

# Unsearchable Riches

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EDITED BY

A. E. KNOCH and V. GELESNOFF

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## INTRODUCTION TO THE 1983 REPRINT

*Unsearchable Riches* was first published in Minneapolis, Minnesota, under the editorship of Vladimir M. Gelesnoff and Adolph E. Knoch. Although their views on some issues changed as they continued investigations into God's Word, no attempt has been made in this reprint of Volume I to alter their original thoughts. However, several numbered pages in the original volume were blank or contained only brief notices concerning subscriptions and advertisements. We have inserted a study by Alan Burns in these pages. Entitled, "New Testament Thoughts," it was first published in 1908 in the pages of a little magazine called *Grace and Glory*. That magazine might be called the predecessor of *Unsearchable Riches* since it was edited by Alan Burns and Vladimir Gelesnoff, and A. E. Knoch had contributed some articles to it. The study by Alan Burns begins on page 61, and is continued throughout the volume as indicated.

Now in its seventy-fourth year, *Unsearchable Riches* magazine is still published by the Concordant Publishing Concern, and bound copies of most volumes are available.



## EDITORIAL NOTES.

It is with a sense of deep gratitude to God that we send forth the first number of this Magazine in the interest of a rightly apportioned Word.

The truth which we endeavor to make known through these pages is one which thus far has been sadly ignored, but which is a stimulus to deeper Bible study, opens up the treasures of God's Grace and the resources of His multifarious Wisdom, and discloses endless vistas into time and eternity, both past and future.

This enterprise is not undertaken on the spur of the moment. It is the result of several years' protracted thought and consideration. Realizing our own insufficiency and weakness, we balked at shouldering so arduous a task, in spite of repeated urgings and solicitations of many friends, which would have remained unheeded but for the sympathy and co-operation of our beloved and esteemed friend, Mr. A. E. Knoch, of California.

The character of *Unsearchable Riches* is irenic, not polemic. It seeks to state the truth as God gives it to us, without wounding the feelings of those who may hold differing views. God has taught us to count no person common or unclean. And experience demonstrates that the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit is often present where His illumination is not vouchsafed, and that the mind may be muddled while the heart remains true.

The truths essential to Christian fellowship are three—all concerning the Person of Christ: The Virgin Birth, the Vicarious Death, the Resurrection. Possession of these vital truths should distinguish every believer from those about him. With all those holding these essentials

we seek to cultivate fellowship, irrespective of denominational affiliations.

The Person of Christ is the touchstone of Christian fellowship and the channel along which it flows. Repudiation of the above cardinal points excludes from the pale of Christian fellowship. On the other hand, to erect other barriers than these is tantamount to a denial of the injunction to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Intolerance or undisciplined religious zeal for traditional party tenets is doing more to demoralize the forces of God than the assaults of blatant infidels and the craft of perverts.

*Unsearchable Riches* is supported entirely by the free will offerings of God's people. A number of friends send us monthly donations. These, together with the subscriptions, provide the publishing fund, which at present allows the issuance of a number every month. Financial help will be needed until the Magazine becomes self-supporting, and we are confident that all who are helped by our ministry will deem it a privilege to help us bear this burden.

We also wish to enlist the aid of our readers in making the Magazine known. Every effort to spread the truth will be heartily appreciated.

May we request those who have promised monthly donations to kindly send them promptly by the 15th of each month? We depend on them for the payment of the printer's bill, and think it contrary to God's mind to contract debts.

We pray and fondly hope that the Lord's richest blessing may rest on these pages, causing them to be "helps by the way" to all perusing them.

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The aim we have in view is *recovery* of truth. Much of it was lost immediately after Paul's departure from

this earthly scene. Some has been recovered, but a great deal still remains buried beneath the rubbish of decayed theology. Current teaching, especially on the subject of Paul's ministries, needs readjustment.

Paul's ministry differs radically from that of the other apostles as to sphere and character.

The Twelve preached to the *Circumcision*.

Paul preached to the *Nations* (Gal. ii: 10).

The Twelve proclaimed *pardon* to the Circumcision.

Paul preached *grace* to the aliens.

The repentance of Israel as a nation was the aim of their ministry. Their preaching of Messiah as Son of David calls to mind the times of the Shepherd-King.

Paul's ministry, which should never be mixed up with that of the Twelve, passed through three different phases, each based on a special and distinct revelation. These are:

The Gospel of God—Rom. i. 1, 2.

The Mystery of the Gospel (the Reconciliation)—Rom. xvi. 25-27, Eph. vi. 19.

The Secret Economy—Eph. iii. 3, 9.

These can be properly understood only in the light of Israel's apostasy. Each failure on Israel's part is followed by further concessions to the nations.

It is well to note at the outset that each new departure in Paul's ministry—each revelation—points backward to a remoter type than the preceding.

Justification, which is the focus of the Gospel of God, is prefigured in the dealings of God with Abraham in uncircumcision (Rom. i-iv).

Reconciliation goes back to Adam, finding its type in the grim period intervening between the failure of Adam and the call of Moses (Rom. v-viii).

The Secret Economy overrides all previous revelations, carrying us back anterior to the overthrow of the mundane system by sin (Eph. i. 4).

Such clear discrimination between the types requires equally clear discrimination between the antitypes.

The Gospel of God was no secret. This is clear from the opening verses of the Roman letter (Rom. i. 1-3). It relates to the blessing of the nations on the basis of the Abrahamic covenant.

The Reconciliation was a *partial* secret. It is first seen in silhouette, then it is dissipated, then it emerges into clear light and is heralded among all nations (Rom. xvi. 25-27).

The Secret Economy was an *absolute* secret. God was positively hiding it from the ken of former ages. There is no mention of it even in Paul's letters until Ephesians was sent on its mission (Eph. iii. 9).

These three ministries possess two common features: all concern the nations, and all are committed to Paul. But beyond these similarities they vary considerably in other respects.

The Gospel of God was ministered by word of mouth (Rom. xv. 15-21).

The Reconciliation was divulged by means of "prophetic writings," viz., the epistles which set it forth, as Romans, Corinthians, etc. (Rom. xv. 25-27).

The Secret Economy was made known to Paul, and its ministry carried on by the servants of the local assemblies (Eph. vi. 21).

Other notable differences press themselves upon our notice.

Abraham was blessed by a priest (Gen. xiv. 18-20, Heb. vii. 6). So the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant will be dispensed to the Gentiles by the priest-na-

tion. In line with this, when Israel failed and Paul took her place toward the nations, he ministered the Gospel of God as a *priest* (*leitourgos*) (Rom. xv: 16).

The Reconciliation was ministered by him as Messiah's *ambassador* (2 Cor. v. 18-21).

The Secret Economy was made known by him as Messiah's prisoner (Eph. iii. 1).

These ministries differ also in another particular—the *time* of their revelation.

Justification and freedom from law (though not complete, as current versions seem to imply,) were preached during his itineracy among the nations and the dispersion (Acts xiii. 39). Justification is first broached in his sermon at Pisidian Antioch. Afterwards it is fully developed in the first four chapters of the Roman letter.

Reconciliation is unfolded in his letters, after the hostile attitude of the Jews outside the land became manifest, but before his imprisonment.

The Secret Economy was committed to his stewardship *after* his imprisonment.

The contents of the Roman letter revolve around two themes: Justification (ch. i-iv), and Reconciliation (ch. v-viii).

Abrupt severance of ch. ix-xi from the preceding portion of the epistle has tended to obscure the teaching of reconciliation. Ch. v-viii view it in the effulgence of God's love and glory, while ch. ix-xi point out that its root lies in Israel's apostasy. "For if the casting away of them is the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" (Rom. xi. 15).

The opening and closing salutations of the great epistle are in perfect accord with the two themes discussed. The opening verses summarize the salient features of the Gospel of God (Rom. i. 1-7); the concluding verses

summarize the salient features of the Secret of the Reconciliation and distinguish it from the Gospel of God. "Unto him that is able to stablish you according to my Gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, in harmony with the revelation of the secret silenced in the course of ages, but now manifested, and by prophetic scriptures, according to the decree of the God of Ages, is made known unto all nations for faith obedience." (Rom. xvi. 25-27).

With Romans as a starting point, subsequent epistles add more lustre to its glorious beams. Romans presents Reconciliation from the Divine standpoint. The Corinthian letter views it from our standpoint, following it with an impassioned appeal to receive what grace has given. Ephesians enriches the subject by adding the reconciliation of Jew and Gentile (Eph. ii. 16), and Colossians winds it up with the reconciliation of the universe (Col. i. 20).

The above is but a scanty outline of the subjects which are foremost in our mind. We wish to share these exceedingly rich and precious truths with our fellow-believers. Our effort will be to unfold them by the Spirit's gracious help, so that others may be able to see them. God's choicest gift to us is His Word. Let us bring to the task of Bible study our very best.

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## RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD.

We have the fullest faith that the Bible is a direct revelation from God to man, and that therefore a careful study of its contents is the imperative duty and life work of *all* Christians. We have not been veered in the least by the terrific din of battle waging around the question of its genuineness and inspiration between the orthodox defenders on the one side and the *literati* of the critical school on the other.

We hold that the Person of Christ, that wonderful Personage utterly separated from all others, and utterly unlike them in its totality, while akin to God and man in its duality—a Personage whose absolute deity is emphatically attested in both Testaments, and shines forth in gleams of light through every word and act of His earthly life, is the final answer to all such disputes. Our position may be thought narrow, but it is so only because we take Christ at His word, and are more willing to be “narrow” and “out-of-date” with it than to be “broad” and “up-to-date” without it.

It is unjust to accuse a man of being narrow, because he takes a person of undisputed integrity strictly at his word; and if Christ has definitely expressed Himself on the inspiration and authorship of the Pentateuch, and on the strength of the accredited facts of His sinless humanity and absolute deity, we take His statement as authoritative, are we therefore narrow?

Is a man narrow because in a dispute where incalculable temporal and eternal interests tremble in the balance—a dispute in which literary adepts and scientific pedants have, without sufficient warrant, preferred against the Bible grave indictments of untruth, which a more

accurate knowledge of ancient history has proved to be unfounded—he refuses, in view of such glaring incompetency in dealing with facts displayed by the assailants of the Bible, to commit himself to the paralogism, and accept the conclusions of a vicious criticism that stands convicted before the bar of evidence, and adheres, for want of better evidence, to the mighty teachings of the Book whose veracity has—thus far at least—been vindicated and confirmed by every fresh discovery? We think not.

We are profoundly convinced, that in the present strained condition of affairs, a prayerful, humble meditation of our Lord's lowly journey from the manger of Bethlehem to Calvary's cross,—with a sincere desire to know the truth, and a heart honest enough to receive it,—will effectually banish the doubts which a crass criticism has created in the minds of many; while bulky tomes of brainy discussion and pointed argument are apt to evoke more smoke than light, and form in the hearts of anxious readers as many clouds as they assist in dispelling.

When God wanted to teach backsliding Israel the relations that should exist between Himself and the recipients of His grace, He set them forth under the figure of a lump of pliable clay moulded freely by the potter's hand (Jer. xviii: 16). This is the ideal attitude. Every Christian should be unreservedly yielded to God; not in the spirit of unconcerned, passive resignation to the inevitable, but of an intelligent and affectionate response to God's benevolent will. It is this element of elasticity that makes life useful, vigorous, robust; and endows service of that permanency which insures its enduring the ordeal of that day, "when the fire will prove each man's work of what sort it is (1 Cor. iii: 12-14). When that element of elasticity evaporates, spiritual vitality is sap-



ped by earthly influences, and service is reduced to a mere mechanical repetition of lifeless forms and worn-out creeds.

Again; it is the lack of this elasticity that lures God's people out of the narrow path of separation, and compels the Father to take in hand the chastening rod and inflict faithful wounds calculated to bring them back to their senses and spare them the self-inflicted sorrows of disobedience. Balaam and David persisted in a course of overt disobedience to God's plain injunctions, and were allowed to carry out the designs upon which their hearts were set, but they involved themselves in calamitous consequences, and had to learn from bitter experience what would have been their happy prerogative to learn in communion with God. Our fear should be, lest, being chastened of the Lord, we should fail to assimilate the lessons which His scourging designed to administer, and smart under its lashes without reaping the peaceful fruit of righteousness, which the scourging yields to those that have been exercised thereby.

God's judicial administration is fraught with mercy. The darkest clouds are not without silvery linings. To know this truth is to possess the secret of blessedness; to remember it when flesh and heart are failing, and the black air begins to hurtle with the darts of the enemy, is to let the Almighty hand clasp ours and guide us through the narrow path strewn with the snares of the devil, artfully concealed in the gloom that thickens around us. Delusion is the devil's *forte* in this age, and we must take care not to escape its grosser forms and become a prey to the more subtle. Wielding our weapons against those who—under the specious pretense of scholarship, and in the witchery of modern style—seek to smother all spiritual life, our apprehension should be, lest, devoting our energies to obstruct their progress, we should fail to

learn some needy lesson which may have been brought to our attention by means of these attacks. It is to be feared that an unwonted amount of time and talent is expended in joining issue with the opponents and critics of the Bible that might be employed to better advantage.

The popularity of destructive movements is always evanescent, and their achieved successes are short-lived. Some movements, like some characters, appear to best advantage at a distance. Sensationalism invests them with a false halo which enhances for a time their superficial attractions and conceals their defects; but which disappears after the first desire for novelty has been gratified. Looked at from a distance, criticism possesses, like these characters, a beauty which fades away on closer acquaintance. It does not belong to what botanists describe as an endogen, an exogen, or an acrogen; neither growing internally by assimilation of truth, nor externally by propagation of life, nor upwards by increasing spirituality. A feeble exotic, dependent upon an artificial hot-house atmosphere for its very existence, it is the very antipode of faith, which, like a stately oak, may cast off its leaves for a time, but only to put them on again with returning spring, or to the perennial pines and evergreens which dare the winter frosts and snows.

Deflection from God's path exposes the saints to Satan's attacks; and he is not slow to take advantage of such welcome opportunities and utilize them to the best of his ability. But in God's hands, let it be stated for the sake of comfort, Satan is a powerful agent in carrying out God's disciplinary plans; and when, as in the case of Job and Peter, His people are permitted to fall into his hands, and experience the influence of his mighty spells, it is only for the purpose of diverting them from hidden shoals and lead them to a closer walk with God. Satan's malignity, and the magnificent results which the wisdom

of God accomplishes through its medium, remind one of the painter, who, actuated by jealousy, flung a sponge at the canvas of his rival, intending to obliterate the scene, but producing by the merest accident the very effect which the artist's utmost efforts had failed to secure. God's purposes are at times born in obscurity, but the very gloom from which they emerge heightens the after-effect.

We will now proceed to study several Scriptures on the subject of the Word.

In a discourse to His disciples Jesus said: "I am the way, the truth and the life; no one cometh unto the Father but by me." (Jno. xiv: 8.)

In His intercessory prayer, lifting up His eyes to Heaven, He breathed the petition: "Sanctify them in the truth: Thy word is truth." (Jno. xvii: 17.)

In the course of a conversation with the Jews, Jesus said to those who had believed Him: "If ye abide in my word, ye are truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (Jno. viii: 32.)

One of the last words of the Apostle Paul to Timothy was: "Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (2 Tim. ii: 15.)

Having brought these passages together, we must arrange them in logical order and emphasize the leading thought in each.

"I am the truth." . . . "Thy word is truth."  
 "The truth shall make you free." . . . "Rightly dividing the word of truth." Thus read together, we perceive at a glance that these Scriptures are interlaced by the usage of the word *truth*.

The first of the above adduced texts speaks of Him Who is the essence and source of truth—our Lord Jesus Christ. "The Scriptures testify of me."

The second text indicates the medium by which truth, of which the Person of Christ is the living embodiment, is communicated to mortals. "No one knows the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him" (Matt. xi: 27). God's chosen instrument to reveal to mortals the person of His Son is the written Word. Thus the written Word of God, being a presentation of His Person—a portrait of the living Truth expressed in inanimate words—is, and of necessity must be, the truth. While in a sense it is perfectly true that "the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life" (yet *only* in a sense, since the passage in question has no reference whatever to the subject to the support of which it is perpetually adduced); yet the fact remains, that *the Spirit needs the vehicle of the letter*, and for the cultivation of the spirit enjoined, we must come to know the letter enjoining. The light is the essential thing, but it needs a lightholder of some kind; and it is impossible to destroy the lamp without extinguishing the light; for it is very difficult to know just where the gold of the lamp and the glory of the light divide, so strange and splendid is the merging. Christ is the light (Jno. viii: 12), the written Word is the God-made lamp, and it will be found, like all the works of God, to be perfect in form, as well as in truth. All God's works are perfect; and His Word being the greatest of His works, we must look for and expect perfection there. The literary form is as perfect as its truth.

The third passage sets forth the object which the truth aims to accomplish. Its chief and foremost design is to free God's people from the blighting influences of the world; that, being purged from all unrighteousness, they may become unobstructed channels through which streams of blessing may flow.

Hosea's complaint, "My people perish for lack of

knowledge" unveils the cause to which a low and carnal state of the people of God is always attributable. For the time being, God's supreme concern is the growth of the Body, the Church; and *knowledge of the truth* is the ordained means to attain that end. "Ye shall *know* the truth, and the truth *shall* make you free." "Desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye *may grow* thereby." (1 Pet. ii: 2.) Truth is the foundation and source of practice; while true practice is the outcome of truth received and obeyed. Holy life, apart from knowledge of God's Word, is no more possible than the raising of wheat without sowing the seed.

