the Old Testament is, as I have said again and again, to stamp it on your memory and mind, *the Satan*.

Turn now to the New Testament.

I wish first of all to show you the personality of Satan ; then to show you the character of Satan ; then to show you his determined opposition to the angel of God ; his determined opposition to the children of God ; then I shall show you his work in unconverted men ; and lastly, I will show you his doom at the hand of God ; after the which I have only to appeal to you who receive the Bible as from God asking, "Is the Devil a person, or what?" and get the unanimous answer, "He is an awful person ; not a thing ; not a theory ; not having a co-equal, but stands alone, the fell arch evil one ; the opposer of God, the opposer of everything that is good, and the leader of everything that is ill ; the Satan, the Devil, the Serpent, whom we shall see is indeed the ancient one."

The word in the New Testament translated Devil is, when standing alone, not having the article, an adjective, and in its adjective form is found only five times in the New Testament. Three times out of the five occurrences of it in adjective form it is found in the plural, but mark, when used as a proper noun it always has the article AND IS NEVER FOUND in the plural number (any more than is "the Satan" in the Old Testament), but always

in the singular, always in the masculine gender, always bespeaking a definite one, whom none that will be taught by God can fail to recognise, and all who thus learn are kept by God as in a fortress, from confusing him with others and thus having in their mind a clear perception, and in their heart a high dread of him whom the Scriptures reveal in his person, his work, his character, and his doom; they indeed may well understand why he is so diligent in this our time and day to make men be persuaded, (but they must be persuaded apart from the Scriptures) that there is no Devil.

Matthew 4. gives us the first occurrence of the word in the New Testament, "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the Devil." Always write that name with a capital D in your English Bible. The Translators have been careless, or the printer, I know not which; sometimes they give it with a small d, other times they give it with a capital D, but as from the mouth of God it comes, whether it be the Satan, or the Devil, it always should have the capital S, and the capital D. Therefore, when you write, or have your writing committed to print, see that this be clear and distinct that the reader shall understand you are speaking of a proper person, and therefore contend to have it represented with its right letter in English, the capital S or the capital D. Verse 8: "Again the Devil taketh Him up into an exceeding high mountain and sheweth Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them." Verse 10: "Then said Jesus unto him, "Get thee hence, SATAN, for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve," Verse 11: "Then the Devil leaveth Him, and behold angels came and ministered unto Him."

Thus from the lips of the Holy One of God, we are taught to recognise the Satan of Old Testament Scripture to be the same as the Devil of New Testament Scripture, for in each of these four occurrences of the word Devil, verses 1, 5, 8, and 11, it is "THE DEVIL."

Turn now to the Gospel of Christ according to Luke, 4. 2, where you have the expression again, "The Devil;" verse 3, "The Devil;" verse 5, "The Devil;" verse 6, "The Devil;" verse 13, "The Devil," absolutely naming this one who directly tempted in person the Lord Jesus Christ.

Some men say that the Devil is sin in man. See, so far is that removed from the truth, that of the Holy One of God is written by God, "He knew no sin," "He had no sin," "He did no sin," therefore to the sinless One the Devil came, came to tempt Him, came to prove Him, spoke to Him, exhibited his power to Him, told of that he could convey to Him, so that the Devil, as presented in the Gospel by Matthew and by Luke, two witnesses from God, as in the presence of the Holy One of God, could not possibly be sin in man. For He who thus away from man, was tempted by the Devil, and He who answered the Devil with Scripture, saw that he to whom He spoke had intelligence to recognise the Scripture, had intelligence to know from Whom the Scriptures came, had intelligence to recognise that He who spoke the Scriptures was mightier than he; the Devil in his awful personality is stamped beyond contradiction from the mouths of God's two witnesses, Matthew and Luke, and that not in his awful work upon the sons of men, but in his interview tempting the Holy One of God, as we have read this afternoon, and as most of us have known from our infancy.

I will only quote further, in connection with the personality of the Devil, Hebrews 2. 14: "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of blood and flesh, He also, Himself, likewise took part of the same, that through death He might destroy him having the power of death, that is, the Devil."

For his CHARACTER. John 8. 44. The Holy One of God speaking, says, "ye are of your father, the Devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. HE"—the most emphatic pronoun that the Greek language knows*—"HE was a murderer from the beginning

* Εκεῖνος. Ekeinos.

and abode not in the truth—because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar and the father of it.” Who? The Devil. A murderer, a liar from the beginning, one in whom the truth is not.

Again for his character. 1 John 3. 8: “He that committeth sin is of the Devil, for the Devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the Devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for His seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the Devil. Whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.” Not only was he a murderer from the beginning, and is a murderer—a man-slayer—but he was and is a liar, and not only so, black and terrible as is such a character, he is one that sinneth and only sinneth, yea, and what is intensely solemn here is this, he has a family, who are like unto their father, they sin, sin, sin, they lie, lie, lie, and they, like him, are men-destroyers.

Jude, 9th verse. We are going to look at three aspects of his *work*. “Yet Michael, the Archangel, when contending with the Devil.” He contends with God’s Archangel, for God has only one. Poets and preachers have sung and spoken about archangels, but God’s revelation only speaks of one, and that Archangel, as regards the doing of the will of God, was opposed by the opponent of God and man, who is called, the Devil. We will now look at five or six Scriptures that show his work toward the children of God. Ephes. 4. 27: “Neither give place to the Devil.” Ephes. 6. 11: “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles,” (that is, the methods) “of the Devil.” He is a planner; he is one that holds counsels; he is one that works with deliberation; he is one who has methods, so that if this way will not succeed, then perhaps that way will succeed. “Put on”—says God to His children—“The whole armour

. . . that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil." And still he seeks to overthrow God's people. 1 Peter 5. 8: "Be sober, be watchful, your Adversary the Devil, as a roaring lion walketh about seeking—seeking—seeking—whom he may devour." "Be sober," therefore, Christian, "be watchful," because your Adversary is going about seeking whom he may devour. James 4. 7: "Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you." Ask the Christian if his experience of the lusting of sin within him is that when he resists, the lusts flee from him, and he will tell you, "Would God it were so;" but as to the Devil, we have but to resist him, and he flees, for he has no power at all against us when we are clad with the armour of God.

Revelation 2. 10: "Fear none of these things which thou shalt suffer. Behold, THE DEVIL shall cast some of you into prison," and so on. The Devil doing his work by men in mortal flesh. His children against the children of God, casting the latter into prison. 1 Tim. 3. 6 and 7: "Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the judgement of the Devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the Devil." That is, the judgement into which the Devil fell; the snare in which the Devil himself is. 2 Tim. 2. 26: "And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the Devil, who are taken captive by him, unto His will." All these Scriptures thus far we have come, speak about one only person and his awful work, under the title of, the Devil.

Now for his work in unconverted men. Matt. 13. 39: "The enemy that soweth them is the Devil." The Son of God again speaking. Luke 8. 11, 12. The Son of God again is heard to say, "Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. Those by the way-side are they that hear; then cometh the Devil and taketh away the word out of their hearts lest they should believe and be saved." John 13. 2: "And during supper, the Devil, having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him." Acts 10. 38: "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy

Spirit and with power ; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed by the Devil." These four verses that we have looked at show the work of the Devil as opposing the will of God, as seeking the destruction of men, even unto the lake of fire, which is the second death. His work in unconverted men as in converted men, is in direct opposition to the will and wish of God.

Now for his doom. Turn to Rev. 12. 9 : " And the great Dragon was cast out, that old Serpent." This is, old, not in the sense of decay, but it is old, in the sense of being ancient.

It is not, old of age, where weakness and senility are expressed and signified, but it is, old, in the sense of being experienced. " And the great Dragon was cast out, the ancient Serpent, called the Devil and the Satan, who deceiveth the whole earth ; he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him." 12th verse : " Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea ! for the DEVIL is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth he hath but a short time." Chapter 20. 1, 2 : " And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the Dragon, that ancient Serpent, who is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years." Verse 10: " And the Devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the Beast and the False Prophet are.

" Oh ! " say some of these teachers of destructive heresies, " there is no word 'are,' and we have as much right to put in, 'were,' as you have to put in, 'are.' " Do you see, they want to say that the Beast and the False Prophet that were cast in a thousand years before this time, that they are not in this place of torment now, and therefore they quibble at the word, "are," that is in italics to show that in the original Greek there is no corresponding word. But there is in the Greek, a word that absolutely answers to the word " a r e . " Listen ! " And the Devil that deceived them

was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where are the beast and the false prophet, and they *shall be tormented.*" Who shall be tormented? Is "shall be tormented," a verb in the third person singular, and therefore would read, "And HE shall be tormented"? No! "And shall be tormented" is the third person plural, "And says THEY shall be tormented." And who are the "they"? We have read of the Devil; we have read of the Beast; we have read of the False Prophet. Three persons? and concerning them it is written, "And THEY shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." That is to say as long as God lives (see Rev. 4. 9, 10. 6).