This fact is most conspicuous in Christ's promises of the Paraclete. The first promise is, "He shall *guide* you into all the truth" (Jno. xvi: 13); the last, "Ye shall receive *power* when the Holy Spirit is come upon you" (Acts i: 8). Truth and power are related to each other, as to order and importance, as cause is to effect. Truth is the cause, power the effect. But to-day Christians are attempting to reverse this order; they want power without truth, and while all sorts of contrivances are resorted to to obtain the former, the latter is often ignored. The religious press pours forth a daily stream of books on the subject of power, which, in the majority of cases, lay but little stress on God's revealed purposes.

It is a mistake to exalt faith above the Word. Faith can only operate along the line of the Spirit's work, indicated in the Word, and as it is His work to guide us into all the truth, it follows that the sphere of faith's operations will be enlarged or restricted in proportion as the truth is accorded its rightful place.

The saint needs to "know the things freely given unto us of God" (1 Cor. ii: 12). The burden of Paul's prayers was "that we, having the eyes of our heart enlightened, may *know* what is the hope of His calling, what

the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe . . . that we may know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that we may be filled in all the fulness of God" (Eph. i: 18; iii: 19).

The soul's first concern should be to seek—knocking persistently at God's door of revelation—a disclosure of the inheritance of the saints in light. When the portals of God's treasure-house are flung open and a vision vouchsafed, the enraptured eye catches a glimpse of the divine path and the will is energized to walk in it. In 2 Tim. iii: 15, having stated the inspiration of the entire collection of sacred writings, and its component parts, the apostle points to the Word of Truth as God's provision for the perfecting of character and equipment for service. "Virtue, knowledge, self-control, patience, godliness, love of the brethren, love (2 Pet. ii: 1-5) is an unveiling of present possibilities, and, when these are known, faith adds them to its possessions.

The fourth text is a direction for using the truth so that it may accomplish the design for which it was given.

The Word of God is likened to a sword (Eph. vi: 17; Heb. iv: 12). Now the warrior must be skilled in wielding weapons, else, instead of reducing the adversary to submission, he will inflict injury to himself.

The great requirement in dealing out the Word is that it should be "rightly divided," or properly apportioned.

The meaning of this injunction is not far to seek. God's dealings with mankind group themselves into a series of ages. These must be carefully distinguished by apportioning to each the particular truths which God associates with it. Each age bears three distinctly marked features: it begins in divine promise and mercy, proceeds in human sin and apostasy, and ends in the judgment of the wicked and the deliverance of the right-

eous; exalting God and debasing man. But beyond these common features, the ages vary considerably as to character and aim. Each failure on the part of man is followed by an act of Divine intervention, inaugurating a new departure and revealing new phases of His variegated wisdom.

If, then, God has from time to time introduced new methods of dealing with man and made different arrangements for the administration of affairs, is it not clear, without any argument, that it is impossible to introduce the principles and standards of one age into another without dislocating the whole body of revealed truth and involve it into inextricable confusion.

If this simple principle was as readily recognized, and acted upon, in the study of the Bible as it is in daily affairs, many bewildering perplexities would vanish.

The civil war abolished slavery. Therefore the statement of its existence in the commonwealth is either true or false according as it associated with the right or wrong period of American history. The statement of the same fact which is true in one connection becomes untrue in another.

Take another example. At one time Canada was a French colony and was ruled by French law. Then it passed into the hands of Great Britain. With the change of sovereignty there came of necessity a change also of administration. The transition of sovereignty rendered the former code of the Dominion obsolete, and replaced it by another which henceforth was to regulate its proceedings. Therefore, it is apparent, for reasons too obvious to be named, that attempts to enforce French laws which were proper before the transition would be altogether out of place after it had taken place.

If a person unacquainted with history were to read a volume on Canada, he would take the truthfulness of the

writer's description of the country for granted. But if he were to find, a few chapters further, a second description, which seemed to clash with the first, a difficulty would be created in his mind, and he would naturally question the writer's truthfulness. The difficulty, however, vanishes if the reader is informed that one description contemplates Canada under the French regime, the other under the English. Both descriptions are perfectly true when associated with the period present in the writer's mind. But, if the reader joins them together, and interprets them of the same time and the same circumstances, all truth vanishes, and he will involve himself in inextricable confusion. Hence, if we were called upon to examine a certain document pertaining to the affairs of the Dominion, the first step toward its right understanding and interpretation would be to ascertain the period under which the document had been formulated. Details naturally fall into their proper place and are easily understood, once this point is conclusively established.

One characteristic feature from the Fall to the Deluge was restriction to vegetarian diet. After the Flood, God made a covenant with Noah, enunciated new principles, and introduced the use of animal flesh for food. Therefore, to enforce vegetarianism before the Deluge was to cooperate with God for the furtherance of His cause; to enforce it after the Deluge, meant to act in direct opposition to His revealed will.

The recognition of this simple principle is of tremendous importance. Divide the Scriptures properly, and the Bible becomes a harmonious unit; seek to "reconcile" the divisions, and the Bible reduces itself to a mass of discordant and conflicting statements.

Our complaint is not that the injunction to rightly divide the Word is not known, but that it has not received



proper recognition. Theoretically it is recognized. Practically it is almost entirely ignored. Here is the source of the existing confusion. Here, too, is the opening wedge which will make a way out of it. The measure in which God's people can expect blessing is the measure in which they will grasp and apply this great principle and the degree of their willingness to adjust themselves in accordance therewith.

The majority of Christians do not know that *all* Scripture is *for us*, not all is *about us*. All Scripture is *for* the church's learning and profit, but not all Scripture is *about* the church. "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written *for our learning*, that through patience and through comfort of the scriptures we might have hope." (Rom. xv: 4.) All Scripture is *for* us that we may learn of God's ways with men; that, grasping His method and end, we may have patience and hope in time of adversity; but not all Scripture is *about* our position, duty and hope as members of Christ's Body.

Two packages of letters are placed in my possession with the request to read them. In reading the first batch I find myself at home. There are names of persons I have known, places which I have visited, and transactions in which I have taken part. In reading the second I experience difficulty, persons are mentioned whom I have not known, places are named which I have not visited, and transactions recorded in which I took no part. I am at a loss how to account for this fact. At last someone informs me that the first batch of letters was addressed *to me*; while the second was addressed to another party, but is placed in my possession that I may acquire the knowledge of many useful things.

Just so, parts of Scripture are addressed to the nations, others to Israel, others again to the Church. In reading Scripture, then, our first endeavor is to ascertain to whom

that particular portion is addressed and remember that what is spoken to Israel and the nations is subject in their application to ourselves to such modifications as the revelation concerning the Church necessitates.

## THE PENTECOSTAL BLESSING.

WHAT IT IS ACCORDING TO GOD'S WORD.

It is a matter of regret that, in referring to the blessings which were inaugurated at Pentecost, we are forced to use a phrase which, though eminently scriptural and exact, is commonly applied to an experience quite apart from Pentecost altogether.

It will be our endeavor in this essay to treat of Pentecost as it really comes before us in the Scriptures, so that it will be possible to see the true import of "going back to Pentecost" or "having a personal Pentecost." These phrases doubtless have a deep significance as an index to their author's experience. But they are calculated to give us an unscriptural idea of the event which occurred fifty days after the resurrection.

Let us then consider the blessings which were dispensed on that day, and the church which was formed then and the further history of the new departure which the feast inaugurated.

Upon the question "What shall we do?" Peter tells the men of Israel, "Repent, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the pardon of sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2: 38.)

Here we have two blessings promised: the pardon of sins, and the Holy Spirit's gift.

### THE PARDON OF SINS.

The pardon of sins is popularly confounded with justification. But justification was never proclaimed to the Circumcision (except justification by works, as James teaches.) It is distinctly a Pauline doctrine. In fact it

is the chief feature which enabled him to speak of "*my gospel*" in contrast with that of Peter and the twelve.

Justification is a groundless grace given by the great *Judge*. Pardon is extended on the ground of repentance and is the prerogative of the *King*.

Justification may be found at the bar of God alone, and is irrevocable.

Not so pardon. It was delegated to the Apostles (John xx; 23). It may be recalled. Peter once asked our Lord "How oft shall my brother sin against me and I pardon him? till seven times?" But he was told "till seventy times seven." 'Therefore is the Kingdom of heaven likened to a man, a King, who would take account with his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him which owed ten thousand talents. But, forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down and worshipped him saying, 'Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.' Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. But the same servant went out and found one of his fellow servants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, 'Pay me that thou owest.' And his fellow servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, 'Have patience with me and I will pay thee all.' And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow servants saw what was done they were very sorry, and came and told their lord all that was done. Then his lord after that he had called him, said unto him 'O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: should not thou also have had compassion upon thy fellowservant, even as I had pity

on thee?' And his lord was wroth, and delivered him unto the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses." (Matt. xviii 21-36.)

In the original the words "forgive," "remit," etc., are all the translation of one word, which might consistently be rendered "pardon," seeing that it is *proclaimed*, and proclamation can issue only from the executive. We do not speak of *proclaiming* either forgiveness or remission in English.

What does this parable teach? Surely that a man (and a nation, for the application includes the nation of Israel) may be pardoned and yet that pardon be revoked on account of later conduct. The parable fits so perfectly that its interpretation is not far to seek.

Israel it was who incurred the enormous debt by murdering their Messiah. But God pardoned them. The nations got into their debt (Rom. xv: 27). Did they share their pardon with the other nations? Far from it, for the apostle could tell the Thessalonians that "they both killed the Lord Jesus and their own prophets and chased us out, and they please not God and are contrary to all men, forbidding us to speak to the Nations that they might be saved, to fill up their sins always: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost. (1 Thess. ii: 15-17).

But, alas, this was not confined to the unbelieving part of the nation, for the "tens of thousands who believed" (Acts xxi: 20), are the same who cried "Away with such a fellow from the earth for it is not fit that he should live," when the apostle but mentioned the word "*goyim*" (Gentiles). It is notable that the same number (ten thousand, or a myriad), gives us both the number of the talents and the "believers." They correspond to the "pardoned" debtors of the parable (Acts 21 and 22).

Then let us not drag down justification to the level of pardon. God himself is justified in our justification, but surely we may not say that He is pardoned when He pardons!

Justification comes as a result of God's election and call. Pardon follows repentance.

#### THE HOLY SPIRIT'S GIFT.

This is popularly confused with the Holy Spirit Himself. But when, in John iv: 10, we read of "the gift of God," we distinguish between God and His gift. And again in Acts viii: 20 this very gift is called "the gift of God." It is referred to in Heb. xi: 4 as "the heavenly gift." It was manifested in signs and wonders, called in Hebrews, "the powers of the age to come."

#### THE PENTECOSTAL CHURCH.

The character of the pentecostal church was exclusively and radically Jewish. Peter addresses "the house of Israel" and limits the blessings which we have been considering when he says "the promise is unto you and your children and to all that are afar off,\* as many as the Lord *our* God shall call." They continued daily in the temple, only leaving for meals. They had all things in common, in view of the impending judgments and redistribution of the land at the Messiah's coming. The popular supposition that they forsook Judaism vanishes as we find the chiefest of the apostles going to the temple *at the hour of prayer*. (Acts iii: 21.)

The teaching of the apostles, in which the others continued steadfastly (ch. ii: 42), is best known by searching the sermons they preached. The continued reference to David is notable, and should tell us that David's Lord

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\*Peter's subsequent course shows that he had no thought of including other than those of his own nation in this proclamation. (See Acts x: 11).

is presented in His character as David's son. There is no record that they ever proclaimed Him in Jerusalem as the Son of God. That was Paul's doctrine, preached by him alone, although the Apostle John afterwards sets Him forth in this character in his writings.

This conclusion is strengthened by the renewed offer of the Kingdom (which belongs to Israel alone). To offer the Kingdom to-day to apostate Israel would be out of place. To offer it to the other nations, diametrically opposed to God's counsels. But *then* it was in place to preach it to His people Israel.

Circumcision, too, was a part of their religion. In the tenth chapter it is manifest that, had they discarded the rite, it could not have been defended by the Pharisees and the Nations certainly would not be considered eligible to it.

More than this, they continued to keep (?) the law. It seems that the whole myriad of "believers" Paul encountered on his last visit to Jerusalem were all zealous of the law. Indeed, his own avowed course of being under the law to those who were under law (1 Cor. ix: 20) shows that the Jews still clung to the Mosaic commandments. And this included the customs and rites which the law enjoined. Paul takes a vow on himself and is about to offer a sacrifice in his endeavor to gain them.

When Paul was assaulted, their charge against him was "Men of Israel, help, this is the man that teaches all men everywhere against the people, and the law and this place, and further brought Greeks into the temple and hath polluted this holy place" (Acts 21: 28).

Part of this charge was true, for had he not written to the Galatians, comparing Jerusalem to Hagar, Abraham's bondmaid? And how true it was that they were

but *servants* in God's family! And they, like Hagar, were to be cast out.

The fact that they "believed" must not be accorded the meaning which is rightly associated with this expression in Paul's writings. There it is sheer faith, apart altogether from evidence. But in the Gospels and Acts, faith is often the result of signs and wonders. And such faith is not to be trusted.

In this very city of Jerusalem, at the feast of the pass-over some years before, many believed in His Name when they saw the signs which He did. "But Jesus Himself did not 'believe'\* them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify concerning man, for he knew what was in man." (John 2: 11-25).

So then, the doctrine of the twelve apostles concerned the Kingdom, the law was taught, circumcision and the customs instituted by Moses were rigidly enforced. That we have been delivered from the law (Rom. vii: 6) must never be confounded with pentecostal teaching.

#### THE HISTORY OF PENTECOSTAL TIMES.

The book of Acts details the history of the departure which began at Pentecost. Let us glance at a few salient features.

The spread of the movement was at first exclusively Jewish. It is remarkable to note that, immediately after Peter's defense of his mission to the Gentiles, and they had exclaimed, "Then, indeed, hath God also granted to the Gentiles repentance unto life!"—immediately after this we are told, "Now they which were scattered upon the persecution that arose about Stephen, traveled as far as Phenice and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to *none but Jews only*." The "Grecians" or Hellenists of

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\*The same word as the previous, "believe."



the next verse, Jews, too, though they spoke Greek (Acts xi: 18-20). In Gal. ii: 7, 9, 10, we see how Peter and John, the pillars of the Jerusalem church, deliberately resolved to go to the Circumcision, leaving the Uncircumcision to Paul.

But even in its own sphere this ministry fails. It was directed towards the repentance of Israel as a nation. Not alone does the nation as a whole and its rulers fail to respond, but even those who once "believed" and had been once enlightened, and tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of holy spirit and tasted of the good word of God and the powers of the age to come—even some of these apostatize. These things constituted the pentecostal blessing, and they had received them. Still their end is to be burned (Heb. vi: 4-8). These are those who sinned wilfully after they had received the knowledge of the truth, for whom there was no longer sacrifice for sins, but a kind of fearful looking for judgment and fiery indignation, about to devour the adversaries. Worse indeed is their punishment than that of those who despised Moses' law. (Heb. x: 26-31). It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God!

But what remained for them who had not drawn back to perdition, but who had believed to the preservation of the soul? (Heb. x: 39).

They are reminded of what Moses did in a similar apostasy (Exod. xxxiii: 7). The blood of the great anti-type, which avails in God's presence, was shed outside the walls of Jerusalem. And now the exhortation goes forth to separate from that religious system with which the city was linked and of which Pentecost was but a revival. Pentecostal blessings were all "*within* the camp." Indeed, it was itself one of the feasts which characterized the camp. It was a part of the ritual of Judaism.

And since He suffered *without* the camp, the exhortation ran: "Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing His reproach. For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come" (Heb. xiii: 13, 14). Even the Hebrews were weaned from Pentecost.

Shall *we* then forsake *our* glorious place "in Christ," in his death and burial and resurrection and ascension and rest at God's right hand, and come DOWN to "pentecostal blessings"—a temporal pardon and sign gifts of which some of those who partook, drew back to perdition?

Here is the true place for the "falling away doctrine," as it is called.

But let us rejoice that our blessing, though not "pentecostal," is perpetual and perfect because it finds no ground in us, but is altogether "in Christ," so that we are persuaded that *nothing is able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

# THE CHRIST OF GOD.

## I. HIS PERSON AND HISTORY.

"Knowing that ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and without spot: who was foreknown indeed before the foundation\* of the world, but was manifested at the end of the time for your sake, who through him are believers in God, that raised him from the dead, and gave him glory; so that your faith and hope might be in God."—1 Pet. I. 18-21.

There are, on the surface of this verse, three outstanding facts concerning redemption.

1. *Its Assurance.*—The apostle refers to it as to a *past* transaction. "Knowing that ye *were* redeemed." Redemption must be known as an accomplished fact before there can be peace of conscience, intelligent, affectionate worship, or joyful service. There were no songs in Egypt—nothing but sighs, groans, cries. But when the mighty arm of God, raised on Israel's behalf, triumphed over the Egyptians, engulfing them in the great deep, and the ransomed hosts stood on the wilderness side of the Red Sea, then the whole congregation burst into singing

I will sing unto Jehovah, for he hath  
triumphed gloriously:  
The horse and his rider hath he thrown  
into the sea.

2. *Its Object.*—Redeemed from what? "The vain manner of life delivered unto us from the fathers." Redeemed, that is, not merely from our badness, but from our goodness as well. That we need redemption from sin is admitted; that we need redemption from our own righteousness is vehemently denied, though it is writ "we

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\*The word "foundation" should be rendered "overthrow." In a future issue there will appear a study of this word as employed in the New Testament.

are all become as one that is unclean, and all our righteousnesses are as a polluted garment." Christ has redeemed us from our own righteousness, which is an attempt to become just by morality and ordinances.

3. *Its Means.* These are first stated negatively, so as to remove whatever misconception may be entertained upon this vital point. "Not with corruptible things, silver or gold." These have no part in redemption. Then positively, emphasizing the only means of approach to God. "With the precious blood of Christ." Whatever may be the place of ordinances, the New Testament explicitly affirms that they play no part whatever in justification. The blood of Christ alone, single-handed, unaided, unassisted, without adjunct or addition of any kind, makes the believing sinner meet for the presence of a thrice holy God.

Having thus enhanced the great and free redemption, the writer introduces the Redeemer through Whom it comes, presenting Him as a lamb—a figure at once exquisite and lovely, suggestive of gentle innocence.

To set forth the glories of the Redeemer is an arduous task. Few would venture to undertake it. The combined efforts of the saints to set them forth would make a ponderous volume. Yet even that bulky tome would barely touch the fringe of the subject. But the Holy Spirit unfolds the excellencies of the Christ, in two concise phrases, withal so pregnant with meaning that it will take eternity to explore them. "A lamb without blemish and without spot."

What is a blemish?

An inherent defect. It dates from birth.

What is a spot?

A contracted defect. It is due to outside influence.

Christ, as to His humanity, was blameless and spotless, without either inherent or contracted defects. Pass-

ing through life, and living with sinners, He neither absorbed their principles nor adopted their practices, but ever remained "holy, undefiled, separate from sinners."

The prophet Isaiah, in his matchless prophecy of the cross, also presents the Redeemer under the simile of a lamb, describing His perfections by two terse sentences, "he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth."

What is violence? Abuse of power.

What is deceit? The resort of weakness.

When in the place of power, He never abused it. When those in authority abused their power and maltreated Him, He did not resist them. Thus Isaiah shows Him to us as an absolute master of himself, walking through life with steady, unfaltering step, never loosing the moral equilibrium. Invest Him with power, He will not abuse it. Oppress Him, He does not resist. At all times, under all conditions, He stands out in perfect self-possession and resolute equipoise of spirit.

From this hasty contemplation of the Redeemer, the apostle passes to a consideration of His history, which is epitomized in four words: *Foreknown, manifested, raised, glorified.*

#### FOREKNOWN.

"Who was foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world." Redemption is not an after-thought, but a forethought. When Satan entered the garden of Eden; when he accosted the woman and insinuated himself into her affections; when he induced her to eat of the forbidden fruit and give of it to her husband; when Adam, acting on the suggestion of his wife, transgressed the divine command, God was not taken by surprise. His plans had been laid out in view of that possibility, and, before Adam's fall, anterior to the work of the six days,

antedating the creation which preceded it, the sacrificial Lamb of God was set apart in the Divine counsels.

As a fact, it may be confidently affirmed that the material universe itself was created with a view to the Incarnation. The carbon, the iron, the nitrate, the hydrogen, and whatever other ingredients enter into the composition of the human body, were all prepared with a view to the human body of the Lord Jesus Christ. All these substances were never lost sight of. But, preserved by the operation of natural law during the centuries, they found their destined place in that fulness of the time, when God sent forth His Son, born of a woman. Well might He sing in the prophetic language of the Psalms :

My frame was not hidden from thee,  
When I was made in secret,  
And curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.  
Thine eyes did see mine unformed substance;  
And in thy book were all my members written,  
While day by day were fashioned,  
While as yet there were none of them.—Ps. cxxxix 15, 16.

So on that bright creation morning when God said, "Let there be light," and there was light, that train was set in motion which culminated in the resurrection glory of the Son of Man.

#### MANIFESTED.

"But was manifested at the end of the times for your sake, who through Him are believers in God." The Lamb of God foreknown in eternity was revealed in time. The Son is the medium of Divine manifestation. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, he has declared Him." From the word "declare" we derive our word "exegesis," "interpretation." The Son has interpreted the Father. In consequence of that interpretation men became "believers in God."

The Bible is the history of two movements: Creation, and Redemption.

Creation is a movement of contraction. Its order is from God to man. Beginning with the creation of matter, it ends with the creation of man, who was to reflect on a finite scale the essential attributes of the infinite God. Adam had been created in the image and likeness of God. But the image of God in Adam was marred and distorted by the fall. This fact necessitated another vehicle of manifestation, so in the fulness of the time God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, Who was the image of God the invisible, God manifest in flesh.

Redemption is a movement of expansion. Its order is from man to God. Beginning with the unveiling of God in human guise, it moves onward and upward toward the final consummation when God shall come out in the open and dwell with His redeemed creatures. But all the fulness of God which a ceaseless succession of glory-laden ages will display to a wondering universe, was focused in the lowly Nazarene, in Whom dwelt all the fulness of God.

This thought, we think, is the keynote of the gospel by John. It commences with the declaration of a believer, "The Word was God": it concludes with the confirmation of a skeptic, "My Lord and my God!" We use the term "skeptic" not in the sense of one who delights to parade his ignorance under the loud-sounding name of "agnosticism," but in the sense of one who wanted to be sure of a foundation before taking a stand.

Starting his treatise with the affirmation of the essential deity of the Logos, John immediately proceeds to mass the evidence in support of his thesis, marshalling in orderly sequence all that the Logos said and wrought among men. At the close, we see Thomas handling the man. A sifting of the evidence evokes the verdict, "My

Lord and my God." A candid, impartial perusal of the written records of the man Christ Jesus will, we firmly believe, always result in acknowledgement of His essential deity.

The great design of all the incidents in John is to reveal the deity through the veil of the flesh, and display the infinite through the lattice of the finite.

Take, for example, the first chapter, where the disciples are won to the Messiah one by one by the testimony of believing hearts. Simon is brought to Christ by his brother Andrew. Jesus looked upon him, and said, "Thou art Simon, the son of John: thou shalt be called Stone." He reads the newcomer as an open book. With one sentence He digs up his past, with another He scans his future. At that time Peter became a believer in God.

More remarkable still is the case of Nathaniel. Philip saith to him, "We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Nathaniel, influenced by the then current ideas, cautiously replies: "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" "Come and see," is the laconic retort. Nathaniel acquiesced.

When Jesus saw him coming, He said, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!"

"Whence knowest thou me?" exclaimed Nathaniel in surprise.

"Before Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee," rejoined the Lord.

When the Lord said, "I saw thee underneath the fig tree," what did He mean? In the prophetic pictures of millennial blessedness under the personal rule of the Messiah every man is represented as enjoying repose under the shadow of his fig tree. The words of Christ to Nathaniel may be reverently paraphrased thus: "I saw you as one of those guileless Israelites who will heed



Messiah's call and eventually enter the bliss and splendor of His peaceful kingdom on a renovated earth." Nathaniel, well conversant with the prophets, exclaimed, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel!"

Take the wedding at Cana. Man had made his provision for the occasion, but it became exhausted before the ceremony was over, to the dismay of the host and the embarrassment of the guests. When the wine failed, He quietly stepped in, and by His word accomplished in a moment the transmutation which nature performs in a season. When other men give up, this man begins to work. The extremity of others is His opportunity.

The cleansing of the temple has harassed many. There are those who would persuade us that Christ for once lost His patience, gave vent to ill-temper, made a whip of cords, overthrew the tables of the merchants, poured out the changers' money, and drove the traffickers out of the temple precincts. This explanation seems plausible at first sight, but its shallowness becomes apparent on a moment's consideration. It reduces itself to this: The driving out of the merchants from the temple was the act of a crank disturbing the solemnity of a public function.

But does this explanation fit with the facts of the case? By no means. The frantic act of a crank may interrupt a public function and cause momentary consternation, but in a few minutes he is manacled by policemen, the function proceeds, and the untoward incident is closed. If the inventors of this interpretation were to interfere with the monkish processions of Rome which disgrace our cities, one of two things would surely happen: either the infuriated mob would tear them in pieces, or the authorities would land them in jail. But when the Master stopped the desecration of the sanctuary, everybody fled, panic-stricken. The very anger of God flashed from His

eyes and confounded those who turned the house of God into a den of robbers. The cleansing of the temple links itself to, and carries us on, to the apocalyptic judgments which lie beyond the present day of grace. Amid avalanches of ruin, terrified men of all classes and conditions are thrown together (disaster levels cast distinctions as nothing else does), and say to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of their wrath is come; and who is able to stand?" Let us note that this terrified assemblage seeks to escape the wrath of the *Lamb*. This fact shows that the wrath of that day will be commensurate with the gentleness and meekness attested in His sufferings.

Thus we follow the Redeemer's steps, beholding at each turn a fresh outburst of God's glory, wondering what to expect next, until we reach the darkness of Calvary.

To better understand the crucifixion we will transport ourselves in thought to that remote day and imagine ourselves as spectators of that awful tragedy.

All Jerusalem is in an uproar! Wildest excitement prevails everywhere. Darkness wraps the scene. Panic-stricken throngs press toward the city gates, smiting their breasts. Outside the city, on a hill called the place of a Skull, hangs Israel's Messiah, uplifted on a cross. Angry mobs surround it. The taunts of the priests, the jeers of the crowds, the imprecations of the soldiery, are from time to time interrupted by cries from the holy Sufferer. Here and there, dispersed among the crowds, are a few disciples. They watch intently the proceedings, and strain themselves to catch every word falling from the lips of their agonizing Master.

We who live at this distance of time and enjoy the priceless gift of a completed Word can hardly imagine

the suspense and anxiety of those disciples. When they heard the cry,

My God, my God, why didst thou forsake me?

their bewilderment must have been indescribable. But a short while ago they heard Him say, "He that sent me is with me; he hath not left me alone; for I do always the things that are pleasing to Him." Now He cries that the Father has forsaken Him. What were they to think of this?

But—still more strange!—He cries, "It is finished! What could this be but a cry of disappointment and despair? He thought the Father would not forsake Him. But things have turned out differently. The Father hath forsaken Him, so He gives up all in despair! These were certainly the thoughts of the two disciples on the way to Emmaus. When the risen Lord drew nigh and inquired about the cause of their sorrow, they answered, "Dost thou alone sojourn in Jerusalem and not know the things which are come to pass there in these days? . . . The things concerning Jesus, the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him up to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. *But we hoped that it was He who should redeem Israel.* Yea, and beside all this, it is now the third day since these things came to pass."

We know, to-day, that "It is finished!" was a shout of triumph, because we look at the cross through an open grave. But the enjoyment of our standing in Christ will be in exact proportion to our conception of the cross.

RAISED.

"That raised Him from the dead." The resurrection of Christ is the citadel of Christianity. Take away the

resurrection, and the whole structure will collapse. "If Christ hath not been raised, then is our preaching vain, your faith also is vain."

Man is a microcosmos— a complete counterpart of the mundane system. There is nothing in the external world which does not find its counterpart in the human organism, though in the formation of the human body the material elements underwent a process of refinement; gross elements have been sublimated to a point unknown in the animal world. This idea colors the whole wonderful range of thought unfolded in the eighth chapter of the Roman letter. Adam was under the Creator, but above the creation. He was appointed to have dominion over all things in the earth, and there was a close link between him and the creation over which he was given ascendancy; his body was made of the dust of the ground. Thus, when man fell, the whole creation became involved in the ruin, though not of its own volition. In consequence of his transgression Adam became possessed of a sinful nature, which reacted on the body, and made it mortal. We are thus prepared to see the grand meaning of the resurrection of Christ for creation at large. Just as corruption, radiating from the first man as a centre, pervaded and permeated the entire universe, just so life, radiating from the second man as a centre, will permeate and pervade to the remotest corner of the universe. Thus viewed, the resurrection of Christ in a glorious spiritual body is a pledge of creation's deliverance from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. The hope of creation is bound up in the resurrection of the Son of Man, which is the basis of the "creation" commission in Mark xvi: 16-18; Col. i: 23.

#### GLORIFIED.

"And gave Him glory; so that your faith and hope might be in God." With glad hearts we follow our Lord

as He emerges from the darkness of the tomb and advances, step by step, through the repeated manifestations of Himself to His wondering disciples, up to the ascension before the dazed eleven, when He was taken up into heaven and returned into the presence of the Father whence He had come. He disappeared in the azure depths of the interstellar void as He had previously disappeared in the dismal waters of death. When a cloud concealed Him from the gaze of the disciples, the two men heralded the proclamation, "This Jesus, who was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld Him going into heaven." The story of the Christ is still unfinished. Its completion lies beyond the words "till He come."

But the sweetest note has not yet been sounded. His sufferings and glory were *for us*.

He was foreknown for us.

He was manifested for us.

He suffered for us.

He was raised for us.

He was glorified for us.

With this one thing in view—"that our faith and hope might be in God."

What is faith? Confidence.

What is hope? Expectation.

He came from the glory and suffered, He died, rose, and returned to His Father that our confidence and expectation might be in God.

To the psychic man, the whole earthly career of Christ is a strange enigma. The temptation in the wilderness, the privations of the way, the agony of Gethsemane, the blood baptism of Calvary, are impenetrable mysteries transcending our faculty of comprehension. The Father's attitude to the Son all along the journey from Bethlehem to Calvary is not consistent with our idea of parenthood.

These successive steps of humiliation were part of the Father's program, and the Son acquiesced. He had confidence in the Father, confidence in His love and wisdom, and so followed unhesitatingly the marked out path. Viewed from the standpoint of our ideas, the humiliation of Christ seems meaningless. Viewed from God's throne, we perceive that by that down stoop the foot of the ladder to the throne was reached. The path of the Lord Jesus exemplifies the supreme value of confidence in God.

Christ's expectation also was in God. In the darkest hour, when all forsook Him, when even the Father hid His face, He cried, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." He thought God equal to the occasion. And the open grave and the honor which now adorns His brow as he sits on the Father's right demonstrate the value of that expectation.

We, too, may place our confidence and expectation in God. His God is our God. His Father is our Father. He leads His people on to glory. Though the way be dreary and the outlook gloomy, let our confidence be firm and our hope bright. The way He chooses is not the shortest nor the easiest, but it is the right way, and it ends right.

## THE DIVINE MYSTERIES.

### A GENERAL SURVEY OF THE DIVINE MYSTERIES.

Love longs for love responsive. It has one aim: to kindle a kindred fire from its flame. We share our heart's secrets with those we love. God is not a man, but He, too, reserves His secrets for His own.

To Abraham, his friend, Jehovah unbosoms Himself with regard to Sodom's awful doom. To us, His beloved ones, He has revealed the Mystery of God, which can only be finished by the fiery judgments which usher in Jehovah's Day.

Prophet after prophet inquired as to the periods of time connected with Messiah's suffering and His glories. But it is to His disciples that the Master reveals the Mysteries of the Kingdom (Matt. xiii: 17). And the nations that sought not after Him are told the secret, as to the duration of Israel's blindness, which Isaiah longed to know!

But from all of these He had concealed His latest, choicest secret, now at length revealed. If Israel spurns the love He lavishes upon her, it must needs find outlet in another channel. The present Secret Economy—of which the patriarchs and prophets, disciples and apostles, never dreamed—leads His own into the most secret treasures of His heart.

In this balmy spirit we desire to inquire into God's secrets. With the apostle we are convinced that "though I understand all mysteries, and have not love, I am nothing." We know, too, that He who bids us do everything in love is the first to fulfill His own request. All His things are done in love, but some of His words excel in

displaying His affection. Chiefest among these fond tokens are the secrets He has confided to His own. Indeed, it is only as we grasp the breadth and length and height and depth of the mystery of the present dispensation that we are enabled to appreciate and respond to the love from which it springs.

And, since it has pleased Him to tell us these secrets, shall we turn a deaf ear to the heart beats that only those who lie in His bosom can detect? Shall we spurn His confidence and count His words as idle tales, profitless and vain?

Men spend their lives to force from "nature" one of the secrets of that sphere. They spend fortunes in uncovering buried cities to unlock the secrets of past history. We may need to remove much rubbish, much decayed theology; we may need to gird the loins of a degenerate intellect; but with so rich a prize in view, such a wealth of incorruptible riches awaiting us, and withal the continuous smile of Him Who is the Only One we care to please, what can be more worthy of our efforts?

Whatever others may desire, let it be ours to sit at His feet and hear His word, and learn the lesson of His love and satisfy its longings. God Himself will see to it that this place is not taken from us (Luke x: 42).

But the very word "mystery" seems to shut the door of love in our face instead of opening its portals. It seems large and dark and shadowy. It seems to defy knowledge. None but the wisest may even attempt the solution of a "mystery"! Not so with the mysteries of God's holy Word. They were simply *secrets*. Once they were hidden and could not be known. After God told them they were easily understood by all who had ears to hear.

The Greeks were noted for their "mysteries." The key to these was not learning or wisdom, but *initiation*. A



knowledge of their secrets could only be obtained by the initiates. The outsider might try ever so hard, but he could not find out the simplest secret. The greatest mental effort, the keenest insight, could never discover their mysteries, but the meanest mind could grasp them once they were unveiled.

All God's ways are secret in a sense, for none can be known apart from His revelation. But the mysteries are concerned only with those of His ways which He was pleased to positively hide, to veil from mortal gaze, until His own appointed time.

Stated briefly, in the order of their occurrence in the divine records, the mysteries are as follows:—

1. The Mysteries of the Kingdom (Matt. xii: 11; Mar. iv: 11; Lu. viii: 10).

2. The Duration of Israel's Blindness (Rom. xi: 25).

3. The Mystery of the Gospel (Rom. xvi: 25; Eph. vi: 19).

4. The Mystery of the Resurrection (1 Cor. xv: 51).

5. The Mystery of Messiah (Eph. i: 9; iii: 4; Col. iv: 3).

6. "The" Mystery (The Secret Economy) (Eph. iii: 3, 9; Col. i: 26, 27; ii: 2).