Thus from Rev. 12. and from Rev. 20. we have traced the doom of him, who, far back in creation's morning, marred the work of God by bringing in sin, and sin bringing in death.

That fell adversary of God and man, we have traced through the Scriptures as being definitely, from the mouth of God, designated as "the Satan," designated as "the Devil;" seen to be a person in the presence of the personal Son of God.

We have seen him, not only to be a person, but a person having power, and that, great power, mighty power. Thank God, it is not almighty, for there is a mightier than he. We have seen that one in his work of seductive leading astray, and opposing of the people of God; and we have seen him in his seeking the judgement unto damnation, of perishing sons of men not born again, in that he seeks to hinder the Word of God having its weight and place in their heart; and we have followed him until we have seen him cast down to the earth, and will be on the earth until he is taken up by the mighty angel of God, and hurled from earth down to the depths of the lake of fire and brimstone, which is the second death, and there, he, and those whom he hath seduced unto the damnation of the lake of fire, shall be tormented for ever and ever.

He is a person, and not a thing; a terrible awful being, whose sentence neither slumbers nor delays, and of a truth, whose condemnation shall be just.

THE COMING AGAIN OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

I.

I PROPOSE to-night, dear friends, to give the outline of the subject that is named for this and to-morrow night's consideration, and hope, if God permit and help, to come back then and fill in the outline. The subject, as I daresay you already know, is that of the coming again of the Lord Jesus. I shall endeavour just to be as elementary as possible, and speak as if to persons to whom the subject is entirely new, and would therefore seek to begin at the very foundation, and lead out in the consecutive parts of Holy Writ where it may be necessary, to raise the structure that God would have exhibited and known as His holy mind in the matter of the coming again of His blessed Son.

The reason why we speak of His coming again is because He has already once come; and if you read with me two verses in the Acts of the Apostles, you will have this word established in the mouth of two witnesses from God. Acts 7. 52. : Stephen here speaking says, "Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers." Acts 13. 23, 24: From the mouth of God's servant, Paul, we have these words: "Of this man's seed hath God according to His promise raised (*or* brought) unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus: when John had first

preached before His coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel."

But not only have we this testimony to His having come, but our Lord Jesus Himself said, and says, that having come first from God, and in expediency for us, gone back to God, therein He offers our heart assurance that He is coming again. As in the 14th chapter of the Gospel of Christ, according to John, we have it: "If I go and prepare a place for you, I come again and will receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also"; and more than one of those who heard Him thus speak have taken up His blessed words and testified that He is indeed coming again!

So important is the truth of His coming again, that in the 2nd Epistle by John he writes: "He is the deceiver and the antichrist who denieth that Jesus Christ is COMING [*not* come] in the flesh."

He who has already come from God and gone back to God, is coming again.

And besides this, to the one who is especially the apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God to the nations, were committed glories and facts in connection with the coming again of the Lord Jesus as Son of God, that we through greater knowledge of these facts and glories might have the greater comfort.

In His past, His first coming,—it was but one coming—there were two great stages. These, if not typical, are at least aptly illustrative of the two similar stages that are to mark His coming again, which yet is but one coming.

In the Scriptures these two stages of His coming again are broadly distinguished by the terms, "the coming of the Son of Man," and "the coming of the Son of God."

The order is, the first stage of the coming again is in the character of Son of God; the second stage is in the character of Son of Man. The 5th chapter of the Gospel of Christ, according to John, tells us that He has received authority to execute judgment because He is Son of Man, and in connection with the latter

stage of His coming again it is especially as the executor of God's righteous judgment; in contrast to which His title, "Son of God," is as the Life-giving One, the Quickening One; and the order, as I have said, of His coming again, is firstly, as Son of God, and secondly, as Son of Man.

Neither in Matthew, Mark, nor Luke, are there any words from God that directly bear on the first stage of the coming again of the Lord Jesus. All the words in connection with the coming again of the Lord Jesus as given through Matthew, Mark, and Luke, concern the latter stage, viz., His coming as Son of Man. Not until you come to the Gospel by John, do you read of His coming as Son of God, and there you only get the merest hint. You may remember that in the 15th chapter of 1st Corinthians, Paul writing to "all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ the Lord," says, "Behold I tell to you a MYSTERY." Now clearly, if through Matthew, Mark, and Luke, the Scriptures which were found in circulation among most who were calling upon the name of Jesus Christ the Lord at that time, there had been given the mystery of His coming again as Son of God, the apostle's words as in the 15th chapter of his first letter to the Corinthians were entirely out of place. But he was the chosen vessel to unfold the mystery that characterises the first stage of the coming again of the Lord Jesus. I have said that in the past coming of the Lord Jesus, there were two great stages that aptly and instructively illustrate the two great stages of His coming again. These two stages of His past coming are (1) His birth, and (2) His entry into Jerusalem, in fulfilment of the prophetic word of God.

I. As to His birth, I beg of you to consider and read carefully the 2nd chapter of the Gospel of Christ by Matthew, and the 2nd chapter of the Gospel of Christ by Luke; that is, as to this stage of His first coming. There when you read the 2nd of Matthew and the 2nd of Luke you will find that the Holy One of God has left the bosom of God, and appears among

men a Babe in Bethlehem's manger. He has come from a place to a place, and in the place to which He has come we find there are gathered to Him heaven-enlightened, heaven-summoned, heaven-guided ones. It would appear that none but those whom Heaven had chosen saw that heavenly vision or heard that heavenly voice. This great point I wish you to see in that first stage, that illustrates the first stage of His coming again, that He came to a place from a place, and to the place to which he came there were gathered to Him, heaven-enlightened, heaven-summoned, heaven-guided ones.

II. Now look at the 21st of Matthew with me. Verse 4: "This was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, 'Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.' And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them, and brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set Him thereon. And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strewed them in the way. And the multitudes that WENT BEFORE, and that FOLLOWED, cried, saying, 'Hosanna' [*which means* "Save now."] Save now the Son of David: Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord; Save now in the highest.' And when He was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, 'Who is this?' And the multitude said, 'This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth, of Galilee.' And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves, and said unto them, 'It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves.' And the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple; and He healed them."

In this, the second stage of His past coming, He came to where the people were, over whom, as God's

appointed and anointed King, He was to reign; and not only did He come to where they were, in contrast to the first stage of His past coming, where some were gathered to where He was, but He came to where they were, PRECEDED by a multitude, and FOLLOWED by a multitude; and He not only came to Jerusalem city, and moved the city because of His presence, but He went direct to the temple, and in the temple He did a purgation, cleansing work, and not only so, but He remained there to heal and to bless such as came to Him in their need for His blessing.

When He comes as Son of God He is coming alone! He is coming from the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens where now He sits: He is coming not to the earth; He is coming to the air. When He comes as Son of God to the air, He will come with a shout, with archangel voice, with trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise, first; and then the living among men in Christ shall be caught up together with them in clouds to meet the Lord in the air. The dead out of Christ He will leave undisturbed in their graves, and He will leave on the earth the mortal sons of men out of Christ. We all in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, shall have been taken out from among the dead and the living to meet the Lord in the AIR, and so shall we (I do not say "they") ever be with the Lord. We shall be taken to where He is when He comes to that point.

When He comes as Son of Man, He will come to the earth, He will come to Jerusalem city, He will come to the temple of God that is yet to be built in Jerusalem city, He will come to take the Antichrist and the false prophet red handed; out of the temple of God will He take them and hurl them without death down into the depths of hell, and then shall He do a purging work in the temple of God; and from that temple He shall guide, and shall manifest His power to bless; and there shall be brought to Him such as answer to those of whom we read in the 21st of Matthew, who came unto Him for healing in the second stage of His past one

coming. Yea, so literally is the 21st of Matthew stage of His past coming an illustration of the latter stage of His coming again, that when He comes as Son of Man, the heavenly hosts, even the angels of His power, shall precede Him, for they shall descend to the earth and binding the tares, that is the wicked, cast them into the outer darkness where shall be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth: and not only shall His angels precede Him—a multitude before Him, when He comes as Son of Man—but a multitude shall follow Him, namely, the dead and the living in Christ, who previously had been caught up to be for ever with the Lord when He had come in the character of Son of God.

Moreover, when He comes as Son of Man there will be no resurrection of dead ones. When that scripture is fulfilled, "Then shall two be in the field, the one shall be taken and the other left; two women shall be grinding at the mill, the one shall be taken and the other left," each of those taken will be taken in judgment, while they who are left, will be left for blessing. "For as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be in the days of the Son of Man." "As it was in the days of Lot, so shall it be in the days of the Son of Man." Those who were taken in the days of Noah and of Lot, and those who were left in the days of Noah and of Lot, are our Lord's illustration to make us understand who will be taken, and who will be left in the time that characterises the coming of the Son of Man. Who, then, were taken in the days of Noah? Who were taken in the days of Lot? Who were left in the days of Noah? Who were left in the days of Lot? "The wicked," every heart cries out in the intelligence of Scripture, "the wicked were taken in the days of Noah; the wicked were taken in the days of Lot; the righteous were left in the days of Noah; the righteous were left in the days of Lot." So shall it be in the days of the Son of Man.

The second stage in His coming again is the very opposite, you see, of the first stage; for when the dead

in Christ and the living in Christ are taken up, the dead out of Christ are left, and the living out of Christ are left : namely, when He comes as Son of God. But on the contrary, when He comes as Son of Man, it shall be as it was in the days of Noah and in the days of Lot.

But see, there was a great difference between the days of Noah and the days of Lot. In the days of Noah, those who were left were brought *through* the judgment protected by God. So surely such as shall pass through all the bitter persecution of the Antichrist shall be protected, by God, who shall shorten those days. You remember the word of the Lord in the 24th of Matthew, "Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." The word "shortened" here is "amputated"—"Except those days were "amputated." The Lord will cut off a number of them in order that His elect may be preserved, who will answer to such as were left in the days of Noah. He will bring them through the bitter persecution of the Antichrist, safe into the peaceful reign, the 1000 years, commonly called the Millennium, the reign of the coming Son of Man, the Christ of God.

On the other hand, as it was in the days of Lot, so shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed. Ere any of the judgment from God fell upon Sodom, Lot was taken out of it, so in the 24th of Matthew and correlative Scripture it is written, "When ye, therefore, shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (whoso readeth let him understand), then let them which be in Judæa flee into the mountains : let him which is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house : neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes." Now what is the use of telling people to flee if the Antichrist is going to dominate the entire earth, when with heliograph, and telephone, and telegraph, and God

alone knows what other graph may be in existence at that time, his power indeed shall be great wherever it may reach : and what can be the Lord's meaning in telling them to flee, if the Antichrist is indeed to dominate the entire earth. He will not dominate the entire earth. And here is wonder of wonders for the spiritual heart; a view of the way of God, that while it instructs causes us to worship; as indeed does all gathering of the mind of God, when it is gathered in His presence; for in the 11th of Daniel it is written of the Antichrist that he will not be able to lay his hand upon Edom, Moab, the chief of the children of Ammon. And where is that Edom? Where is that Moab? Where is that land of the chief of the children of Ammon, over which the Antichrist will not be able to extend his power? Look at your map, and there you will find Palestine running down by the Mediterranean sea, and here Edom, here Moab, and here the land of the chief of the children of Ammon, and they have only to step across the border land of Judæa. The land of Edom is within running distance, the land of Moab is within walking distance, and the land of the chief of the children of Ammon is almost within stepping distance of Jerusalem. Flee there, and though he has a rifle of boundless range, and a rifleman of unerring aim, one step out of the land of Judæa into Edom, Moab, or the chief of the children of Ammon, and they will be kept there as safe as the living Almighty God can keep them!! But more than this. What land is that? That is where Israel's forefathers fell, whom God brought out of the land of Egypt, by His might, through the Red Sea. Surely the Valley of Achor will be a door of hope for Israel in that sad and bitter hour of Jacob's terrible trouble. Thus you see that as Lot fled out of Sodom, so they, when they see the abomination spoken of by Daniel the prophet standing in the holy place—that is, in the temple of God that is yet to be built at Jerusalem in the literal land of Palestine—they will flee out of the land, and be as safe as was Lot from Sodom's judgment.

THERE are four of the sixteen doxologies of the book of the Revelation that seem to me to complete the outline that I have sought to bring before you thus far in connection with the coming again of the Lord Jesus, and please remember that while to-night I have gone over Scriptures, quoting them as we reach them, to-morrow night we hope to turn up each several passage and fill in the outline of to-night, so that each one may be able to take it away in the heart intelligently, and find it as words from God; and thus neither receiving nor rejecting because I happen to say it, but receiving what the Lord and Saviour is heard to say, each may know the blessedness of that Scripture written in the prophet, "And they shall be all taught of God, and great shall be the peace of thy children."

Turn with me now to the book of Revelation of Jesus Christ. I wish to mark out four of its sixteen doxologies or glory words :

I. Rev. 1. 5 : the middle of the verse : "Unto Him that loveth us and loosed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen." The word "from" here—"loosed us FROM our sins"—is very different to the word "from" which you get in Matt. 1. 21, which says : "And thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people FROM their sins." The word "from" in Matt. 1. 21, is this : A mother sees her child get up on a chair; the little one will climb up higher and higher; if it manages the height at which it is seeking to reach, it will topple over, chair and all. But the mother, with woman's quickness of perception, allows the child not to get so far, but snatches it *from* the danger, she lifts it *away from* (*ἀπὸ*) the danger. That is Matt. 1. 21 : "He shall save his people FROM their sins," snatching them away from their sins.

But this word "from" (*ἐκ*), in the first of Revelation, is He loveth us and hath loosed us OUT OF our sins. Thus, then, we know that this doxology or

"Glory word," as given here in Rev. 1. 5, 6, is the Glory song of the Church which is the Body of Christ, which He shall gather unto Himself when He comes again in the character of Son of God.

II. In contrast with which hear these same singers as they sing in Rev. 5. There those who sang "Unto Him that loveth us and loosed us from our sins in His own blood" are heard to sing again. "And they sing a new song, saying, 'Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof, for thou wast slain and hast redeemed to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people and nation; and hast made THEM unto our God kings and priests, and they reign upon the earth,'" (Rev. 5. 9, 10, see R.V.). Thus they who sing the doxology of Rev. 5. sing not of themselves, but of others who have been redeemed unto their God, and made a kingdom, even priests to God, and who shall reign upon the earth. Mark well, please, that this is a Millennial scene, this is not eternity. We know it is not eternity from the 13th verse: "And every creature, . . . and such as are on the SEA. . . ." Whereas if you look at Rev. 21. 1, you will see that when the present earth and heavens shall pass away there shall be no more sea. Therefore we know by comparing Rev. 5. 13, with Rev. 21. 1, that in Rev. 5. 13 it is not the eternal but the Millennial glory that is being spoken of, and thus they who shall sing the doxology of verses 9 and 10 of this 5th chapter, already have been taken to Heaven, and sing of such as have been blessed in virtue of the blood of the Lamb, who have been made a kingdom of priests unto their God, and who, therefore, reign not "over" but "upon" the earth.

III. Turn to the 14th chapter now for a moment: "And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand, having His Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping

with their harps : and they sing as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four living creatures, and the elders : and no man COULD LEARN that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile : for they are without fault [*or* without blame] before the throne of God.”

Turn back to the 7th chapter. In the first eight verses you will get an account of twelve times twelve thousand that were sealed of the twelve tribes of Israel that are here named, corresponding with the hundred and forty and four thousand that you get in the 14th chapter of the Revelation who learn a song that none but themselves could learn; and why? because in the mouth of none save that hundred and forty and four thousand, would the words of the song have a fitting place, so that, therefore, they might be acceptable to God.

Compare the doxology of the 14th of Revelation with that one that we get in chapter 5. that we have looked at already. Compare it yet again with the doxology of chapter 1., at which we have also looked, and see how vast a difference in this doxology or song that the hundred and forty and four thousand only could learn so as to sing; connect them with these twelve times twelve thousand spoken of in chapter 7. of the book of Revelation, and see how exclusively they are separate from the Church which is the Body of Christ; in which, if a Jew or a Gentile be, he has lost his Jewish or Gentile character, and in Christ becomes one, for in Him there is neither Jew nor Greek.