7. The Mystery of Marriage (Eph. v: 32).

8. The Mystery of Lawlessness (2 Thess. ii: 7).

9. The Mystery of Godliness (1 Tim. iii: 16).

10. The Mystery of the Seven Stars (Rev. i: 20).

11. The Mystery of God (Rev. x: 7).

12. The Mystery of Babylon (Rev. xvii: 5, 7).

Besides this, the mysteries in general are referred to in 1 Cor. ii: 7; iv: 1; xiii: 2; xiv: 2; 1 Tim. iii: 9.

In all there are twenty-seven references to twelve distinct and separate secrets. To the student of numbers as used in the Scriptures, these facts are highly significant. Twenty-seven is the cube of three, telling us

that we have here the fullest revelation of God, while twelve, by introducing the factor four, speaks of its connection with the earth.

Speaking generally, the literary order is also the chronological order. This is most important to observe and study.

Just as the student of geometry lays down a series of self-evident propositions, called axioms, before entering upon his subject, so we too will need to acknowledge two simple yet vital principles before considering the mysteries.

As a mystery is not merely a revelation, but the revelation of something which had been *concealed* (otherwise it would not be a mystery) we conclude:

Axiom I. *Each of God's secrets was unknown until the time when it was revealed.*

The second is but a corollary:

Axiom II. *It must not be forced into previous revelations given at a time when God was hiding it.*

Foolishly simple as these axioms appear, their importance cannot be over-rated and their neglect has brought the subject into confusion and contempt. It is just such simple axioms as these that form the ascent to the portals of the Divine Mysteries.

We will always need to bear in mind the time when each secret was revealed.

#### THE TWO GREAT GROUPS.

All of the mysteries, with the exception of the Mystery of Marriage, follow man's failure, either individually or nationally.

The failure of Adam is the root of the General Mysteries. These are:

The Mystery of God.

The Mystery of Marriage.

The Mystery of Messiah.

The Mystery of Lawlessness.

The Mystery of Godliness.

The failure of the nation of Israel is the root of the Special Mysteries. These are:

The Mysteries of the Kingdom.

The Mystery of the Seven Stars.

The Mystery of Babylon.

The Duration of Israel's Blindness.

The Mystery of the Gospel.

The Mystery of the Resurrection.

The Secret Economy.

The prophet Isaiah foretold Israel's defection and blindness. But that out of this blindness should come a seven-starred constellation rivalling Orion in its brilliancy, he never dreamed. His only thought was "How long?" (Isa. vi: 11.) He would have it as short as possible. In these mysteries we are not only told "How long," but are fully initiated into the various events and dispensations which fill the interval of Israel's blindness.

The message given to Isaiah is quoted on three different occasions as being fulfilled by Israel. (Matt. xiii: 14; John xii: 38; Acts xxviii: 25-27.)

Each occasion chronicles the rejection of Jehovah and His sentence upon them from a different standpoint.

In the thirteenth chapter of Matthew the speaker is *Jehovah* Himself by His prophet. It follows the rejection of the Kingdom; it calls forth the Mysteries of the Kingdom.

When the Kingdom is rejected, what is going to be done? The Mysteries of the Kingdom answer this important question. In seven-fold perfectness the apostasy is traced from the Kingdom point of view until judgment has consumed all opposition.

In the twelfth chapter of John's Gospel, Isaiah's solemn message is quoted once again. The significant words are added that Isaiah spoke these words "when he saw His glory and spake of Him." So the Son is the speaker, too.

He had just foretold His death at the hand of that apostate religious system which will blossom into great Babylon in the coming day. When the King himself is rejected, Who was their only hope of blessing and dominion in the earth, what will become of that false nation which still keeps up its religious show, so much as to cast out of the synagogue all who were true to Him? (Jno. xii: 42:43.) What is the end of this hypocrisy? *The Mystery of Babylon* shows this apostasy full blown and ripe for judgment.

The closing words of the Book of Acts sum up its ministry by once more quoting the passage from Isaiah. This is its third and final occurrence. The *Spirit* is the Speaker, even as the Spirit is the One Who has been rejected. Now, for the third and last time, we learn that the nation's ears have been stopped so that they cannot hear. But they are not cast off forever. *They* may reject *Him*, but *He* cannot forget His people and His covenant.

But how can He reach them when He takes them up once more, now that their ears are dull of hearing?

*The Secret of the Seven Stars* explains this to us. He cannot indeed speak to them directly, but His Spirit sends His letters to them through messengers and thus reaches all who have "ears to hear."

Israel's blindness was no secret, but its duration was the subject of anxious inquiry by the prophets of old. "The manner of time" was not revealed to them. When Isaiah asks "How long?" he is given a general indication of the desolations which occupy the time, but the period itself is hid.

It is only after Israel finally refuses the ministry of the Spirit that the duration of Israel's blindness is at length discovered. It is to continue until the "fulness of the nations be come in" (Rom. xi: 25).

This opens to our view the last three of the Special Mysteries, which are of surpassing and excellent glory. They are concerned with this "fulness" of the nations which must be completed before Israel's ears are unstopped and her eyesight is restored.

These secrets possess an intense interest for us in this present day.

If we insist once more that these secrets must be viewed in the light of Israel's final apostasy—the rejection of the Spirit—it is because it will be impossible to understand them apart from this solemn fact.

As Israel's refusal of the Spirit's ministry becomes increasingly manifest, Saul and Barnabas are separated by *the Spirit*, and sent to a special work among the nations. Many of the Jews among the nations, like Bar-Jesus, not only refused to believe, but oppose the Spirit's gracious work; inviting a like fate. So the apostle turns from them and proclaims the glad news to the foreigners. A distinct company, formed of believing Jews and Gentiles who have received the Spirit's message, is the result of this ministry. This assemblage is not guilty of Israel's crowning and unpardonable sin in rejecting the Spirit (Matt. xii: 32).

And now the question arises, How shall they be shielded from the judgment about to visit that nation and the whole earth?

The answer to this is the *Mystery of the Resurrection*. Their bodies are to be changed in a moment, whether asleep or living, and they shall be gathered to Himself during this dreadful judgment period. They will thus be saved from wrath through Him.

Israel will not thus escape the judgments of that day. The Mysteries of the Kingdom tell us of a furnace of fire for the tares; the Mystery of Babylon reveals its awful doom; and the Seven Stars hold out a promise to those who overcome during that terrible time of trouble.

Israel's fearful failure leads to another notable secret. So long as that nation was Jehovah's especial depository of light and blessing, the nations must be content to approach and receive through them. But when they fail, God opens up the avenues of His heart so that the aliens may enter His inmost affection. This is the *Mystery of the Gospel*—the Reconciliation.

And now the destiny and inheritance of those thus brought into God's family must be settled. The earth and its dominion belongs to Israel. No failure on her part can annul a single promise Jehovah has engaged Himself to perform. If the blessing of the nations is to be on earth, it must be subordinate to Israel.

And now we see the need of the last and most precious (for us) of all the mysteries.

Heaven, and not earth, is the scene of our future glory, and there, unlike the future glorious earth, both Jew and Gentile are of *equal* exaltation. Paul and others of the Chosen Nation will partake of this celestial inheritance, but they will have no preeminence over us poor sinners of the Gentiles. We rank equally with them in this supernal glory! This we commonly term "The Mystery," or the Secret Economy.

If this scanty outline of the Special Mysteries has shown that the key to them lies in Israel's apostasy, the way is clear for a more extended notice of each, together with a glance at their relation one to another.

If Israel had not rejected Messiah, the Kingdom never would have had a secret phase, the Seven Stars never

would have received their solemn messages, and Babylon never would have crowned their awful apostasy.

And, more than this, if Israel, after her murder of Messiah, had accepted the Spirit's offer of the Kingdom, where would there be occasion for an eclectic Resurrection, a Reconciliation, or a Secret Economy.

## THE SPECIAL MYSTERIES.

### THOSE CONCERNING ISRAEL.

The Special Mysteries fall into two systems, those which concern Israel, and those which especially concern the Nations.

Those concerning Israel all find fulfilment in the period bounded by Israel's rejection in the past and Israel's reception in the future. Internal boundaries are also fixed by the insertion of the Mysteries concerning the nations. While Israel is set aside, there can be no secrets concerning her in course of fulfilment.

At this time we shall attempt nothing more than a brief synopsis of each secret. A grasp of the leading features of each mystery and due attention to those points which distinguish it from other mysteries will be of great service to us when we come to consider each one in detail.

### THE MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM.

The first four of these mysteries are the only ones which were given in such a way as to be mysterious or difficult to understand on the part of those who heard. They were spoken in parables to those without and explained in plain language to His own disciples. They were hid from those whose ears were stopped by Isaiah's fearful words. Like the messages of the Seven Stars, they were only for those who had ears to hear.

The parable of the Sowing shows the cause which led the Kingdom, as proclaimed by the Master, to be rejected. These were, (1) the opposition of the devil, (2) the weakness of the flesh, and (3) the world and its riches.

*The Wheat and the Tares* traces the fortunes of the Kingdom to the end of the era, when the Son of Man will clear the field of all the intruding hypocrites.

*The Mustard Seed* shows the outward greatness which the rejected Kingdom will yet attain, and the further fact that the false greatness will afford a covert for malignant spiritual powers.

*The Leaven* likewise shows that corruption is the secret of its greatness, and the corruption, introduced by Israel herself, will permeate the whole. Nothing can stop it but fire.

These four were spoken without to the multitude. Though themselves the actors in these parables, their ears did not take them in. But they were explained to the disciples.

The following three were spoken to the disciples and needed no further explanation.

Now that the Kingdom had not been brought about by the proclamation which had been made, a new way is revealed by which it will be established. Once He preached it openly; now He hid it in parables. How, then, was he to get this hid treasure? By nothing less than the death of the cross, where He gave all that He had for the field.

But to some the Kingdom was not hid. They had accepted Him as their Messiah ben David. He was the King of Israel. This was not like the treasure hid in the field which a man *found*. This was what the great Merchantman *sought*. Had all been like them there would have been no mysteries. For them He not only laid down all He had, but He had already condescended to earth on



their behalf, and would yet give all that he had to get the Pearl of Great Price.

*The Drag Net* is concerned only with the last phase of this mystery, when Israel is gathered out of all nations, and brought into their own land and purged of the rebels.

#### THE MYSTERY OF THE SEVEN STARS AND THE SEVEN LAMP STANDS.

After the return from Babylonian captivity there was also a return to the study of the Scriptures. This led to the rise of the synagogue, which eventually became the center of the spiritual life of Israel. The temple still remained the place of ceremony and sacrifice.

While the nations' fulness is brought in, Israel remains both blind and deaf to the words and ways of Jehovah. But when that economy is passed and Jehovah turns once more to His people, it is to the assemblies of the synagogues, the spiritual centers of Israel, that He first addresses Himself.

In their unspiritual condition, it would be useless to address the nation as a whole. So the message is addressed to those who have ears to hear.

The seed of Abraham is divided into two classes. These were described to him as the dust of the earth and the stars of heaven. The former represents his physical, the latter, his spiritual progeny.

In the days of old when Israel was apostate, Jehovah no longer spoke to them directly. He spoke to His servants the prophets *about* them.

Once more, Israel becomes fearfully apostate. But there always was a remnant who were true to Him. So again there are individuals who can both see and hear. These are Abraham's spiritual seed, "the stars of heaven."

While the Secret Economy was in force, these were included in its embrace. Now that it is passed and Israel's

hope is once again in view, the "stars of heaven," the spiritual ones, are those whom the Son of Man can use (being in His hand) to convey His messages to the assemblies in the synagogues.

Through these He reaches down into the corrupt mass and encourages the overcomers in the dark and dreadful days of Jacob's trouble.

As these messengers were to the assemblies as the light of the stars of heaven on a dark night, so too each assembly was to a world which was passing through its darkest hours, as a "lampstand" to hold up the last glimmering of Divine light still left in the earth.

#### THE MYSTERY OF BABYLON AND THE BEAST THAT CARRIED HER.

Israel was Jehovah's wife. Her blessing and strength and sustenance came alone from Him. Time and again she left him for other lovers, till at length He divorced her. According to the law she can never be His again. But, in spite of this, He holds her for Himself and Himself for her. "Thou shalt not be another's: so will I also be for thee." (Hos. iii: 3). So it is that the sons of Israel abide many days without a King.

But when he came in lowly human guise, ready to receive her as His bride, she spurned His proffered blessings. "We have no king but Cæsar!" (Jno. xix: 5.) And they crucify their King.

But if Jehovah will not bless her while estranged from Him, she will find other lovers to give her the delights and blessings which she craves. She will lay the kings of the earth under tribute to furnish the luxuries which He withholds.

We can see, even in this waning economy, how the sons of Israel have obtained, through their wealth, a power before which even kings must cringe. By this means

they will yet establish themselves in luxurious style in the great city which they will build in the land of Shinar.

The secret of Babylon lies in the woman and the beast that carries her. In plain words, it lay in the apostate nation raised to millennial bliss and power by the assistance of earth's kings. Jehovah and His blessings are spurned. His curses are derided.

But the awful heat of His jealous rage consumes her in a moment.

#### THE DURATION OF ISRAEL'S BLINDNESS.

Having no glory in itself, yet binding together the vast constellation of Special Mysteries, the prophecy of Isaiah is like some great dark star, which forms the sable center of a great sun system.

In it we have Israel's apostasy set forth. To this apostasy we can trace all the Special Mysteries. Apart from that apostasy these mysteries could have found no place.

The *duration* of the apostasy is the subject of one secret. It was to last until the "fulness" of the nations was come in. The best definition of this "fulness" is found in the consideration of the three grand secrets which, in a special sense, while not excluding Israelites, are characteristically non-Jewish, or Gentile.

#### THE SPECIAL MYSTERIES REFERRING TO THE NATIONS.

In his epoch-making articles on "The Mystery," first published in *Things to Come*, our beloved Dr. Bullinger has led the way into the almost forgotten mysteries of the present period. Vast fields of unexplored truth were opened. Much distorted teaching was readjusted. The way was cleared for still further explorations. No doubt many were moved to meditate on these things. In a letter received not long since a beloved brother writes: "Of late

I have been much struck by Paul's statement. (1 Cor. iv:1) that we are "stewards of the mysteries of God." Looking at the heavens with the naked eye our attention is naturally drawn to some large and luminous star which appears to be isolated from the rest. But, if we look at the same star through the telescope, a number of other stars are discovered in its proximity. So also with God's word. What at first seemed an isolated star turns out to be a constellation. What once appeared to be one mystery is, on closer acquaintance with the truth, discovered to be but one of a long and glorious series. May the Lord anoint the eyes of His people to see it and prepare their hearts to receive them as a priceless treasure!"

The mysteries, together with the celestial side of the Mystery of Messiah, are of transcendent interest to us now. They are harmoniously intertwined; they cannot be severed; yet each has its own peculiar glory and each a setting different from the rest.

The Mystery of Messiah has been gradually unfolded through the ages. It was first revealed in heaven, and was the occasion of Satan's fall. On earth it dimly shone in Eden's garden, when God foretold of One Who should bruise the serpent's head. Prophet after prophet added to its glorious beams. But mankind never knew that He was to have dominion in any other realms than that which earth afforded. His heavenly headship was not revealed until the destiny and blessing which accompanied the Secret Economy demanded it. This Mystery had been revealed, but not "as it is now revealed." (Eph. iii: 5. The parenthesis should be extended from the end of ver. 4 to the end of ver. 5.)

Quite different are the other secrets. They were not partially made known.

One of them, it is true, the Mystery of the Gospel, had

been shadow-graphed upon earth's earliest ages, but it has been "hushed up."\*

But the secrets of the Resurrection and of the present Dispensation were *absolute*. That concerning the Resurrection was made known some time before the Secret Economy.

Thus we find these secrets marked by various modes of revelation. One is gradually revealed; one is typified but then "hushed;" the others are concealed until after Israel's defection.

In manner, too, they differ.

The Mystery of Messiah is made known to His apostles and prophets, in which we must include Peter (1 Pet. iii: 22). The Mystery of the Gospel was the subject of prophetic writings. But the Secret Economy was made known exclusively through Paul. He alone was to enlighten *all* as to that secret.

In full accord with its character, the Mystery of the Gospel, having been hushed like a court secret, is proclaimed by *heralds* and administered by *ambassadors* in consonance with a *decree* of the Eternal God.

No such royal style attends the dispensation of the Secret Economy. Its scenes are private and in the family circle. As a *steward* serves out his delicious store, so Paul, the steward of this Economy, serves a rich portion to the members of God's family. The "deacons" or servants of the assemblies carried on this ministry. (1 Tim. iii:9.)

The Mystery of the Gospel is made known to all nations for faith-obedience. The Secret Economy is only for those who have yielded this obedience and received the Reconciliation.

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\*The Greek verb is *sigao*, cf. Luke ix: 36, xx: 26, Acts vii: 17, xv: 12, 13, Cor. xiv: 28, 30, 34.

## THE MYSTERY OF THE RESURRECTION.

Perhaps the first of these Mysteries to be revealed was the secret concerning the Resurrection. As Israel's judgment was not to be shared by those among the nations who believed, they must be removed from the earth during the judgments which impended. This was to be accomplished by catching them up into the air, as the apostle had told the Thessalonians. But the Corinthian mind found difficulties with the practical operation of such a course. What kind of a body must it be to be able thus to leave its accustomed sphere and fit itself to a totally different one? This is explained by the apostle that each body is attuned to its own place, but there are different kinds of bodies as well as differing environment. But this only shows that our bodies as at present constituted cannot partake in the rapture he had told them of.

So he tells them a secret. The bodies were to be *changed*. Bodies terrestrial, with the stamp of earth, were to be transformed in the half a twinkle of an eye into bodies celestial, with the stamp of heaven.

This change is entirely unnecessary for those who will be born from above and who will people the renewed earth.