So then clearly and surely—and you will see clearly if you learn carefully—these twelve times twelve thousand being of Israel, and from Israel, necessarily

are the saved of God in a time that is outside the dispensation in which our lot at present is cast. Moreover, as we shall show to-morrow night, these twelve times twelve thousand from Israel tribes are none other than shall be saved, and blessed, and sealed, by the living God in a time that shall succeed the coming of the Lord Jesus as Son of God, that is, previous to the moment when He shall come as Son of Man.

Moreover, this shall be accomplished by God through the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom, from which the gospel of the grace of God as proclaimed to-day is entirely and essentially different. And as I read ("How readeest thou?" is the scriptural question as to understanding the law of the Lord), as the Jew was used of God in handing on the grace of God as in the Gospel it is told out and in the mystery of Christ it is more fully unfolded, to the Gentile, so I judge, back to the Jew by the Gentile will God give the gospel of the kingdom to the glory of Himself in the salvation of those who answer to the twelve times twelve thousand spoken of in Rev. 7. and Rev. 14.

IV. Then in verse 9 of this 7th chapter, "After these things I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, 'Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.' And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four living creatures, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, 'Amen : Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever, Amen.' And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, 'Who are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?' And I said unto him, 'Sir, thou knowest.' And he said to me, 'These are they which come out of ~~the~~ great tribulation and have

washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple : and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell over them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more ; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall shepherd them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters : and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.' ” So after the hundred and forty and four thousand of Israel are blessed as the first 8 verses of this 7th chapter tell, there is seen an uncountable number, not of Israel, who are brought up out of the great tribulation. Now the great tribulation which will be brought about through the oppression of the Antichrist, will not reach unto heathendom proper. These Gentile ones that no man could number, will be brought out from among the Gentile ones of so-called Christendom, from the countries that surround the Mediterranean sea, and all that God counts under the dominion of Rome ; Rome in its restored dominion, which the book of Daniel and the book of the Revelation abundantly show, and at which to-morrow night we hope to be able to look, however briefly.

It is commonly thought, it is sometimes said, and I believe it has even found its way into print, that after the Lord Jesus comes as Son of God there will be no mercy to the Gentiles of this and similar lands. Consequently, in the light of the Lord's return at any moment, mothers have felt, and rightly felt, by feelings implanted in them by their God, “ How can I say, ‘ Lord Jesus come,’ and look on the darlings of my womb that are not yet born again. Fain would I say ‘ Lord Jesus come,’ but I confess honestly I would rather He did not come until my children were born again.” Mothers have this dread wrought in them through a misconception that is somewhat general, that when the Lord shall have come as Son of God there will be no more mercy to the Gentile.

Beloved in Christ here to-night, blessing shall be

vouchsafed to England, or rather Great Britain, guilty and privileged though she is; great as are the privileges and blessings God has given to this land, His present grace is as nothing compared to the grace that shall abound to this land and its people once the dead and the living in Christ shall have been taken away by the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in the character of Son of God.

The thought that there will be no mercy has arisen from a misconception of 2 Thess. 2. to which, presently, I shall turn. But here for a moment let me ask you to see from God that this uncountable number that come up out of the great tribulation (Matt. 24. and correlative Scriptures show), will follow the setting up of the abomination that maketh desolate, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, and this can only be set up in the literal city of Jerusalem, in a literal temple that shall be built there and recognised by God as His temple.

Those mentioned here, then, are Gentile ones in contrast to Israel.

Turn now to 2 Thess. 2. It opens with a beseeching on behalf of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The word "coming," as commonly found in the New Testament, simply means "presence with," and is a word that is used in connection with those caught up to Himself in Christ, and is also used of His presence with His redeemed ones on the earth.

In contrast with that word there is another word used; for example, in 1 Cor. 1. 7: "Ye come behind in no gift, waiting for the 'coming' [*that is*, unveiling] of the Lord Jesus." This word occurs twice in Peter's 1st epistle, and is there translated by "revelation" and "appearing," but the word in itself simply means "unveiling"; you will be brought to see Him. A third word is used in 2 Thess. 2. 8, where it is the OUTSHINING of the coming, and just as in the first stage of His past coming there was an unveiling, and yet that unveiling was not an outshining, so in the coming again; for OUTSHINING shall be the characteristic of

the coming of the Son of Man. "For as the lightning cometh out from the east and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be." Never is it so said of the coming of the Lord Jesus as Son of God. It is as secret, as hidden, as confined, and will only be heard and seen by such as the first stage of His past coming illustrates: heaven-instructed, heaven-summoned, heaven-guided ones.

"We beseech you, brethren, on behalf of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of our gathering together unto Him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us (sending letters as if from the apostle), as that the day of the Lord hath come." Now where you get the day of the Lord spoken of in Scripture, it is always teeming with judgments of the direct kinds. It is a terrible day of sore judgment; albeit it is sore judgment unto blessing; but remember the day of the Lord in Scripture is always connected with judgment. Do not be shaken. "Let no man deceive you by any means, for that day shall not come except there shall come the falling away [*i.e.*, the apostasy] first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God," which is not at Rome, nor could be; which is not at Constantinople, nor could be; which is not at Damascus, nor could be; which is not in London, nor could be; nor yet, for the matter of that, at Canterbury, nor could be. It can only be, as the Scriptures from first to last declare, in the land of Palestine, in the literal city of Jerusalem. Pass on to verse 7: "Until he be taken out of the way," is commonly understood to mean that the Holy Spirit is going to be taken out of the way by the rapture of the saints at the coming of the Lord Jesus. Perhaps Christians are not much to blame for this, and yet they are somewhat, since other Scriptures do not agree with this interpretation. For it is not "Until he be taken out of the way," but this: "Only

he who now letteth," that is holdeth on (or holdeth down, he has taken a grip and will hold it;) will hold "until he become [*i.e.*, come into being] out of the midst," until he arises out of the lawlessness, the spirit of which already is working. Comp. Newberry's Bible, *in loco*.

The holder down is to arise out of the midst, thus it is the Antichrist, *not* the Holy Spirit, that is meant.

And when he becomes out of the midst, when he comes into being manifestly, out of the midst, what will happen? Verse 8: "And then shall the lawless one be revealed." We know, for many Scriptures so testify that when the Lord Jesus comes as Son of God, and takes away the dead and the living in Christ, the man of sin will not be revealed immediately: the man of sin will not be revealed for years afterwards, we know not how many in all, but of this we are certain, for God has said it, he will not be manifest for three and half years after the dead and the living in Christ have been taken away by Jesus our Lord. So you see that even in that light to apply this to the Holy Spirit is not possible, because when this that is spoken of in the 7th verse comes to pass, "THEN, AT THAT TIME, shall the lawless one BE REVEALED, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth and shall destroy with—" what, with His coming? Nay, for part of His coming again has already taken place seven years or more before this; therefore, mark the words: "with the brightness of His coming." What is the word "brightness?"

It is the word, everywhere else found "appearing," but it means "outshining;" "whom the Lord shall slay with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the *outshining* of His coming."

There is a part of His coming that will have no outshining about it, viz., that which is analogous to the first stage of His past coming, His coming again as the Life-giving One, the Son of God; concerning whose coming and its glories is a mystery, only un-

folded to us by Paul and such as wrote after him, and concerning which there is no word of prophecy that I know of, which says that this must be done or that must be done previous to His coming again as Son of God.

Every word of prophecy that applies to the present dispensation betwixt Pentecost and the moment of His coming again as Son of God, is a comparative word, a word that can be applied no more exclusively to this day than could have been applied and used by the Christians of the past century to their day, and so on through each century back. God's words are comparative words, words that find their fulfilment in any cycle of years that have rolled since Pentecost, specially since the unfolding from God of this mystery consequent on Pentecost, and thus we see there is nothing necessary to be fulfilled of which Scripture speaks: therefore it is, we look not to the East, nor to the West, and there is nothing that could transpire to give me, as I read, to understand thereby that the coming of the Lord Jesus has been brought nearer. Some will think, no doubt, of the word in James 5. 8, "The coming of the Lord draweth nigh." It should be "The coming of the Lord hath drawn near." (Revised Version reads "is at hand.") It had already drawn near when God caused James to write as we have quoted, and His unveiling to us may be at any moment.

Now a word as to the misconception of which I spoke (p. 17). Turn to 2 Thess. 2. 10, a moment, speaking of the Antichrist, "Whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish: because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

Before the Lord will reject the Gentiles; before

the Lord will send this strong delusion that they should believe the lie that the Antichrist is God, and the God of Heaven not God, God will not only have the gospel of the kingdom preached, but also what 2 Thess. 1. speaks of, "The gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ," and not only so, but after that, so patient, so longsuffering, so rich in mercy will God show Himself to men, that He will cause an angel to fly in mid-heaven, "having an everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, 'Fear God, and give glory to Him: for the hour of His judgement is come: and worship Him that made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.'" What is the everlasting gospel? "Fear God and give glory to Him." Acknowledge the God of heaven to be the true God, and salvation is yours.

Oh, the mighty, matchless, wondrous mercy of God to men, that even after the gospel of the grace of God has failed to reach them, after the rapture of the saints has failed to reach them, after the gospel of the kingdom has failed to move them, after the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ has also failed, God should cause an heavenly one to go through mid-heaven, preaching to men the everlasting gospel that God is the only God, and if they acknowledge Him they will be saved.

Jonah and those who were with him in the ship, are not only illustrations, but types, of this wondrous grace of God.

The runaway prophet is a type of Israel in its going away from God, and He will bring yet His witnesses back in testimony, like that of Jonah to the heathen sailors, which resulted in their sacrificing to "the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land," for it was thus that God was presented by Jonah to these heathen ones. And more than that, if you look at the 25th of Matthew, where not a dead one is, but only Gentiles living in mortal bodies, what will you

see? That kindness to a Jew will put a Gentile into everlasting life and blessing.

Kindness to the Jew? Who is a type of that? Rahab in her kindness to the Jew. Rahab that sheltered the Jew, and got the blessing is, as I read, God's type or God's illustration of getting the blessing of the salvation of Jehovah for such kindness, setting forth the grace of God in the 25th of Matthew.

Thus wondrously shall the grace of God abound, so that His present grace will be as nothing compared therewith. Now please turn to Phil. 3. 20, "For our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." Saints of God, by none be charmed to look to earth to know your Lord is coming: look to heaven: look upward: look as Noah in the ark could only look, for he had a window in the top which was dimensioned by God (the door was without measurement), it was big enough for him to look up to his God: so look up, and only up; "from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." "Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord" (Phil. 4. 1). Look up! look up!! look up, and only up!!! 1 John 3. 3, I quote and add one word: "And every man that hath this hope on Him"—(mark that word "Him" with a capital H in your Bible, for it is Him yonder, Him who is coming)—"purifieth himself even as He is pure."

Have I that hope on Him? Is it a theory or a hope indeed? I may know by this: "Every one that hath this hope on Him, purifieth himself even as He is pure."

What is the word "purifieth?" Peter comes to our help, for he uses the word again. "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth."

Peter's use of the word "souls" is always in the sense of the English word s-e-l-v-e-s. In the Scriptures the word soul has a fourfold meaning in the mouth of God. Peter's use of it is one of those four, and is

always in his Epistle the English word selves; as "in the ark, few, that is, eight souls were saved by water," that is, eight persons.

"Seeing ye have purified yourselves in obeying the truth." There is no purifying by means of the hope set on Him, save as I am obedient to the truth. Purification is not a sentiment, it is not a theory, it is not a feeling, it is not a dream, it is practical godliness, submission to the truth of God; whether it be the truth of God as regards my behaviour in the family circle, the wife with the husband, the husband with the wife; the child with the parent, the parent with the child; or in the world circle, the social circle, the servant with the master, the master with the servant; or in the Church circle where purification to-day is at an awful ebb among the beloved people of God, and Christian ministry, and Christian fellowship, and Christian service, and Christian baptism, are almost *nil* in the estimation of many of the beloved of God.

This blessed hope is truth for the heart. I love Scripture that gets to my heart, and the Lord Jesus in the 14th of John said, "Let not your heart be troubled." It is heart-truth, and it is so tremendously practical, that if it is obeyed, it brings about the fulfilment of that proverb, "Son, give Me thine heart;" and He having our heart, where our heart is, our treasure and chiefest joy shall be also.

II.

The subject of our to-night's consideration is the continuation of the one we had before us who were present here last night, namely, the coming again of the Lord Jesus. Last evening we sought to give an elementary outline. We saw from the mouth of two of God's witnesses, Scriptural reason as to why we speak at all of His coming again; namely, because He has already come in fulfilment of prophetic utterances of God. We also saw that in His past one coming there were two great stages that have a most happy echo and counterpart in His coming again; the main features by which the first coming was characterised are found again giving character to the stages of His one coming again. In the first stage in His past coming this took place: there gathered to Him in a place to which He had come, heaven-enlightened, heaven-summoned, heaven-guided ones. In the second stage of His first coming, He came to where the people were who should have welcomed Him as their God-appointed, God-anointed King. In the first stage of His past coming, He was announced as a born King and a born Saviour; in the second stage of His past coming, He was presented King unto being a manifested Saviour.

Similarly in His coming again, as to the first stage thereof, when He shall come in the character of Son of God, there shall be gathered to where He is, even to meet Him in the air, heaven-instructed, heaven-summoned, heaven-guided ones. The dead and the living in Christ together will be caught up away from earth, to be for ever with and like the Lord. In the second stage of His coming again, He will come

down to earth to where the people are, over whom as King He is indeed to reign, and to whom He is to be manifested in their happy experience, their very Saviour King.

We enlarged on this point from many scriptures that I do not intend to speak of now, but shall seek from this point to fill up the outline, that in brief I have repeated here to-night as the main points of that at which we looked together last night.

I ask you first of all to turn with me to the Gospel according to John. Chapter 11. verse 23, "Jesus saith unto Martha, 'Thy brother shall rise again!' Martha saith unto Him, 'I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.'" Alas! that there should be so many of the dear people of God to-day that are no better instructed in the mind of the Lord than was Martha of this early day. They have a hazy understanding in their minds of a resurrection in the last day, when the righteous and the unrighteous alike shall be brought forth from their graves, and a judgment proceed against them as they shall stand before the Throne of God. "Jesus said unto her, 'I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth in Me, though he die.'" This expression has no reference whatever to being dead in trespasses and sins; as the Revisers tell you, the word is, "though he die, yet shall he live." "Though he die, he that believeth in Me, Who am the Resurrection and the Life, yet shall live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this?"

No question here from the Lord about the resurrection in the last day, but a question in the light of resurrection and life, known from Himself by such as believe in Him Who is the resurrection and the life. Some to know Him in His resurrecting power who have known death as regards the body, and others to know no death, but to know Him as the life, and pass hence together, long, long before the resurrection of the last day shall have come about, for He is the Resurrection and the Life.

We remarked last night that neither in Matthew, Mark, nor Luke, are there any words given from God to us that directly touch or bear upon the coming again of the Lord Jesus Christ, in its first great stage, His coming again for the dead and living in Christ. Not until you come to the Gospel by John do you get words that directly bear on this first stage of His coming again, and even in the Gospel by John it is the merest brief hint. And as I read, it is in this 11th chapter that we get the first hint from the lips of the Lord about this first stage of His coming again; in which He is to manifest Himself as the Resurrection and the Life One in a resurrection and life-giving power that shall precede the resurrection of the last day: which resurrection of the last day I understand is the resurrection spoken of in the 5th chapter of this Gospel by John, verses 27-29, and agrees with the resurrection spoken of in the 20th chapter of the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ. With which compare Rom. 2. 6-11.

Indeed, as you look into this Gospel by John, from the 11th and 12th chapters especially, you will see that they are intensely prophetic, and if not intensively prophetic, they are at least intensively illustrative of prophetic truth. For you have one asleep whom Jesus loved; Jesus coming as Lord, as the Resurrection, and raising from among the dead ones the one beloved by Him, named Lazarus; restoring him to his loved ones, who with him around the Lord keep the feast that is spoken of in the 12th of John: then after the feast at Bethany you find that many believed on the Lord because of Lazarus. So similarly I believe that millions will believe on the Lord Jesus Christ to their salvation at the rapture of the Church. Children of Christians caught up at the shout of that coming Lord Jesus as Son of God, and many others beside (I believe the 12th of John, and Scriptures we looked at last night, abundantly testify), shall be born of God as soon as the rapture has become a fact.

But not only in the 12th of John will you get that

many believed on Him because of Lazarus, but read on, and you will find of Him being presented and welcomed as the promised King. Moreover, as you read on in John, following on His reception as the anointed King, you will find the Greeks, the Gentile ones coming, and saying, "Sir, we would see Jesus." So we repeat, the 11th and 12th of John, if not prophetic, are intensely illustrative of prophetic truth: Lazarus answering to the dead, and those to whom he was restored answering to the living in Christ, caught up by Him who is coming as the Resurrection and as the Life in the character of Son of God; many believing on Him because of those raised ones, and because of that meeting that has been brought about; then the Jew or Israel brought into recognition and acceptance of their promised King: and then you have the Greeks drawing near and saying, "We desire to see Jesus."