## THE MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL.

When sin entered, man was forthwith estranged from God. And God, sovereign as He is, forthwith moulds the scene into a silhouette of the Reconciliation. In the epistle to the Romans we are told that the period from Adam to Moses, in all its darkness, pictures the present grace.

The intervention of Israel not only destroyed the picture, but also prevented and precluded such a thing; for if they were His especial people, who alone were on terms with Him, through whom alone He could be approached, the reconciliation of the world was impossible.

God's attitude towards the Nations has been one of distance and enmity. This was absolutely necessary to maintain His righteous and holy throne. True He *had* planned to bless them, but only through and with Israel. Now that Israel had failed and is set aside there is no channel through which His mercy can meet them. In this dilemma, that seemed to bar all blessing from the Nations, He reveals a secret connected with the glad tidings. By the death of His Son his attitude towards the Nations has changed. He is reconciled. His righteousness and holiness, which once hindered the native graciousness of His heart, have been satiated by the cross of Messiah and now urge its display. There is now no longer need to wait for the new earth before He by His Spirit dwells amongst the aliens. All estrangement is gone on His side, and thus peace is the burden of the proclamation which hitherto had been a secret.

He proclaims peace to all and access by faith into His own presence without the intervention of Israel or Israel's ceremonies. And as this is based solely upon His *favor* it leads them outside the sphere of judgment altogether.

#### THE SECRET ECONOMY.

The Mystery of the Gospel speaks of favor shown to those without. The Secret Economy, a later revelation, deals with the relationship of those within.

When Messiah's *heavenly* glories are revealed, a remnant of His earthly people are chosen to share His celestial honors. Their inheritance is transferred from earth to heaven. The aliens who believed did not have even an earthly inheritance. What place, then, shall be given them in the heavenly realms? Shall they, like those upon the Millennial earth, be subordinate to the chosen Nation?

No! *They share equally in this high and overwhelming glory!*

This is the secret, till then unknown and unknowable.

This is the climax of God's grace and love, the finishing touch that rounds out the moral universe. By it sin is dethroned from the heavens, whence it sprang.

Till now, revelation had been concerned with the earth and its restoration and re-creation. It is only by refusing to heed our second axiom that we have been reading this Mystery into previously revealed truth. Earlier scriptures have been so colored by its presence that their true import is difficult to entertain.

Search the scriptures and see, where is there any license for introducing a heavenly destiny and hope before Paul wrote Ephesians? All things shall be heavenly as to *character*, but this refers to *position*.

It was a secret, not only unrevealed, but actually concealed.

#### THE GENERAL MYSTERIES.

Like the Special Mysteries, the General Mysteries fall into two systems, having for their respective centers the Mystery of God and the Mystery of Messiah.

#### THE MYSTERY OF GOD.

Since Adam parted company with Jehovah-Elohim in the garden, God seems to have deserted the earth so far as the bulk of mankind are concerned. His acts are done in secret; His ways, except to the anointed eye, are inscrutable. He is the Ascended God (i. e., "Most High").

Instead of men knowing God as the Provider of all their needs, His place is usurped by a blind, imperious weakling, whom they dub "Providence."



The mystery is enhanced exceedingly in this day of peace, when the blatant atheist may loudly curse Him to His face and still prosper.

But the time is hastening on when the mystery of God will be over. Men will find that they have to render an account to Him, not only when the judgment summons comes, but during their life on the regenerated earth.

His blessings, too, will come directly from his hand. God and not "Providence" will send the rain. If they doubt this, let them test it and forget to send their deputation to His glorious temple at Jerusalem. The thirsty ground and withered crops will eloquently plead His presence and power.

#### THE MYSTERY OF MARRIAGE.

*The Mystery of Marriage* is a purely physical phenomena, confined to the human race. Since mankind consists of two sexes, physical unity is dual; husband and wife are not two, but one. It is only as thus considered that a comparison can be instituted between the duties of a husband towards his wife and the love of Christ for the assembly. In a spiritual sense the assembly is Messiah's own body: in a physical sense, the wife is the same physical structure as her husband. He should care for her as he does for his *own* body, *just as* the Lord His *own* spiritual body, the assembly (Eph. v: 31-32).

#### THE MYSTERY OF MESSIAH.

In considering the Secret Economy we have already touched upon the Mystery of Messiah. Suffice to say that God's Anointed, and His universal sway, was a secret long drawn out. Ray upon ray was added to its lustre, until He came Himself in human guise and descended into the depths of death.

And even when He rose, they would not have Him. And when he promises to return, they still refuse to listen to His call.

And when Messiah is finally refused and thrust from the earth most shamefully, then heaven opens to our view and we find the despised Nazarene seated upon the Universal Throne, wearing the diadem that rules the heavenly realms!

And we draw aside the curtain of the future and there behold the universe from its centre to its utmost bounds, in glad subjection to His sway.

But that is future. At present His great enemy, who spoiled this fair scene to thwart God's purpose for Him, holds almost undisputed sway.

#### THE MYSTERY OF LAWLESSNESS.

Satan's presence is not seen or known. His dupes are unconscious of his influence. He works in secret. The time is coming when he will work openly. The Man of Sin, his human embodiment, will make him manifest. But until then the springs of lawlessness will remain hid behind his hand. Men may proudly boast of doing as they please, but all the while they are but the puppets he can use to bring about his own exaltation. This secret is the key to human conduct.

#### THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS.

But the world is not only blind to that which actuates themselves, but they cannot understand the motive of a life fraught with the fear of God. As though set upon a pedestal and firmly fixed is the truth which eventuates in conduct. Truth may be denied, but conduct cannot be gainsaid. The secret of such conduct is the subject of this mystery.

Thus we have gone the gamut of the mysteries. We have found them mysteries in name only, and waiting for our earnest inquiry.

In them we find extolled the power and might, the knowledge and multifarious wisdom, and the surpassing greatness of our God. To know Him is the highest endeavor within the reach of any of His creatures. But to man alone He has revealed His secret purposes. His heavenly hosts are pleased to learn them through mankind.

But not all mankind have been blessed with the complete number of the mysteries. That was reserved for us, sinners of the Gentiles.

And how many of us are ready and willing to lend their ears to hear? How many are ready to bend their hearts and knees in adoration of the great Revealer of Secrets?

And how many will not linger with a mere knowledge of the mysteries, but press on to love's elysium that lies just beyond?



## NEW TESTAMENT THOUGHTS

**CHAOS AND CONFUSION** are never found to be the results of the work of God. When we read in the initial verses of Holy Writ the earth described as being without form and void and covered with darkness, we know that this awful condition was the result of an adversary's plot, and not the product of the divine wisdom and power. Confusion and disorder, whether existing in the material creation or found within the sphere of social, family, or church life, is never taken as the evidence of the divine presence, but the opposite. Our God is a God of law and order, and He acts and rules, not in a haphazard way, but according to a symmetrical purpose and plan foreordained in His eternal counsels.

If we examine a snowflake microscopically, we will find it to be a mass of perfectly constructed, though varied geometrical designs, each of them perfectly mathematical in its construction. Shall we compare the Scriptures to a snowflake? Surely not, for what comparison can exist between that which, though perfect, vanishes in a moment of time, and that veritable mountain of truth which we read shall remain for ever? But if we find such a beauty of design in the transient crystals of the snow, may we not look for at least the same perfection and accuracy of design in that book of eternal verities? Can the Scriptures lack that which a mere speck of crystal is ever found to possess? We do not look for confusion in those books of which human mind is the author: much less must we allow its existence in the volume created by divine wisdom.

Illustrations of the orderly perfections of the Book crowd in upon us: the florist's garden divided into its several parts and plots, each plot containing choice specimens of horticultural art; the princely palace, built upon an architectural plan, each room a wonder, setting forth the skill and art of the designer; the museum with its exhibits of the wonders of the world, with everything in methodical order and

arrangement. And much more, but we have given enough to show that anything of value is entitled to system. Man does not look for order in an ash pile, nor for precision in a refuse heap; and yet, when considering the Word of the all-wise God, he places it on no higher level than these, regarding it as a book empty of form and destitute of structure. The Bible is a unit, and should be treated as such. Here we err through reading verses, yea building whole theologies upon verses, forgetting that verses are but the crumbs of Scripture; and though they be the very diamond dust of truth, yet it is our privilege to avail of all truth, as contained in the Bible, instead of seeking to feed upon mere fragments of the whole.

A right understanding of the whole is therefore necessary to a right understanding of its parts. We naturally get an idea of a stately building as a whole, before we enter and admire its various apartments. In like manner, the student of geography is first occupied with the hemispheres, from thence he is taken to the study of continents, next to countries, then districts, and so on. So also the student requires to obtain a view of the Bible in its several parts and divisions.

We do not have to seek far to find proof of the havoc which careless Bible study can produce. That widespread error, generally known as the "falling away doctrine" is mostly based upon isolated verses and portions of Scripture which have not been considered in the light of their immediate contexts. The epistle to the Hebrews furnishes a veritable armory of weapons to the exponents of this doctrine, and those who would oppose its teaching have at times made confusion but more confounded, through forced, if not fantastical, attempts at interpreting such passages as Hebrews 6:4-6 and 10:26-29. If, however, the place and design of that wonderful letter were taken into consideration, as well as the people whose welfare it has at heart, the epistle would be found to explain itself, its supposed contradictions vanishing away, and its very difficulties be transformed into simplicities, through the magic power of the touchstone of Truth.

“Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” Sow careless study, and you will inevitably reap indifferent results. The crying need of the day is for diligent, careful, reverent Bible study. The Church of God does not need more beautiful buildings. It does not demand more highly cultured singing, or sweeter music. Neither is it famished from lack of oratory or eloquence. The Bread of Life is needed by the people, who cry aloud for the truth of God.

But it must naturally be, that that which is not understood cannot be explained. Study of the Word must precede the teaching of it. Our purpose in this article is to pass on a few hints to those who would enter, with more intelligence, the temple of revealed truth: to point out a few of those leading thoughts, which appear to control New Testament revelation.

*(Continued on page 125)*

## EDITORIAL NOTES.

In correcting the page proofs of our preceding number the printer left out the word "other" on page 2, line 17 from the top of the page.

The phrase reads: "which at present allows the issuance of a number every month," whereas it should read: "which at present allows the issuance of a number EVERY OTHER MONTH."

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# THE DIVINE MYSTERIES.

## THE SECRET ECONOMY

### INTRODUCTION.

LOVE delights in secret surprises. Its gifts gather grace as they are undeserved and unexpected. This precious quality adds greatly to the richness of God's love. From its hiding place in the inmost recesses of His affections He has brought forth a surprise such as He only could have planned, so fertile is the wisdom it unfolds, so fathomless the affection that conceived it.

Among God's many secrets we have chosen to meditate upon the one which most directly concerns us in this age, THE SECRET ECONOMY, which God, concealed from previous ages in Himself; but which is now made known, by which the very heavens are apprised of the variety of God's wisdom, and the whole universe will yet learn the transcendent wealth which is found in His favor.

But the ultimate object of such love is love responsive. While we tell the secret it will reveal His love and kindle ours. This is our true goal: to miss this were to miss all.

Of the many mysteries, this is the only one which limits and defines a "dispensation," so-called, or stewardship, or economy.

Essentially, a dispensation is not a period of time, though it is apt to characterize the era to which it belongs. Whatever God gives or *dispenses*, whatever arrangements He makes for His people or for humankind—that is a dispensation. It is that system of things which answers to the operations of His throne.



No other system or economy, whether past or future, was a complete secret as was the present one.

Some secrets, or mysteries, such as those concerning the Kingdom, and Great Babylon, are prominent *features* of a single economy. Others, such as the Mystery of Messiah, and the Mystery of God, extend all down the dispensations.

When we apprehend that a dispensation is not a matter of time, but of God's arrangements, we are delivered from a serious difficulty which has harassed students of God's Word. It is quite possible for two dispensations, or even three, to be on the scene at one and the same time. That this was the case when the present economy began is evident from the fact that the Kingdom of God, as proclaimed in Acts, still continued to be heralded by Paul two years after his arrival in Rome (Acts xxviii: 31) and by a number of those with him who were of the Circumcision (Col. iv: 10, 11). Even after this Secret Economy was inaugurated, James and Peter and John, as witnessed by their epistles, continued to look for and proclaim the coming Kingdom according to the prophets. Peter was not unaware that Paul proclaimed something widely different, which even he did not understand (2 Pet. iii: 15-16).

In his epistle from Babylon to the dispersed Israelites he seems to have these things in mind, as he tells them of the salvation which the prophets sought and searched diligently "who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you. \* \* To whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto you, did they minister these things which now have been announced unto you" (1 Pet. i: 10-12). He writes to them briefly for the purpose of "exhorting and testifying that *this* is the true grace of God wherein ye stand" (1 Pet. v: 12).

*But the dispensation of the mystery was not the sub-*

*ject of prophecy.* It was concealed by God from the prophets. Peter does not speak of it. It was not intended for those to whom he wrote.

Where, then, shall we go for light?

In the third chapter of Paul's letter to the Ephesians we read that, among other things, it was granted to him that he should enlighten *all (pantas)\** as to this secret.

This much is clear: to *Paul*, and Paul alone, may we go for light on this subject.

Paul had been at Ephesus in person not many years before he penned this epistle. While there he had "not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God" (Acts xx: 27). Why did he not tell them this secret?

The continual repetition of the word "now" in contrast to his previous ministry among them is evidence enough to show that he had not divulged this mystery. About eighteen years before, he had seen the veil withdrawn from the third heaven, the scene in which this secret has its fruition. But God was not yet ready, the saints were not yet prepared for its public revelation; Israel was still before Him. So he tells the Corinthians that it was not lawful to utter the words which he had heard (2 Cor. xii: 4).

While Paul holds nothing back of the *counsel* God had held with His people, as recorded in the Scriptures, he reserves His secret *purpose* until the time when he penned this epistle.

Of the letters to the seven churches to whom Paul wrote, only three, Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians, are illumined by this mystery. It is useless to go to Paul's earlier writings for more than hints of the impending

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\*The word "all" is *understood*, even if omitted by some and bracketed by Lachman. Its strengthening force is acknowledged by almost all of the Editors. The Revised retains it in the text.

revelation. They were written before this secret was given out.

Philippians and Colossians, companion epistles of Ephesians, may afford help at times, but they are not so much concerned with the *revelation* of this secret as the correction of errors due to a departure from its doctrines and precepts. They cannot be taken to heart until we are first initiated into the mystery through Ephesians.

So to Ephesians we turn. In it we find four mysteries or secrets:

- The Mystery of Messiah (ch. i: 9; iii: 4),
- The Mystery of this Economy (ch. iii: 3, 9),
- The Mystery of Marriage (ch. v: 32),
- The Mystery of the Gospel (ch. vi: 19).

The Mystery of Messiah is but briefly set forth. The Mystery of Marriage and the Gospel are but references, one to Genesis, the other to Romans.

The bulk of the epistle is occupied with the Secret Economy which is the subject of our meditation.

The mystery itself is summarized in the third chapter, sixth verse. It is that the Nations should, in spirit, be

- (1) fellow-heirs,
- (2) fellow-members of the body, and
- (3) fellow-partakers of His promises,

all by virtue of Christ Jesus.

The joint heirship of the Nations is first revealed in chapter one, verses thirteen and fourteen. Their equal rank as members of the body of Christ comes out for the first time in chapter two, verses five and six; while verses nineteen to twenty-two of the same chapter first divulge the secret that, in Christ, God's promises are equally shared by the Nations.

This simplifies our task very much. We need but to study the epistle in this light. There is no need of any arrangement of our own, of gathering together various texts, but only to follow the Divine Author.

At the very threshold of our inquiry we are brought face to face with a great obstacle. The epistle comes to us in its English form, through the medium of men who did not apprehend the mystery it unfolds and who, of necessity, had to make their translation conform to their theology. This not only gave the whole a false coloring, but led to notable departures from the plain sense of the original.

It were well if all His people could go direct to the inspired original, but, as it is, the necessity of the case calls for a new version. It is not for us to shoulder such a task as this. But the need is so great, there is so much at stake, that for a man

"Not to attempt it, arduous as he deems  
The labor, were a task more arduous still."

The chief feature of the version we present is *consistency*. We have not allowed ourselves to make one English word do duty for a dozen (or seventy, as is sometimes the case in the A. V.) words in the original, but have confined it to a single one, wherever possible. We are thus *forced* to make distinctions usually overlooked. By a slight increase of vocabulary we attain greatly increased fidelity to the inspired text, but, above all, *consistency*.

The same is true of the *grammar*. Consistent exactitude is quite imperative in dealing with the Holy Spirit's words.

In these meditations we have sought to be guided only and solely by the Word of God. This, we trust, is the secret of its vast divergence from accepted theology. But

no human pen can lay claim to inspiration nowadays. Our prayer is that God will over-rule and blot out and nullify all which He cannot accept and deign to bear with the weakness and imperfection of that which may contain His precious truth.

God's word alone will stand. We implore all not to lean on what we have written. Do not spare it, but cast it into the Divine Crucible of His Word. The fire will test it in that day. Then, as now, the writer will rejoice to see the fire consume the dross, leaving nothing but fine gold for Him.

## THE SECRET UNVEILED.

### THE ADDRESS UPON THE ENVELOPE.

"Paul, commissioned by Christ Jesus, through the will of God, to the saints who are (in Ephesus)\*, and faithful in Christ Jesus."

God has spoken in many ways. His latest and highest communications have come to us in the form of *letters*. When the postman brings a letter we first scan the envelope to find to whom it is written. Then we open it and read the contents; that is, if it is for *us*.