Pass on to the 14th of John for a moment, "Let not your heart be troubled." We remarked last night, and repeat this night, that the coming again of the Lord Jesus is truth for the heart, and if it be learned in the presence of God the heart will be captivated by it, and because it is truth absolutely for the heart, it is life-moulding in its manifestation; for nothing is so practical or so pregnant with influence on our ways of life, as heart knowledge of the coming again of the Lord Jesus, which may take place at any moment.

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions [*or* abodes]: if it were not so I would have told you. For I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." Elsewhere, the Lord said it was expedient for those that loved Him that He should go back to God from Whom He came, and here, in this 14th of John, the opening words, we find the proof that He offers to our heart that He is coming again is this: "If I go I come again;" and coming again He will take us who are in Christ unto Himself, that

where He is there we may be for ever with Him.

Now let me show you how much truth there is in the statement that I made as to its being but a hint that we get about His coming again in its first stage in the Gospel by John, and that there is nothing in the other "three gospels." Look, please, at 1 Cor. 15, 51, and bear in mind that this epistle was written to all, and is written for all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ the Lord. And therefore, since it was written unto all that in every place were calling upon the name of Jesus Christ the Lord even in the days of the Apostle Paul, understand from that the definiteness and meaning of the words he uses when he says, "Behold I tell you a MYSTERY." This, that the Apostle Paul was telling to every saint in every place had not up till this moment been told to them as he at the bidding of the Lord told it to them. Behold this, he says, "I show [or tell to] you a MYSTERY." "It is a mystery, but I am going to bring it out that you may understand it as a revelation." "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment." Nothing of that kind will take place at the coming of the Son of Man, nothing. No change. In vain will you search the Gospel by Matthew, Mark, and Luke to find such. In vain will you search the prophecies of the Old Testament Scriptures to find in connection with the coming of the Son of Man anything that is akin to "we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump;" and "last" here in my reading is in the sense of highest or best; for while in the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ you have angels having given to them seven trumpets, never in the hand of any do you find the trump of God save in the hand of Jesus Christ our Coming One. "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on im-

mortality." I am going to speak, God permitting, in a part of this city on immortality,¹ and therefore I stay not to speak of it to-night, only let me say this in passing:—the living saints who are on earth, when the Lord Jesus shall come as Son of God, will get immortality: the dead saints at the coming of the Son of God will not get immortality, they will get incorruptibility. Immortality and incorruptibility in the Scriptures are ever only used by God to describe and bespeak a condition that befalls the body: the spirit and soul of man they have nothing at all to do with, and are never in the Scriptures made synonymous with eternal life. Eternal life I have, the gift of God to me, these past five-and-twenty years, glory be to His Name! immortality I may never get: incorruption I shall get, if immortality I do not get; but incorruption is the lot of the sleeping saint raised—immortality the lot of the saint that never dies; that is what he shall get when the Lord comes as Son of God.

Verse 54: "So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, 'Death is swallowed up unto victory.' O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?"

The word "Hades," erroneously rendered grave in the Authorised Version (for it never means the grave, any more than does Sheol of the Hebrew Scriptures) is expunged by the editors of the Revised Version, and the verse reads as I have quoted it: "O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Pass on now with me, please, to 1 Thess. 4. Perhaps if we read a verse in the 1st chapter of 1 Thess. it will be a help to some. Thessalonians is universally believed to be the first letter that the Apostle Paul, at

¹ "Immortality not the Synonym of Eternal Life," uniform with this.

the bidding of God, wrote, and while it does not come first in the order of the epistles in our English Bible, it is the first letter from God through his servant Paul that unfolded in a very distinctive elementary form the primal doctrines of the present dispensation; and in this first chapter of this 1st Epistle to the Thess. we read—verse 9: “They” (that is, those among whom the Thessalonians were moving from whom tidings had been heard) “They themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from among the dead, Jesus who delivereth us from the coming wrath.”

The attitude in which the early Christian was put was this: “waiting for the Son from heaven.” He was not taught that any prophecy needed to be fulfilled in order that the Son should come, but he was taught to serve the living and true God, and to be in waiting posture, waiting attitude, waiting expectation of His Son from heaven. On reading 1 Thess. 4. 13, we learn that these Thessalonians had got into sorrow about some of their number having fallen asleep, and in this letter the Spirit, through Paul, seeks to set them right that they may never give up the waiting posture, that they may never give up looking for the Son from heaven. Therefore He says: “But I would not have you to be ignorant;” and have you noticed, beloved in the Lord, that those very things which the Lord prefaces by these words are the truths concerning which Christians generally are most appallingly ignorant. Take your Bible and find out for yourselves each truth that is prefaced by these words, “I would not have you to be ignorant!” look at the writings even of the leaders among God’s people, consider in your knowledge of God’s people and tell me if this is not your solemn, deliberate conviction that these things concerning which the Lord has said, “I would not have you to be ignorant,” are indeed the things of which Christians generally are most lamentably ignorant.

And is it not indeed in keeping with the ways of our God who knows the way of Satan against us, and against His holy will being known and done by us, that He, in order to arouse our attention and gain our hearts in learning what He would have us learn, is so considerate that He should say again and again and again, "I would not have you to be ignorant," "concerning them which are asleep that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so [*i.e.*, let us also believe that] them also which sleep, through Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent (*that is*, go before them) which are asleep. For the Lord Himself," etc., that is, alone, in contradistinction to His coming as Son of Man, when He will not come alone, but will have a multitude preceding Him, namely, His holy angels, the angels of His might (for the Son of Man shall send forth His angels, etc., Matt. 13.), and a company in His train, namely, the previously caught up and changed saints, the dead and living in Christ who have been taken away by Him in His coming as Son of God. Here, the first stage of His coming again has this blessed mark about it, He is coming alone. "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with voice of archangel and with trump of God." He shouts; the kind of shout is "voice of archangel," and the channel through which the voice is made to be heard is "trump of God." He will descend from heaven with a shout, with voice of archangel shall that shout be given, and it shall sound through the channel of the trump of God, so that the dead and the living in Christ may all hear, and all may respond, "and the dead in Christ shall rise, first : then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in clouds, to meet the Lord in the air." Nothing akin to this happens when He comes as Son of Man. There is no resurrection of dead when He comes as Son of Man; resurrection of

righteous dead ones shall follow very quickly after His coming as Son of Man, but in His coming as Son of Man there is no resurrection of dead ones. And I apprehend there is meaning from God in these words, "the dead IN CHRIST shall rise first:" for though in the cemeteries of this land it is a common thing to see, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord," the careful reader of the 14th of Revelation will learn from God that as yet there are no dead ones "in the Lord." Dead in Christ there are; and righteous, saved and eternally blessed ones there are, dead, who like some that are yet to die "in the Lord" are not "in Christ." "The dead in Christ is as unique as is the expression "so also is the Christ," in the 12th of 1st Corinthians. "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in clouds, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words. But [*please mark this*] of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you." They had indeed need that He should write unto them about the coming again of the Lord Jesus as Son of God, that they might understand what would befall the dead and the living in Christ, when He should so come; "but of the times and the seasons" which have nothing to do with such coming again, "ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night." "The day of the Lord," and the coming of the Lord Jesus Himself (*i.e.*, alone) for the dead and the living in Christ are altogether different; vastly different; different as to their stages, and different as to the range of their operations; diverse, as well as different in their range; diverse in their operations upon such as are the different subjects of the Lord's coming in its first and second stages. Times and seasons do not connect themselves with the coming again of the Lord Jesus in its first great stage, namely, that of Son of God.

One verse in Titus, and another in Hebrews, I wish

to read, before we turn to the book of Daniel. Titus 2. verse 11 to 14, tells us about the grace of God and what it teaches. Among other things that the grace of God that bringeth salvation to all men teaches is this : " Looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of the great God, even our Saviour Jesus Christ." These are two entirely different things; the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory. The blessed hope views only the first great stage of His coming again, and the appearing of the glory, that is, the outshining of the glory of the great God, our Saviour Jesus Christ views the second stage of His coming again.

Now the 9th of Hebrews. There are some to-day who assert that only such as are intelligently waiting for the Lord Jesus when He comes will be taken away by Him, that those who are not watchful, but it may be are careless, and are living after a fashion that no Christian at any time should be living they shall be left.