In the brief passage which heads this page we have, as it were, the envelope which carries our epistle to its proper destination. It has an importance all its own. It tells not only to whom the letter is written, but from whom it came and through whom He has seen fit to send it to us.

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\*The epistle seems to have been a "circular letter," space being left for the insertion of "Ephesus," "Laodicea," etc., as the case might be. See Col. iv: 16. This accounts for the variations in the early manuscripts.

Nowadays it is necessary that the good faith of the sender be guaranteed by the use of printed stationery bearing the title and business of the firm. This gives a letter due weight.

#### WHERE FROM?

The twelve apostles were commissioned by "Jesus, Christ." In harmony with this the burden of their message was, that Jesus, the Man of Bethlehem, and Calvary and Olivet—He is the Messiah. While still on earth, He chose them and sent them forth.

Paul, too, in his earlier personal ministry, was concerned with the earth life of our Master, and styled himself a slave and apostle of "Jesus, Christ."

But the message we are about to hear is not connected with the days of His flesh, nor His Messianic claims over the earth. This is shown by the title used. "Christ Jesus" tells us that, though earth has cast Him out, yet God has given Him His proper place at His own right hand. As His Anointed He even now fulfills His purposes.

The name "Paul" has a strange sound to one accustomed to the Hebrew names which introduce almost all of the sacred writings. Of course Paul was a Jew like the other sacred penmen, but God has changed his Hebrew name Saul to a foreign tongue "Paul." The significance of this is clear when we remember that he, like Luke, another Gentile name associated with a portion of God's word, sends his messages *outside* the Jewish pale, to those who could claim no kinship with God's earthly people.

God then, has placed this message in the hands of His Christ, and Christ sends it forth by Paul.

## WHERE TO?

This matter, simple as it seems, is of vital importance. To whom is this letter written?

Not long since a letter was delivered at the wrong address. The recipient opened it hastily without looking at the name upon the envelope. The tone of the letter was strange. A glance at the envelope discovered the mistake. Though quite unintended, it caused serious trouble.

"But," you say, "we are interested in *all* our God has written." Great, indeed, has been His condescension in thus taking us into His confidence. But let us not abuse our trust by "appropriating" to ourselves all that He has written, when He has plainly addressed it to others.

Two statements are given us to identify those to whom this epistle was sent.

- (1) They are holy,
- (2) They believe in "Christ, Jesus."

The first is a general statement which includes all God's people.

Those "who called upon the name of Jehovah" in Judea were "saints." Later on, when they were dispersed among the Nations, they still held this appellation. From the days of Enosh (Gen. iv: 26) down to the opening of the great day of Jehovah (Joel ii: 32) the remnant who call upon His Name, are set apart to Him.

Those among the Nations, whether Israelites or not, who believed the peculiar message sent to them through Paul, after he was "separated" from the rest—these, too, were "saints."

There are, however, various points of difference between these two classes. Notable ones are:

## AS TO CHRIST

<p>"Jesus, Christ," acknowledged as to His <i>earthly</i> parenthood as the Son of David.</p>	<p>"Christ, Jesus," acknowledged as to His <i>spiritual</i> parenthood as the Son of God.</p>
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## ACCESS TO GOD THROUGH

Repentance and Baptism.	The Door of Faith.
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## JUSTIFICATION BY

Works: "Faith apart from works is dead."	Faith: "To him that worketh <i>not</i> , but believeth."
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## GOVERNMENT

Earthly Authority, vested in the twelve in Jerusalem.	Under the Decree issued from Jerusalem.
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The question arises, Was this message sent to both of the two distinct companies of God's people?

The title "Christ, Jesus," forbids this. The hope of Israel is connected with the title "Jesus, Christ," and is not at all satisfied with His present glorious heavenly exaltation, which "Christ, Jesus," brings before us. In fact, this title has no present point down here, for only in heaven has His anointing been acknowledged. Only there is He Christ in deed as well as name. Only in spirit do we acknowledge His claim. This title shows that it was sent to the Pauline assemblies only. This will become self-evident as we proceed, just as the contents of a letter are often sufficient to identify the party to whom it was written.



We call it "Ephesians." As it undoubtedly was sent to Ephesus, this is quite correct. Very ancient manuscripts omit "at Ephesus." This omission, however, leaves a gap which must be filled. This fact, and the very general character of the statements which the epistle contains, with no local allusions, lead us to the conclusion that it was a *circular letter*.

## ITEM I. JOINT HEIRS OF A HEAVENLY INHERITANCE.

### THE SALUTATION.

"May favor and peace, from God, our Father, and from our Lord, Jesus Christ, be yours!"

DIVINE favor, and the repose it gives, is the height of human blessedness.

This may be shown in various ways.

The slave deems it a favor if his master deals with him kindly and considerately. Our great Master, Jesus, Christ, is the most gracious and considerate of Masters. I had rather wear His livery than the royal robes of the highest earthly potentate.

The pet enjoys the special favor of its father. Nothing is too good, no care too laborious for his child. The Father of our spirits, too, has favors to bestow upon the objects of His love.

But earthly figures fail when we come to speak of favor Divine. Suffice to say that, as we enter upon our epistle, we find grace so suffuses all that an overwhelming sense of its infinity forbids a finite utterance.

May every reader of these lines, as we pursue our further course in this epistle, find the favor here invoked and enjoy the calm it gives!

## THE GRACE GLORIOUS.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord, Jesus Christ, Who has blessed us with every spiritual blessedness in the celestial regions, in Christ,

According as He has selected us in Him, before the disruption of this world's system, to be holy and without a blemish in His very presence ;

*In love* having designated us beforehand for a son's place towards Him through Jesus Christ, in accordance with the gratification of His resolution to win the laud elicited by His grace glorious, with which He has favoured us in the Beloved One."

"THE BELOVED!" These words, the heart of the passage before us, lead to the very center of God's affections. How amazing that He should take us into such confidence as this! Enfolded in this love we find the favors here bestowed. By this favor we are made acquainted with the *Father* of our Master, Jesus, Christ, as the Rich Redemption, which follows, tells us of His *God*.

Not grace only, but GLORIOUS grace! The depths of grace have already been sounded. The apostle himself is the great example of its unfathomable reach. But now we are called upon to explore its heights, its richness, its surpassing splendor.

Such grace as this cannot but provoke applause. The One who can shower such undreamed-of favors upon His enemies deserves all praise, all honor, and the admiration of every heart.

This is what he craves; this is what He obtains.

Before even stopping to tell why, the apostle bursts into a benediction at the very thought of the message that

he bears; and our hearts echo: "*Blessed, indeed, be the God and Father of his Lord, Jesus, Christ!*"

And why?

Because He has blessed them with *every* spiritual blessedness, in Christ.

#### "SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS."

Israel was promised spiritual blessings. Up to a few years prior to the time this letter was written, they had shared these blessings with the other Nations (Rom. xv: 27). But there are *material* blessings as well in store for that nation in the good land Jehovah promised. Her fig trees and her olive groves and her vineyards will satiate the souls of the sons of Israel upon the regenerated earth. But here we have no mention of such good things as these. In that day these will be accompanied by the spiritual blessings which they picture. The Kingdom of God on earth is not merely meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy by the energy of the Holy Spirit. In the passage before us there is no such combination of the spiritual and material as the Kingdom will present. All is purely spiritual because all is in

#### "THE HEAVENLY REGIONS."

The sphere of material blessings is abandoned.

This letter was not written until all hope of Israel's earthly bliss had been crushed, for the time being, by their stubborn refusal of the Spirit's testimony to their Messiah. Israel, as a nation, was "blinded" and could not be blessed until that then distant day when they say "Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of Jehovah."

As we have already seen, two companies of saints, one of a distinctly Israelitish character, the other com-

posed quite as much of the men of other nations, were upon the scene. One was distinctly *national*, the other *individual*.

One of these classes presents no difficulty. The congregation of the Israelites must wait the repentance of the nation and be purged by the judgments which usher in the Day of Judgment. Their endurance would be tested to the utmost. The overcomers, only, enter the Messianic Kingdom.

But what of that distinct class, composed of Gentiles and Jews, dwelling among the Nations, whose blessings depended upon deposed Israel?

#### THE DOOR OF FAITH.

In contrast to the way of repentance, baptism, and works consistent with these, the Nations entered through the door of FAITH. The consequences of this change are so weighty and so far-reaching that we must needs turn aside for a few moments to meditate thereon.

Why was Faith made the door? "It flows from faith that it might agree with grace" (Rom. iv: 16) says the apostle to the Romans. Interpose anything else between man and God and grace is gone. Faith alone has no merit, and calls for no endeavor, no return.

#### THE WAY OF GRACE.

Grace has a way all its own. Let us follow its footsteps for awhile and note its heavenly tread.

The apostle is a pattern case. Not, indeed, a pattern of those who went before him (their case was quite different) but of those who *were about to believe* (1 Tim. i: 16).

The concentrated hate of the nation found vent in

Saul of Tarsus. Mad with rage against God and His Anointed, urged on by His religious heart, he forces his way to the very van of earth's rebellious sinners. He it was who held the clothes of those who stoned Stephen.

If anyone deserved the judgment due to the rejection of the Spirit's testimony, it was this young man. He excelled his contemporaries in his knowledge of Jehovah's law and in zeal for His cause. But as for this Messiah, he wished himself accursed by Him (Rom. ix: 3).

And did he get his wish? Did he get a judgment more severe than the rest, in keeping with his greater light and more dreadful offenses?

Not content with his persecutions in Judea, he is on his way to Damascus to destroy God's saints there. As he nears the city, Christ Himself descends from His heavenly throne and meets him on the road.

"If a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away?" (1 Sam. xxiv: 19). Messiah has met His most malevolent human enemy.

"Behold, ye despisers and wonder and perish" is the Scripture which fits his case (Hab. i: 5; Acts xiii: 4). And does Messiah allay him with a breath? Does He blot out the remembrance of such a wretch from under heaven?

#### GRACE TRIUMPHANT.

Rich are his deserts in judgment!

*But richer far is the favor he is shown!*

This is the opening note—the keynote—of this high celestial harmony.

Christ has met His enemy and conquered him with *grace*.

This had never been promised by the prophets.

Messiah, when on earth, had never left the narrow

pale of Israel's land. But now He appears in glory among the Nations, far distant from the holy city.

He was to have come in flaming fire, executing vengeance upon the ignorant and disobedient (2 Thess. i: 8).

But Saul's call was something entirely new. It was the very opposite of what might justly have been expected. It was favor, undiluted, unaided, unassisted, pure.

And so we have a new method, a distinct dispensation, begun when Saul was called.

That he was not to be identified with Jerusalem is further evident by his peculiar baptism.

Admission to the existing unity was by baptism performed by some member of that party who was qualified. But Saul baptized\* himself (Acts xxii: 16). As he went on, his every step was in an untrodden path, distinct and often diametric to the rest.

Not only did he preach that Jesus was Israel's Messiah, David's Son, but he also "preached Jesus in the synagogue that He is the Son of God" (Acts ix: 29). Never before, in the Pentecostal era, do we find this testimony.†

The Kingdom of David was confined to Israel and the land, but God's spiritual dominion is over all. The proclamation of Christ as the Son of *God* is the opening wedge that brought blessing to the other nations.

Paul himself was very jealous that the difference between his message and that of the twelve apostles should be acknowledged.

In writing to the Galatians, he says: "But when it

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\*In II Kings v: 14, this word baptize is used in the middle voice in the LXX. It translates the active (Kal) of the Hebrew. Naaman baptized himself.

†Acts viii: 37, is spurious.

pleased God, Who set me apart from my mother's womb, and called me through His favor, to reveal *His Son* by me, that I might evangelize Him *among the Nations*, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: neither went I up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went into Arabia and returned to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and abode with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save Jacob, the Master's brother.

"Now, the things I write unto you, behold, before God, *it is no falsehood.*

"Then I came to the regions of Syria and Cilicia, but was not personally acquainted with the Jewish assemblies in Messiah. But they had heard only that 'He who used to persecute us, now preaches the belief he once ravaged,' and by me they glorified God.

"Then, fourteen years after, I went up to Jerusalem again, with Barnabas, taking Titus along, too. And I went up in response to a revelation, and submitted the good news which I heralded among the Nations for their consideration, but separately to those of note, lest by some chance I ran, or had run, to no purpose (Gal. i: 15—ii: 2).

It is evident from this that Paul did not "continue in the apostles' doctrine" (Acts ii: 42) as the converts did at Pentecost. If he did, why should he be so much in earnest to establish the fact that he had not received aught from Jerusalem? or the further fact that he had not even had a chance to get it from the twelve? Why all this, if his message was the same as theirs? And why, pursuant to a revelation, does he go up and tell them of it, if they *already* know and proclaim it?

The truth is, they did not know it before, and never proclaimed it, either before or after his visit.

"\* \* \* When they perceived that the gospel of the

Uncircumcision was confided to me, even as the Circumcision to Peter, \* \* \* Jacob, Cephas and John, who appeared to be pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we [should go] to the Nations, and they to the Circumcision. \* \* \*” (Gal ii: 9).

Before writing this to the Galatians, Paul, along with Barnabas, had been *separated* from the rest by the solemn command of the Holy Spirit. “Separate me now Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them,” was the Spirit’s decree (Acts xiii: 2). Then, and not before, was this Hebrew name, Saul, changed (to correspond with his new mission) to the Gentile name “Paul” (Acts xiii: 9).

Leaving Antioch they come to another place of the same name in Pisidia. Here the apostle delivers a sermon in the synagogue, to the Jews. Its points of contrast with the apostolic testimony are striking. *Faith* takes the place of repentance and baptism. *Justification* is broached for the first time. The law is set aside. No wonder they charged him at Jerusalem with teaching the Jews among the Nations to apostatize from Moses! (Acts xxi: 21). But the strangest part is yet to follow. “*And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue the Gentiles besought that these words might be spoken to them the next Sabbath!*” *This could never have occurred under the preaching of the twelve!* They had nothing to tell the Nations, except that they ought to become proselytes. They could only bring them the message God had *sent to the sons of Israel*, as Peter did to Cornelius (Acts x: 36).

But Paul’s message was one of *grace* and could reach either a Jew or a man of any other nation. So here, first of all, we see not only a new revelation, a new message, separate and distinct apostles (sent by the *Spirit*, while the twelve were commissioned by the Master on earth)



but an assembly composed of Jews *and aliens* on the ground of *grace* and *faith*.

This work, begun at Psidian Antioch, was repeated in many a place, even as far as Illyricum (Rom. xv: 19).

The result was that the assemblies among the Nations, while subject to Jerusalem, were quite distinct in character and doctrine.

In fact, *they already enjoyed the spiritual blessings which Israel will enjoy in Jehovah's day.*

Later on, the saints at Jerusalem were scattered among the Nations, but they carried their doctrine with them. They are the dispersion (*diaspora*) to whom Peter addressed his first epistle (1 Pet. i: 1). They continued in the grace revealed to the prophets (1 Pet. i: 10), in contrast to the secret grace revealed to Paul's hearers.

#### GRACE REGNANT.

The magic potency of grace has created righteousness and justification (or acquittal) quite apart from doing what the law demands. It has exalted God's righteousness, through the cross, far beyond the highest effort of judgment or wrath. Listen to its heavenly logic: "But God commends His own peculiar love to us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. *Much more* then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath through Him; for if, when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by His life" (Rom. v: 8-10).

Saved from *the* wrath. What wrath? The wrath of the terrible Day of the Lord. Those at Jerusalem can only hope to be carried safely *through* it. If they endure to the end, they shall be saved.

But those who are justified by faith, they are saved *from* (*apo*) it.

Paul himself most richly deserved this wrath, but got grace instead. His is the pattern case.

Speaking of this to the Thessalonians he had written "For God has *not* appointed us to wrath, but to obtain *salvation* through our Lord, Jesus, Christ, Who died for us that, whether we watch or are drowsy, we should live together with Him" (1 Thess. i: 10; v: 10).

To Israel He had said "But know this, that if the owner of the house had known in what watch the thief would come he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken into" (Matt. xxiv: 43).

To the Thessalonians: "But ye brethren are *not in darkness* that *that day* should overtake you as a thief" (1 Thess. v: 4).

How great is the contrast! Nothing else has wrought it but grace!

So much for the future.

But grace has a present power.

Just as His death delivered them from the impending thunders of His wrath, so, too, that death delivered them from the dread bondage of the law.

Grace absolutely defies condemnation in every shape and form. If they did well, there could be no condemnation: if they did ill, grace stepped in and banished condemnation. There is no condemnation possible. Who could lay anything to the charge of those God himself had justified on the ground of grace?

Grace has ascended the throne that Sin once filled, and holds its sovereign sway.

#### GRACE GLORIOUS.

What shall become of these dependent assemblies?

Once they shared Israel's "spiritual blessings," but now Israel is herself bereft of all.

Once Paul made up to them where Israel failed, but now, when writing to the Ephesian saints, he, too, is off the scene through their hateful malice. Now he is a prisoner at Rome and can no longer go about his priestly ministry among the Nations.

First of all we are concerned with the apostle himself and his fellow Jews. What is to be the lot of these, now that Israel's blessings are indefinitely deferred?

While the nation has been going down-grade at a fearful rate, courting and receiving God's wrath, these Hebrew believers have ascended from one favor to another. Shall they share Israel's defection or will the flight of grace go on unhindered?

This is the problem as it might have appeared at the crisis following the close of Paul's personal ministry, and especially after his arrival in Rome and after his solemn recital of Isaiah's prophecy, setting aside the nation finally.

Not that God reasoned thus. To Him it was no problem. To Him it was the ripe fruitage of the ages.

#### BEFORE SIN'S SHADOW FELL.

Let us, in spirit, transport ourselves to the era primeval. Sin's shadow has not dimmed the lustre of God's creation: it is absolutely unknown. The universe, from center to circumference, is as perfect as when first it sprang forth from nothingness in response to the call of its Creator.\*

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\*We have translated the word *katabolee* by "disruption" (instead of "foundation," A. V.) because its etymology demands a *casting down* rather than a building up; its usage in the LXX demands this meaning.

The phrase "the foundation of the world" really refers to the entrance of sin. This gives a far more vigorous and satisfactory sense.

And *then* it was that God chose us. All things were holy and flawless; and in His purposes we, too, were without the least flaw or taint.

The temporary visitation of Sin must not rob us of this great verity. Sweet as is the honey which God will get from this rapacious eater, we must never forget the sweetness of this transcendent truth. God, in His grand purposes for us, forestalled sin. Our place in His presence, before sin intruded upon the scene, is a guarantee of the permanence and perfectness of our portion yet to come.

#### THE PLACE OF A SON.

The Father loves His Son. He is God's Beloved.

It is not the father with but one son whose love is occasion for remark; but a man with many sons can have but one first-born. And this one's place and prestige receives an added force from every brother that he has. So the Father of spirits determined for His Beloved, His Only One, that He should have many brethren, so to obtain pre-eminence in love as in all things else. His wish concerning His Christ could only thus be gratified.

To pour this love upon the peerless creatures of His heavenly realms, who had no need for all the fruits of love—this did not suit His purpose. To love the mighty and malevolent enemy of Messiah might come nearer to His mark. But that exalted creature sought Messiah's ruin and aspired to His place. No, *that* can never be. *That* would be traitorous to His Messiah. He shall die like men (Ps. lxxxii: 7).

So naught was left but to create a new, a fitting race, and plan it all to gratify this great purpose and pleasure which He had planned for His Anointed.

In such love was conceived the love He bears His later sons.

But in that primal day man had not sinned and was flawless in His sight. God's creations all are perfect. Here, too, love lacked occasion.

The stage is built; the earth made habitable.

Man is made in Elohim's image; so to be fit for His companionship, so equipped to enter into the bosom of His affections.

Messiah's enemy is allowed to insinuate himself into man's favor, and to alienate his heart from God. Messiah is forthwith promised and His triumph over His adversary is announced. But mankind becomes utterly apostate.

God chooses one man Abraham, and one nation from His grandson, Israel, with whom He counsels to fill the earth with blessing by Messiah.

When Messiah comes in person, Israel rises in pride against Him, even while He seeks to reveal God's loving heart. They return His love by hate, and, led on by Satan, crucify the Highest.

All God's counsels concerning earth's blessing were wrapped up in Him and the nation from whom He sprang.

Even after they have done their worst, love lingers over them, pressing home their dreadful guilt, promising that He will return and bless them if they only will repent.

But they will not.

Saul, hatefully religious, persecutes the feeble few who were faithful to His name.

Truly, he was the chief of sinners.

*Here, at length, God finds a fit field for the outflow of His favor.*

Though least deserving it of all mankind, yet receiving it in fullest measure, his was a "pattern case." And by him many another of the chosen nation believe and love Messiah. They receive His spiritual love gifts even

though they are outside the land, the place of earthly blessing.

What shall be done with them? While the nation is apostate they cannot claim the nation's portion.

This gem of grace is far too precious for any earthly setting! It was conceived before ever the earth was. How fit, then, that God should take it to His heavenly sphere!

#### THE CHOICE OF LOVE.

Each one was picked out by love. When the gem cutter picks his stones, he chooses those which seem most likely in their virgin state. But God picks His to show His skill—the worse the better.

When men would display their love, they spend it upon their friends. God makes better choice; He lavishes it upon His enemies.

Like a skillful painter, He strengthens the high lights of His grace by contrasting shadows deep and gloomy. His most glorious grace cannot find expression except in the direst and most dreadful case.

The murder of Messiah would seem to be the height of human guiltiness. But was it not still worse, when, after this was done and God in mercy pleads with their blood-stained hands to receive His gifts—the benefits which that death alone could bring—that then they steel their hearts against His grace? This is the pinnacle of sin; the place where grace finds its most glorious crown. To take such a stubborn heart and melt it in love's flame, this is the triumph and the fruit of His primeval purpose, which will yet fill the heavenly spheres with everlasting praise.

No longer does our apostle look to live upon the regenerated earth. No longer does he claim his inheritance

in the land of his fathers, which Abraham trod and will yet receive.

His gaze is up. He looks above and longs for a heavenly inheritance. His spirit already soars in celestial realms, he is already concerned with heavenly affairs and welcomes every ray that lightens up the scene of his future career.

He knows full well that he does not deserve the meanest corner in so high a place.

But he knows, too, the power of this glorious grace. He finds himself, as we shall see, in spirit soaring past the various ranks and dignities that rule the realms above, past the prince of the archangels, and stands before the very throne of the Divine Majesty.

Nor stands he long, but takes his seat with Christ Himself at God's right hand, the place of power, and of pleasure and of perfection.

None went lower than he: now none can find a higher place!

This is the grace glorious!

# THE ACTS.

## PREFACE (i: 1-11).

The Word of God has been in our hands complete and unaltered during nearly nineteen centuries, and yet only now is there any evidence that the attention of the Church is directed to the significance and importance of the "right apportionment" of it; and only now, apparently, the "laying out of the ages" (Eph. iii: 11) begins to be discerned and truly interpreted.

The Epistles furnish proof of how soon and sadly the assemblies founded by Paul swerved from the simplicity of Christ, and departed from the purity of doctrine which he delivered unto them.

The writings of the early era show that the special characteristics of Pauline teaching were soon lost, and the doctrines of Scripture became obscured by spiritualization, and corrupted with grossest errors and most violent and shameful adulterations.

The Reformation restored the Bible to its rightful place of prestige. So far as it went, it was good; but it never went far enough. Luther, in a measure, recovered justification; but it is not yet realized to what extent he and the other heralds of the Reformation remained under the influence of Roman doctrines and ideas.

The movements which followed the Reformation were insufficient. In point of doctrine, their "progress" has been backwards. Their grasp of justification was not as clear and mighty as Luther's. The measure in which these movements grasped the Word of God was the measure of their strength. On the other hand, the measure in which they fell short of it was the measure of weakness and insufficiency of the whole movement.



The Bible is a record of the unfolding of God's purpose in the ages. With most Protestants, it is but a manual of ethics. As a result of this false conception, the Bible has been misunderstood, misinterpreted, and misapplied. Its purpose has been misunderstood, its contents have been misinterpreted, and its truths have been misapplied.

But of all the books of the Bible three have been pre-eminently misunderstood, misinterpreted, and misapplied: the Acts, the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Apocalypse.

The first only engages our attention at this time. Before entering upon its study it is well to ascertain the cause of misunderstanding.

The one aim of expositors, as witnessed by the chapter headings in the current editions of the Bible, was to interpret everything of the church.

We know how detrimental intrusion of extraneous matter is to a mechanism or an organism. This may be illustrated in various ways. A little dust clogs the wheels of a watch and disables the entire mechanism. A grain of sand penetrating the eye, though ever so infinitesimal, irritates the nerves, induces inflammation, and may even cause loss of sight. But all comparisons fail when we come to speak of the injury done to the truth by forcing the Church into every part of the Divine records.

The true place of the Acts in the Divine counsels has not been recognized. The common exegesis may best be stated in the words of another:

"From the days of the early fathers, the Acts of the Apostles have been regarded as the inspired record of the church's birth, constitution, early life, and missionary activity. The consensus of opinion, ancient and modern, considers it as the first fragment of church history.\*"

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\*Feodorov, *History of Dogma*.

The "consensus of opinion," then, connects the Acts with the Church. To this view the majority have too readily acquiesced, though the chaos it has wrought, quintessent of other causes, is in itself sufficient to arouse suspicion as to its correctness.

In the following pages, the interpretation accredited by the "consensus of opinion" is brought for trial before the supreme court of truth.

To interpret a book, we must know its scope and purpose, and these can only be inferred from the book itself, which alone can settle this point authoritatively.

It is customary to equip scientific and literary works with a preface explaining their nature and purpose and affording such practical help as the student is likely to require. To use these works without knowledge of the writer's aim and method the reader is apt to take a wrong view of the whole matter and bring it into discredit and contempt.

The preface to the Acts is comprised in the first eleven verses of the opening chapter. The nature and purpose of the work are therein enunciated in a series of five propositions. These are

1. Luke's Declaration—ver. 1, 2.
2. The Lord's Teaching—ver. 3.
3. The Lord's Announcement—ver. 4, 5.
4. The Disciple's Question—ver. 6, 7.
5. The Message of the Two Men—ver. 11.

As Ariadne supplied Theseus with a thread at the very entrance of the cavern which he had to penetrate that he might not lose his way amidst its labyrinthine windings, so the five rubrics of the preface furnish the clue to a right interpretation of the book.

## 1. THE BEGINNING OF JESUS.

"My former treatise, Theophilus, dealt with all that Jesus did and taught as a beginning, down to the day on which, after giving commandment through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom He had chosen, He was taken up."

The opening sentence trumpets into our ears that the book is a *continuation*, not a commencement. Luke proposes to narrate the continuance by the twelve of "what Jesus did and taught as a beginning." This "beginning" of Jesus is recorded in Matt. iv: 17, and is concerned with the offer of the Kingdom to Israel.

The Gospels relate the preaching of the Kingdom, with the King *on earth*. In the Acts we have the same preaching continued with the King *in heaven*.

The close connection between Messiah's ministry in the Gospels and that of the twelve in Acts is strongly emphasized in the Hebrew letter.

"God, who in ancient days spoke variedly and fragmentarily to our fathers in the prophets, has at the end of these days spoken to us by a Son" (Heb. i: 1, 2). Two periods are referred to in the phrases "in ancient days" and "at the end of these days." The former covers the centuries when Jehovah spake to Israel by prophets. The latter covers Messiah's ministry detailed in the Gospels.

Starting from the latter point, the second chapter carries us a step forward. "How can there be any escape, if we make light of so great a salvation? A beginning having been spoken by the Lord was confirmed to us by them that heard (Him); God corroborating their witness by signs and miracles and various powers, and by gifts of holy spirit in harmony with His own will" (Heb. ii: 3-4).

So we see, the ministry of the twelve in Acts is here described as a "confirmation" of the beginning initiated by Messiah Himself.

## 2. THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

"He had also, after He suffered, shown Himself alive to them with many sure proofs, appearing to them at intervals during forty days, and speaking of the kingdom of God."

This was the curriculum during the forty days.

The term "kingdom of God" occurs four times in Matthew, fourteen times in Mark, thirty-three times in Luke, twice in John, seven times in Acts, and nine times in Paul's letters.

The cognate term "kingdom of heaven" occurs thirty-three times in Matthew, and nowhere else in the New Testament.

A study of these passages is necessary to determine the exact import of the term.

Our inquiry at this time is confined to the use of the phrase in the Gospels and the Acts. The modifications and expansions of the term necessitated by later revelations are outside the range of the present study.

The first question is, Are the terms "kingdom of heaven" and "kingdom of God" synonymous?

1. Six times in Mark and nine times in Luke "the kingdom of God" appears, where the parallel passages in Matthew have "kingdom of heaven."\*

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<i>*Matthew.</i>	<i>Mark.</i>	<i>Luke.</i>
iv. 17	i. 15	
v. 3		vi: 20
viii. 11		xiii. 28
xi. 11		vii. 28
xiii. 11	iv. 11	viii. 10
xiii. 31	iv. 30	xiii. 18

2. Both expressions are interchangeably used in Matt. xix: 23, 24.

3. The "kingdom of God" and "the kingdom of heaven" are used of the same pronouncement. Matt. iv: 17, 23, ix: 35, Mark i: 15, Luke iv: 43, xvi: 16.

4. The Kingdom of God is identified with the Kingdom of the Son of man. Matt. xvi: 28, Mark ix: 1, Luke ix: 27.

5. In Acts i: 3, 6, it is identified with the Kingdom to be restored to Israel. The Lord's teaching during the forty days elicited the question of the disciples, which is the one absorbing query throughout the book.

6. The Kingdom of God is identified with the Kingdom of the Father (Matt. xxvi: 29, Mark xiv: 25, Luke xxii: 16, 18). The same fact results from a comparison of Matt. vi: 33 (R. V.) with Luke xii: 31.

He had taught the disciples to pray, "Thy kingdom come" (Matt. vi: 10, Luke xi: 2). What did He mean? The next clause, "Thy will be done, as in heaven so on earth," defines the petition, while His words in a subsequent chapter describe the manner of its coming and the position therein of those who were taught to pray for its advent (Matt. xiii: 43).

7. At the time of the entry into Jerusalem there was a widespread expectation "that the kingdom of God was immediately to appear" (Luke xix: 11). What the expectation was is clear from the cries of the palm-bearing multitudes: "Blessed is the kingdom that cometh, the kingdom of our father David: Hosanna in the highest!" (Mark xi: 10).

<i>Matthew.</i>	<i>Mark.</i>	<i>Luke.</i>
xiii. 33		xiii. 20
xviii. 3	x. 15	xviii. 17
xix. 14	x. 14	xviii. 16
xix. 23	x. 23	xviii. 24

Compare also Matt. xix: 12, with Luke xviii: 29.

The Kingdom of God is thus identified with the Davidic monarchy. The parable of the *Nobleman* (Luke xix: 12-27) confirmed the expectation of the multitudes, though it dispelled their idea as to the time of its realisation.

8. At the time of the nativity holy men and women looked for "Israel's consolation" and the "redemption of Jerusalem" (Luke ii: 25, 38). Joseph of Arimathea, one of their number, "looked for the kingdom of God" (Mark xv: 43; Luke xxiii: 51). The Kingdom of God is thus once more identified with the "hope of Israel."

These facts establish two things:

(1). The two terms (in the Gospels and the Acts) are exactly equivalent as to meaning, and differ only in inclusiveness.

(2). Both terms mean, and refer to, the Messianic Kingdom as an outward earthly polity; in a word, the Kingdom of which all the prophets had spoken.

The phrase "kingdom of heaven," as already noted, is employed only by Matthew.

It is a canon of interpretation to explain any expression or thought of Scripture by the presence thereof in other parts of Scripture, and especially by its first occurrence. Following that principle, we find the basis of this expression as far back as Daniel ii: 44 and vii: 27.

"That the heavens do rule" was announced to Nebuchadnezzar as a present fact and truth (Dan. iv: 26). But the visions of the second and seventh chapters foretold a *future* kingdom—a kingdom in the same sense in which the empires represented by the Metals and the Beasts were kingdoms—foresaw in the dim distance a time when the Son of man would wield the sceptre of earthly sovereignty in the same sense in which Nebuchadnezzar and Cæsar have wielded it.

The Gospels and the Acts trace the fortunes of this

Kingdom. In the former the disciples offer it to the sons of Israel while the Master was with them; in the latter they repeat the same offer in His absence.

### 3. JOHN'S BAPTISM.

"For John indeed baptized with water, but before many days have passed you shall be baptized with holy spirit."

John had linked his ministry to Messiah's. "I indeed am baptizing you in water unto repentance; but he who is coming after me is mightier than I: his sandals I am unworthy to bear for a moment; he will baptize you in the holy spirit and in fire" (Matt. iii: 11).

Messiah baptized only in water (Jno. iv: 1). The Spirit could not be given until Jesus was glorified (Jno. vii: 39). Obviously, then, John looked onward to the Spirit's ministry which lay beyond Messiah's. The ministries of the forerunner, the King and the Spirit are thus unified and interlaced.

Before Messiah undertook the proclamation of the Kingdom He was enmantled with the Spirit's power. So now He enjoined the disciples to wait at Jerusalem until endued with power from on high.

John, looking forward, linked his ministry to that of the Spirit: the Master, looking backward, links the impending ministry of the Spirit to John's ministry to Israel.

### 4. THE DISCIPLES' QUESTION.

"Once when they were with him, they asked him, Master, is this the time at which thou art about to restore the kingdom to Israel? It is not for you, he replied, to know times or epochs which the Father has

reserved within his own authority; but you will receive power when holy spirit is come upon you."

This can only be understood in the light of the preceding verse—the announcement of their imminent baptism with holy spirit. The disciples' question has its root in that announcement.

The prophet had said: "Upon the land of my people shall come up thorns and briers; yea, upon all the houses of joy in the joyous city: for the palace shall be forsaken; the populous city shall be deserted; the hill and the watch tower shall be for dens for ever, a joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks; *until the spirit be poured upon us from on high*, and the wilderness become a fruitful field, and the fruitful hill be counted for a forest. *Then* judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness shall abide in the fruitful field. And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and confidence for ever. And my people shall abide in a peaceful habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places" (Isa. xxxii: 13-18).

The downtreading of the people and land of Israel, according to this prophecy, will cease with the outpouring of the Spirit from on high. The Master's words brought this promise to their minds and prompted the question which, instead of being "carnal," as many imagine, was intensely *spiritual* and had definite divine connections.

Messiah's answer confirmed the *fact* of the Kingdom as it was at the time in the minds of the eleven. As to the *time*, He said: "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has reserved within his own authority. But you shall receive power \* \* \* and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in Judea and Samaria and to the uttermost parts of the earth."



The Kingdom turned on Israel's reception of the Messiah. The witnesses therefore must depend on the results of their preaching to answer the question, and these are hid from them.

It remains to ascertain whether Peter thus understood the Lord's answer. His sermon at Solomon's Portico conclusively shows that he did. He urged Israel to repent, that Messiah may return and bless them. "Repent, therefore, and turn, so that the record of your sins may be canceled, and that there may come seasons of refreshing from the Lord, and that he may send the Messiah appointed beforehand for you—even Jesus." (Acts iii: 19-20).