One of the main Scriptures that those use who thus speak is this 9th of Hebrews. Their misconception arises from a misunderstanding of what it teaches. The 9th of Hebrews in its closing verses, beyond all controversy, is presenting New Testament doctrine in Old Testament type. Thus we read in the 24th verse, " For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into Heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; nor yet that He should offer Himself often, as the High Priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others." The closing words of this 9th of Hebrews are the 16th of Leviticus in Israel; the great day of atonement, and the 9th of Hebrews takes up the great day of atonement, typical truth to illustrate New Testament doctrine. Thus you get, first of all, Christ appearing once and putting away sins by the sacrifice of Himself. Now, what happened on the great day of atonement? Two goats were brought before Jehovah, lots were cast upon them, one for the

Lord, and one for the scapegoat. The goat on whose head the Lord's lot fell was taken, was put to death, its blood was carried into the most holy place by the High Priest of Israel, and when he had gone in and done with its blood as God had bidden him, he came out to the people, while the people to whom he came out—Oh, mark! here is the doctrine of the Gospel, and they who seek to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ in connection with the Gospel of the grace of God will do well to mark what here we see from God—when the High Priest had gone in with that blood, and had done with it as God had bidden him, and come out to the people, he came out to a people **WITH ALL THEIR SINS, WITH ALL THEIR TRANSGRESSIONS, WITH ALL THEIR GUILT STILL UPON THEM.** That blood had not taken away from them their iniquities, hence this verse says here, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many;" for albeit though Christ has died, ("once in the end of the ages hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself,") the sins of men are not thereby removed from them. It needs the second goat, or the New Testament doctrine that is analogous to the second goat to be acted out and be availed of by mankind, in order that from them, by God, their sins may be sent away.

Hence we read in the next verse, "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him unto salvation." That is how the words read: "And unto them that look for Him unto salvation shall He appear the second time without sin." So when the High Priest came out from the holy place, and put his hands on the head of the **SECOND** goat, the living goat, and confessed over its head all the guiltinesses of that people, then God said he would take away their sins, and would send them away on the head of that goat unto a land not inhabited, and when their sins had thus been put away, the High Priest went back into the presence of God,

and the people waited for him to come out a second time, and when he came out a second time he came out without sin; he came out a Priest clad with the garments of glory and beauty, to bless them in the name of Jehovah.

Our Lord Jesus Christ has died as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world; He went to God and His Father, and came back, and was seen among men (John 20. 17, compare verse 27), then He went back from the midst of His chosen witnesses and sent down His witness to us that He will come again as He went, and now "unto all who look for Him unto salvation shall He appear the second time without sin." Read the 9th of Hebrews in the light of the 16th of Leviticus, from your God, as you are bound to do if you learn it as He would teach you, and you will see that the thought that only such as are in the waiting attitude will be taken when He comes for the living and dead in Christ, well meant as it may be, is as erroneous as it is possible to be. For it is not a question of faithfulness to Him. Give me one "in Christ," whether dead or living, when He comes as Son of God, and I will give to you one who, because in Christ, shall be caught up to be for ever with the Lord together with all who thus are taken up.

These words may fit us now to look at the 9th of Daniel. This 9th of Daniel is a most interesting chapter. It opens by presenting us Daniel not so much as the prophet of God, as Daniel the student of God's word. The 9th chapter of Daniel shows us Daniel, prophet of God though he was, on his knees at the prophetic words of God through His prophet Jeremiah, seeking to understand the mind of God; Daniel the student, and to him fresh revelations were given as we read here. Daniel 9. 20: "And whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before Jehovah my God for the holy mountain of my God; yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision

at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding." (Not to puzzle him—he came forth to give him skill and understanding.) "At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter and consider the vision. Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make atonement for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the holy of holies [*that is*, the holy place of the temple]. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after the threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off¹ and shall have nothing, and the people (singular) of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he [the prince that shall come] shall confirm a covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations, he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolator: "not the desolate one, but the desolator: he who does desolating work shall have that which is determined poured upon him when the moment of God shall have come.

These seventy weeks (or heptads) we know are weeks of years, not because the Hebrew word here rendered "weeks" of itself *determines* that, but we know it from the following two reasons. At the

¹ The marginal reading is correct.

beginning of this 9th chapter of the book of Daniel, Daniel understood by books the words of Jeremiah that God would do such and such in seventy years with Jerusalem and her people. These years were literal years, and seventy heptads (*i.e.*, of years) were determined, said Gabriel to Daniel, upon his people and his holy city. Then again see chapter 10. verse 2: "In those days I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks." In order that we might distinguish between the weeks of chapter 9. and the weeks of chapter 10. God adds in the Hebrew of the latter, as the margin of your English Bible tells you, "weeks of days," "I was mourning three weeks of days." Why bring in the words "weeks of days" if not to lead us into a clear understanding, that having begun speaking about years he goes on to speak about seventy sevens of what? Clearly of years, we infer, and so truly is our inference correct that as we read on and find the Spirit using the word "weeks," again He adds the words "weeks of days."

Please remember that this commandment from which the seventy weeks run their course had not been given when Gabriel made this revelation to Daniel. This commandment to restore and build Jerusalem is the point from which these seventy weeks began to run their course. The seventy are divided, as you will notice, into seven, and sixty-two and one. If you count from the time when the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem was given, which you have in the 2nd chapter of Nehemiah, you will find that from that date to the closing of Old Testament Scripture (when, as one has beautifully said, "God wiped his pen and spoke no more until the Baptist appeared;") if you count, I say, from the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem, in the 2nd of Nehemiah, to the date of Malachi's prophecy, there run between exactly seven weeks (or sevens) of years, namely forty-nine years, and from the date of Malachi's prophecy till the date of the crucifixion of the Christ, there are exactly threescore and two weeks,

or sevens of years ($62 \times 7 = 434$ years).¹ Thus from Nehemiah 2. to Matthew 28. we have exactly the seven weeks and the sixty-two weeks fulfilled; I believe, could it be determined, the very day was accurately accomplished by God. This from Scripture we know, the month in which the weeks began their course, and the month in which the Christ was crucified, were identical, and the 483 years (or sixty-nine weeks) were exactly fulfilled from the month Nisan to the month Nisan.

But what about the last week? Betwixt that cutting off of the Messiah who had nothing, people, city, or anything else, between that and the seventieth week there runs the dispensation that is commonly known by the term, the Christian dispensation.

The days from Calvary's death of the Son of God, until the time of His coming again as Son of God, are days that roll between the sixty-nine weeks end and the beginning of the seventieth week, and it will necessitate, as God has been pleased to reveal His purpose; it will necessitate the removal of this unique thing that God is doing, that He kept hid in Himself—NOT HID IN PROPHECY, but hid in Himself from the generations named by Paul in Ephesians 3., for example, and brought out through Paul. Until God has finished that mystery, and has removed it from off the scene of His dealings among men, until then, the seventieth week of Daniel cannot be brought into linking and continuous course with the sixty-ninth week. But see, betwixt Calvary's death of the Son of God, and the raising up of the Apostle Paul, the revealing to him of the mystery of the calling of the Church in her relation to Christ, days intervened; there was a period that elapsed between the fulfilment of the sixty-ninth week, and the beginning of the present dispensation proper; so similarly as we look

$$\begin{array}{rcl}
 7 \text{ weeks} & = & 49 \text{ years.} \\
 62 \text{ } & \text{..} & = 434 \text{ } \\
 \hline
 69 \text{ } & \text{..} & 483 \text{ }
 \end{array}$$

into the Scriptures we gather, that between the taking away of the dead and the living in Christ (the catching up of that woman whom God is building for the last Adam, the Eve that shall be presented to Him when He comes as Son of God; when the Christ is completed, through all the baptized in the one Spirit into the one Body) between this and the coming of the Son of Man there shall intervene a period analogous to the days, the years, that rolled between Calvary's death of the Son of God, the raising up of the Apostle Paul, and the revelation to him of the mystery that God had previously kept hid in Himself. These years that rolled between the end of the sixty-ninth week, and the beginning of the present dispensation, are analogous to the days, the years, that shall run betwixt the taking away of the Church, as we believe and understand what is said, and the beginning of the seventieth week of Daniel—which seventieth week of Daniel must run its course ere the Son of God shall come not as Son of God, but as Son of Man.

That may prepare you for looking with me at Matt. 24. In the end of the 23rd chapter you have the Lord Jesus saying (verse 38), "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me henceforth till—" they will see Him again, but when they see Him again is this time when they shall say, "'Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.'" And Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came to Him to shew Him the buildings of the temple. But Jesus said unto them, 'See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down!' And as He sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto Him privately, saying, 'Tell us.'" Three questions they ask, three things they want to know, please mark them each: (1) "When shall these things be? (2) What shall be the sign of Thy coming (3) and of the end of the age."

Three questions. The first question, "When shall

these things be?" is answered in verses 4, 5, and 6; these give you the answer as to when these things shall be, the throwing down of the stones of the temple, the uprooting of the desolate house, the people given up until the moment shall come when they shall say, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord."

Verses 4, 5, and 6: "And Jesus answered and said unto them, 'Take heed that no man lead you astray. For many shall come in My name, saying I am the Christ; and shall lead many astray. And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for these things must needs come to pass, but the end is not yet.'" "The end is not yet"—very clearly marked off it is that whatever sorrows those were, they were not the sorrows in connection with the end.

Now the second question, "What shall be the sign of Thy coming?" is answered from verse 7 of Matt. 24. on through to chapter 25. verse 30. All the words from chapter 24. 7, to chapter 25. 30, give us the Lord's answer to the question, "What shall be the sign of Thy coming?" And these signs of His coming contain in them seven parables, of which I cannot to-night stay to speak, but I tell you they are there; they who care have only got to read to see them for themselves, and seeing them for yourselves, you will doubtless of your God be enabled to appreciate the fittingness of their place as being signs of His coming again, not as Son of God, but as Son of Man.

"What *shall be* the sign of the end of the age?" From verse 31 to verse 46, that is, the last verse of chapter 25., you get the answer to the third question, "What shall be the end of the age?" He is coming to sit as the Son of Man on the throne of His glory.

It is the glory of a MAN to forgive a wrong, and the wrongs that He will forgive when, as Son of MAN, He sits on the throne of His glory, are exceeding wonderful as we contemplate them, for at that throne of the Son of Man kindness to the Jew sheltered (as the spies by Rahab) in guilty, guilty Christendom, will put him or her that hath done the kindness in posses-

sion of eternal life, and a welcome from the One who sits on that throne glorying to forgive the wrong done to Him by guilty ones. Those who stand before this throne, not one of them has been raised from the dead; not one of them is from heathendom proper; these are such as shall pass through the great tribulation preserved by God like the Jew through the same great tribulation of the antichristian days, the latter half of the week; preserved by God as in the days of Noah were those eight in the ark, for so shall it also be in the days of the Son of Man.

Now let me further say a word in reference to 2 Thess. 2., that when God shall send the strong delusion that they shall believe the lie, that sending by God will not be until after that the man of sin has been revealed; and the man of sin cannot be revealed till the temple of God is in existence at Jerusalem, in the literal land of Palestine; and a temple of God at Jerusalem there cannot be, so long as there is on earth a heavenly-called people, as is the calling of God in the dispensation, known as the Christian dispensation, where Jew and Gentile alike in Christ, lose their characteristics as such, and are made one in Christ: whereas when that temple is built, it will be Jew distinct from Gentile, Gentile distinct from Jew; the Jew will have words of saving grace from God, only for the Jew; as exclusively for the Jew as was the preaching of the Baptist, as was the baptism of the Baptist, as was the preaching of Peter on the day of Pentecost, as was the baptism of Peter on the day of Pentecost, preaching baptism to and for men of Israel only. On the other hand, and distinct from the grace of God to Israel in that latter time, there shall be words of saving grace and mercy to the Gentile, preached, I judge, by such as answer to them who believed on Him because of Lazarus having been raised from the dead, and God will hand on His truth, I doubt not, according to the analogy of the faith, from those Gentile ones thus blessed by Him to the Jew, as He used the Jew to hand on to the Gentile the gospel of His

grace that peculiarly marks the dispensation that now is.

More I fain would say, but time forbids, and I trust that my endeavour to be at once elementary and complete will have God's truest blessing, and that nothing but profit to His glory shall accrue from our two nights being together; but that each of us shall go from these meetings seeing this: He is coming: in that coming are two stages, first His coming to gather to Himself His loved and His own, and then to them becoming the unveiled One, the manifested One; this unveiling and manifestation will pave the way for the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of His might, which revelation shall be followed by the outshining of His coming, wherewith He shall slay the Antichrist, the lawless one, the man of sin, unto sitting down on the throne of His glory as Son of Man, to be known for the blessing of the entire earth; not only Son of Man, but Son of David, Son of Abraham, Seed of the Woman, making the grace and mercy of God to sweep the globe around, until none shall need to say to his fellow, "know the Lord," for all shall know Him from the least unto the greatest. Albeit a dark and terrible day shall flow therefrom; for of the very offspring of those who have been thus blessed by Him in the second stage of His wondrous coming again, shall be found in the end to range themselves under the leadership of Satan, who is then cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are, having been cast therein alive 1000 years before. Thus God gives the great counterpart to His grace and truth at the present time; for as He had an Enoch and an Elijah translated to heaven without death, Satan, too, shall know his Enoch-and Elijah-like ones to be hurled down to hell without death, namely the Antichrist and the false prophet. Shall saints of God know what it is to go without dying to be for ever with and like the Lord? Then they who have chosen to receive the mark of the beast, and go in for Satan's god, shall from the left hand of the

throne of the Son of Man's glory so go from off earth without death into everlasting torment. Thus shall God fulfil the bitter counterpart to them that will reject His grace, that do spurn His mercy, that contemn His love, that will not yield to Him; He will fulfil the bitter contrast, as we said, to all the blessing that He will give in His grace to such as obey Him in His gospel words, whether they be the words of the gospel of the grace of God, or of the gospel of the kingdom, or of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, or of that which shall be preached last of all, the everlasting gospel by the heavenly one flying through mid heaven, preaching to them that dwell upon the earth, to acknowledge Him bare Creator, and salvation is theirs. On the heels of that angel another angel shall quickly follow, and shall testify to the doom of Babylon; the third one then following shall cry, "If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God mixed and unmixed in the cup of His anger, and he shall be tormented . . . and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever" (Rev. 14. 6 to 11).

God help us, thus in His mind somewhat instructed, to go on as His friends, loving Him, and delighting ourselves only in His will; and as far as we have access to scatter the truth abroad, so that even if our children be left behind when the Lord comes for us, they shall know their whereabouts, and shall not be like seamen on a tossed and angry sea, with neither compass nor rudder, but, being instructed by us as to what is coming to pass, know exactly what they ought to do, and thus fortify themselves against the evil that is coming in the last days on this poor world, to the praise of Him who died, and lives, and is coming again.

The following questions were sent in after the delivery of the above addresses :

1. *Is not the first resurrection in two stages; first, those that are Christ's at His coming in the air, and second, those saints who die during the great tribulation, at His appearing, seeing that the latter as well as the former live and reign with Him a thousand years?*

The first resurrection is not only in two stages, but many others as well. The first stage of the first resurrection was the resurrection of the Christ Himself from among the dead. The next who will be raised in the first resurrection will be such as are "in Christ" when the Lord Jesus comes as Son of God. After those, probably the Old Testament Saints. After these, probably the Infant dead. After that, the two witnesses from God, probably Moses and Elias, spoken of in the 11th of the Revelation, who will be slain in the city where their Lord was crucified, and whose dead bodies will lie in the street of yonder city of Jerusalem in yonder land of Palestine till after three and a half days life from God will enter their lifeless bodies, and they shall be caught up to heaven, part of the first resurrection. After them, those who have died or been put to death during the time of the great tribulation will be raised and shall live and reign with Christ during the Millennium, that is, the thousand years spoken of in Revelation 20. Thus there are many stages in the first resurrection. Of all which 1 Cor. 15. 20-28 R.V. tells, while Heb. 11. 39, 40, and other Scriptures confirm.

2. *Can you give a brief exposition of Matt. 24. 28, and Luke 17. 37. To whom do the expressions "carcase," and "body," refer, and who are the "eagles"?*

Comparing the 17th of Luke with the 24th of Matthew, you will see clearly that the eagles are the angels of God, and that the body and the carcase to which they come are the tares found in the field of the Son of Man. The angels will come to bind them in bundles and cast them out of the kingdom into the outer darkness, where shall be the weeping, and the wailing, and the gnashing of the teeth, and where there is such a body, such a carcase, thither will the angels of His power come; for like the eagles they are keen of sight, and swift of swoop, and none who are tares shall escape their clutches.

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