#### 5. THE DECLARATION OF THE TWO MEN.

"But while they stood intently gazing into the sky as he went, suddenly there were two men in white garments standing by them, who said, Galileans, why stand ye looking into the sky? This same Jesus who has been taken up from you into heaven will come in just the same way as you have seen him going into heaven."

This same Jesus will come in just the same way—what way?

1. He ascended from a Hebrew remnant which had confessed Him as the Messiah while the nation as a whole had rejected Him: He will return to a remnant of the same people persecuted by their apostate brethren for His sake (Luke xxiv: 50, 51; Acts i: 9; Mal. iv: 1, 2; Isa. lxvi: 5-9).

2. He departed from rebel Israel crying: "We have no king save Cæsar!" He will return to repentant Israel exclaiming: "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!" (Luke xix: 14; Matt. xxii: 39; Zech. xii: 10-13).

3. He was carried up while Jewish disciples were looking at Him: He will return to Jewish disciples that look for Him (Acts 1: 9, Heb. ix: 28, Apoc. i: 7).

4. He was lifted up from Olivet: He will return to Olivet (Acts i: 12, Zech. xiv: 4).

5. As He was carried up, a cloud closing beneath Him hid Him from their sight: He will return with the clouds (Acts i: 9, Dan. vii: 13, Matt. xxiv: 30, Apoc. i: 7, xiv: 14).

In accord with the promise of the two men—"this same Jesus will come in just the same way"—Peter promises to the men of Israel Messiah's return to fulfil to them all that their own prophets had foretold and promised of spiritual and national blessing.

The five waymarks of the preface unequivocally proclaim the connection of the Acts with Israel and the Kingdom.

And there are five more witnesses testifying to this fact.

*John the Baptist* bound his own ministry to the sons of Israel to that which was to commence with the coming of the Spirit (Matt. iii: 11).

*Luke* at the outset of his treatise announces his purpose to relate the *continuation* of the Kingdom ministry of the Master by the twelve (Acts i: 1, 2).

*The risen Master* linked the prospective ministry of the Spirit to the Kingdom ministry of John (Acts i: 5).

*Peter* preached the Kingdom to Israel on condition of repentance, as John and the Master had done before (Acts iii: 19, 20).

*Paul* describes the ministry of the twelve in Acts as a "confirmation" of the beginning made by the Lord Himself (Heb. ii: 1-4).

The cumulative evidence of these witnesses and facts vetoes the common exegesis and proclaims the Acts *the last chapter of God's dealings with Israel. It is a treatise on the Kingdom of God as proclaimed by the Holy Spirit and its rejection by Israel both in and out of the land.*

## THE OVERTHROW OF THE WORLD.

The Bible has suffered alike from friend and foe. The foe has strained every nerve to demolish the sacred book and undermine the faith delivered to the saints. But some decades ago, just when the foe seemed on the verge of triumph, antiquity emerged from the grave and made its voice heard. At the magic touch of the investigator, the earth yielded monumental and documentary treasures for centuries buried in her bosom. The spade of the excavator and the patient skill of the decipherer have exploded the theories of critics, discredited their conclusions, and vindicated the historic accuracy of the sacred records. The confident assertions of assailants have been shown to be deductions based on fragmentary evidence. Their positive, dictatorial tone, the overconfidence of presumption.

The friend, on the other hand, has been as timid in dealing with the Bible as the enemy has been daring, and has as naively relied on tradition as his opponent on imperfect knowledge of ancient history and languages.

Scripture has everything to gain and nothing to lose from minute research. It invites severest scrutiny. The microscope has augmented immeasurably our knowledge of the perfectness of God's workmanship in nature. Laborious investigation and exhaustive analysis can only discover new wonders in the texture of the Word, which is the greatest of His works.

Man uses words at random; God uses them by *weight* on the principle of intentional selection. They are chosen with care and employed with precision; and if we wish to know their import and understand their teaching we must study them with care.

Of the many important words of Scripture we have chosen "foundation" for our present meditation.

In the current editions of the English Bible, the word "foundation" represents two Greek words—*themelios*, which is used sixteen times, and *katabolee*, which occurs eleven times.

The phonetic difference is evident. The etymological difference, obscured from the English reader by inconsistency of translation, has been overlooked.

One thing is certain: the two words convey varied ideas. Our change of verbiage may be due to accident or ignorance or both. But to attribute the verbal changes of Scripture to ignorance or accident is a libel on its Author. The fact of two distinct words insists on a distinction somewhere. That "foundation" is really the equivalent of *themelios* is proven by the context of each occurrence.\* But "foundation" as a translation of *katabolee* is inadmissible at all. Etymology demands a *casting down* rather than a building up, the noun being composed of the preposition *kata*, *down*, and the verb *balloo*, to *throw*, to *cast*.

The parent verb *katabaloo* is found in 2 Cor. iv: 9, Heb. vi: 1, Rev. xii: 10.

In Corinthians and the Apocalypse the sense is clear. In the former the metaphor is taken from an athlete or combatant overthrown by his rival; in the latter the devil is cast down from heaven.

The sense and force of Heb. vi: 1-3 has been dimmed by a defective version, which renders the same verb "laying." This is most confusing.

In the closing verses of the preceding chapter the

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\*Luke vi: 48, 49, xiv: 29, Acts xvi: 26, Rom. xv: 20, I Cor. iii: 10, 11, 12, Eph. ii: 20, I Tim. vi: 19, II Tim. ii: 19, Heb. vi: 1, xi: 10, Rev. xxi: 14, 19 (twice).

apostle laments the low ebb of the spirituality of the Hebrews. In spite of prolonged instruction, they still cling to transient ordinances and fail to apprehend the permanent blessings preached to them by the apostles of the Lord. Their condition occasions the exhortation of the next chapter.

"On this account leave behind Messiah's beginning, and press on toward the climax (not indeed overthrowing [the] foundation: repentance from dead works, faith in God, the teaching of washings and laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and the judgment of the age). And this is what we, God permitting, propose to do" (Heb. vi: 1-3).

The words from the second half of the first verse to the end of the second should be bracketed, and the first half of verse one connected with verse three, thus: "On this account leave behind Messiah's beginning, and press on toward the climax. [] And that is what we, God permitting, propose to do."

The customs instituted by Moses were imposed until a time of rectification (Heb. ix: 10). During the Master's ministry (which is the "beginning" here referred to, ch. ii: 1-3) these had continued in force. Now, with the renewed offer of the Kingdom, the climax was at hand and the law nigh unto vanishing away (Heb. viii: 13). Hence the exhortation to desert the forms and adjust themselves to the impending rectification. The parenthesis safeguards the injunction of the first verse from possible misconstruction. Abandonment of the ritual did not involve an "overthrow" of the foundations on which the preaching to the Circumcision rested; namely, repentance, faith in God, baptism, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and the judgment of the age.

The Hebrew words represented in the Septuagint by

this verb (*huppil, sahtam, palnatz, dimgah, shahghath, hahras, hishpeel, nachtash, nachthatz*) all mean to overthrow, destroy, break, pull down, corrupt, and none means to upbuild.

Joab's soldiers did not *build* the walls of Abel; they intended to break them down (2 Sam. xx: 15).

The murmurers in the wilderness were not *established*; they were overthrown (Ps. cvi: 26, 27).

Those infatuated with the harlot are not *built up*; they are cast down (Prov. vii: 26).

The walls of Tyre were not *founded* by the Chaldeans; they were cast down (Ezek. xxvi: 4, 9, 12).

The kingdoms of the nations will not be *founded* in the day of Jehovah's wrath; they will be overthrown. (Hag. ii: 22). And so in every instance.\*

The Septuagint does not contain the cognate substantive. But its solitary occurrence in the Apocrypha, where it is used of *haphazardly heaped material*, proves that in those days it had a meaning consistent with the related verb (2 Mac. ii: 29). And the New Testament conforms to the usage of the Septuagint.

*Katabolee*† is consistently rendered "foundation," except in Heb. xi: 11, where it is translated *conceive*!

It should read something like this: "By faith even Sarah herself was empowered for the throwing off of the seed, though she was past age, because she counted him faithful who had promised." God had said, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called" (Gen. xxi: 12). Now that she was about to be delivered, the enemy sought to

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\*II Ki. iii: 19, 25, vi: 5, xix: 7, II Ch. xxxii: 21, Job xii: 14, xvi: 9, 14, Ps. xxxvii: 14, lxxiii: 18, cxi: 11, Prov. xviii: 8, xxv: 28, Is. vi: 9, xxvi: 5, Jer. xix: 7, Ezek. vi: 4, xxiii: 25, xxix: 5, xxx: 22, xxxi: 12 (twice), xxxiii: 4, xxxix: 3, Dan. xi: 12.

†Matt. xiii: 35, xxv: 34, Lu. xi: 50, Jno. xvii: 24, Ehp. i: 4, Heb. iv: 3, ix: 26, xi: 11, I Pet. i: 20, Rev. xiii: 8, xvii: 8.

thwart God's purpose by preventing the child's birth. But Sarah trusted in the Lord, and received from Him strength to throw off the offspring, or bring it forth into the world.

"Or else must he often have suffered since the overthrow of the world: but now once at the crisis of the ages hath he been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb. ix: 26).

"The lamb slain from the overthrow of the world" (Rev. xiii: 8).

The founding of a perfect universe, without taint or flaw, demanded no sacrifice. But when the vast mechanism of the universe was thrown out of gear by the consuming fire of sin, a sacrificial death became necessary to remove the disturbing cause and restore harmony.

"That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the overthrow of the world, may be required of this generation" (Luke xi: 50).

The blood of prophets could not have been shed when the earth was founded; it began to be shed when sin invaded it. These words of our Divine Lord brush aside the veil of centuries and display to our vista things which transpired before the present stage was built. We know that the primeval earth was inhabited (Isa. xlv: 18). We know, too, of the existence of a primeval revelation. Zachariah and Peter both mention "the things whereof God has spoken by the mouth of his prophets from the beginning of the ages"\* (Luke i: 70, Acts iii: 21).

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\*Just as we have the expressions "from" (*apo*) and "before" (*pro*) the overthrow of the world, so we have the phrases "from" (*apo*) the ages" (Luke i: 70, Acts iii: 21, xv: 18, Eph. iii: 9, Col. i: 26) and "before" (*pro*) the ages" (I Cor. ii: 7, Jude 25). The latter phrase refers to the display of the ages to the principalities and powers anterior to the overthrow; the former antecedates that display.



All God's purposes converge on the Son of His love. By Him was the whole universe created (Col. i: 16). By Him, as Creative Wisdom, the heavens were established and earth's foundation laid (Prov. vii: 27, 29). By Him, too, were the ages displayed (Col. i: 17), and the Father's purpose, that the Son "should hold first rank among all," was made known to the principalities and powers (Col. i: 18). This display of the ages with Christ as King (1 Tim. i: 17) was the occasion of Satan's fall. That proud spirit conspired against Messiah. His daring plot resulted in the disruption of the mundane system.

With the overthrow commenced the revelation of the slain Lamb (Rev. xiii: 8). The purpose of restoring the ruined spheres was published. Through the cross, the hostile principalities and powers will be made a public example (Col. ii: 15), rebellion will be crushed, and harmony restored in the universe, from center to circumference (Col. i: 20). The "restitution" became the burden of revelation (Acts iii: 21).

The "gods" of the Old Testament are identified with the angels (Ps. viii: 5 and Heb. ii: 7, Ps. xcvi: 7 and Heb. 1: 6). And we are told that they were called gods because "to them *the word of God came*" (Jno. x: 34). The inference from Luke xi: 50 is that it came through prophets, or spokesmen. Who these prophets were is not disclosed. It is enough to know that they were agents through whom God divulged His purposes and that they suffered martyrdom.

In the light of this, the charges of "violence" and "murder" against the Anointed Cherub acquire profound significance and force (Ezek. xxviii: 16, Jno. viii: 44). Our Lord fastens on Satan two crimes: murder (Jno. viii: 44), and departure from truth (Jno. viii: 45).

These indictments reveal the devil's hostility towards God's witnesses and the doctrine of the cross.

The Eden temptation transferred the scene of conflict to our planet. The creation of Adam was a step towards the purposed "restitution." Satan was aware of this, and, in a desperate attempt to prevent it, planned his ruin. He never dreamed that the fall enfolded the key to the restoration of earth and heaven. The principalities and powers did not know that God would seize such an occasion to display His secret wisdom and defeat him who was the archetype of wisdom (Ezek. xxviii: 12). The purposes of glory folded in the cross for humankind were hid from them (1 Cor. ii: 6-8). With the sin of Adam begins the revelation of the death of Christ to humankind. It is first embodied in the promise to the woman (Gen. iii: 15), and then foreshadowed in the slaying of the sacrifice to provide coats for the man and his wife (Gen. iii: 21).

These first events are a faint echo of what had previously happened elsewhere. The display of Christ's pre-eminence occasioned Satan's fall: the announcement of Adam's supremacy over this nether sphere occasioned his downfall. With the overthrow of the world began the revelation of the slain Lamb to the intelligences in the supernal regions: with the failure of Adam began the announcement of Christ's sufferings to men. Satan's activity in the Adamic earth exhibits the same strange atavistic tendency which had marked his career on the previous one. Enmity towards revealed truth and murder of its witnesses are the first events on record after the expulsion from Eden (Gen. iv). The sin of Satan, who was followed by the third part of the celestial host (Rev. xii: 4), wrecked earth and heaven. Both spheres will be restored in due time. The purposes relating to their respective restoration, however, differ as

to the time of inception, as well as to the time and manner of revelation.

*The counsels respecting a terrestrial Kingdom coincide with the overthrow and date therefrom.* Then were His works *finished* (Heb. iv: 3). Then was the Kingdom prepared (Matt. xxv: 34). Then, too, were the names of its heirs *written* in the Lamb's book of life (Rev. xvii: 8). God, in His grand plan of the ages, forestalled the overthrow. The Kingdom in its pristine beauty, before the disruption, is a guarantee of the permanence and perfectness of the Kingdom yet to come.

The Kingdom was promised to Israel. The bruising of the woman's seed and His triumph over the serpent were announced in Eden's garden. These two threads of prediction run on parallel lines throughout the Old Testament. But the converging of the Kingdom counsels on the cross had remained hid since their inception at the time of the overthrow (Matt. xiii: 35). When Israel (to whom alone the Kingdom belongs) scornfully rejected the Master's offer, the secrets of the Kingdom were at length drawn out. At first they were privately made known to the disciples. Then, after the Master's ascension, they were publicly divulged. What had been spoken in their ears is by them proclaimed to the nation from the housetop (Acts iii: 19-21).

But there is another purpose, antedating the overthrow. Its surpassing glory transcends even the bliss reserved for this terrestrial sphere.

The Son of His bosom was the object of the Father's delight, even before the overthrow (Jno. xvii: 24). In love to Him the plan was conceived of forming a body whose members should be one in dignity and honor with the Head. In that love we, sinners of this dispensation, Gentile curs, were chosen and placed before Him holy and flawless (Eph. i: 4).

Since the formation of that purpose, however, everything seemed to presage the impossibility of its realization. The Anointed Cherub sinned and led astray a host of angels. Adam succumbed before his wiles. Mankind became utterly apostate. The favored nation stumbled. Those chosen for a celestial destiny were drawn into sin's vortex and became enemies by their evil works. How, then, can His favor flow to sinful rebels whose words and acts cry for vengeance?

The answer is epitomized in one word—the Propitiatory.

Justification is always associated with propitiation (Luke xviii: 13, 14, Rom. iii: 24, 25). The blood sprinkled mercy seat (the propitiatory of the tabernacle) was hid behind a curtain, veiled from mortal gaze. The unbroken tables of the law within the ark shadowed the faithfulness of Jesus, the blood on and before the covering, redemption's price.

Christ Jesus, the true propitiatory *foreknown* before the overthrow (1 Pet. i: 20) and *slain* therefrom (Rev. xiii: 8) was once, like the propitiatory in Israel's temple, concealed behind the veil of time. At the crisis of the ages the propitiatory was displayed (Rom. iii: 25) and God's right to pass over sins in the past and justify sinners now was vindicated.

Law played no part in the framing of redemption purposes. These were conceived in love based on perfect equity. They belong to a sphere where law has no jurisdiction and care not intrude.

The whole question of justification is "apart from law" (Rom. iii: 21), which came in beside (Rom. v: 20) to reveal sin in the light of God's holiness and decree that death should be its wages. It demanded the punishment of sin and its removal. Christ received the wages

of sin and assured its eventual banishment. The demands of law have been granted; its claims paid to the very last farthing. The satisfaction rendered to law has vindicated His justice and satiated His holiness. Love is left undisputed master of the field, and, unhampered, carries out its primeval purpose of grace and love. Law withdraws from the arena to take a spectator's seat with the prophets, witness the grand transactions of love, and testify to the inflexible justice of its proceedings, whose sole aim is God's glory and the welfare of His creatures.

So long as counsels relating to the earthly Kingdom were in course of fulfillment new departures were impossible. Israel's apostasy furnished a fit occasion to deluge the earth with grace and girdle it with a resplendent belt of celestial glory. While Israel as a nation is deserted by her God, the earth becomes a theatre for the display of secret purposes conceived prior to the overthrow of the world by sin. The propitiatory forestalled sin (I Pet. i: 20). Redemption's train, with its burden of endless glory, began before sin dimmed the lustre of creation and reaches a climax long after sin has left the scene.

When we apprehend that the present economy has its fruition in heaven and was planned before the overthrow of the world-system, we perceive that its types must be looked for in the era primeval, before sin cast its dismal shadow on the dial of the ages.

Where may we catch glimpses of that era?

Only in the epistles unfolding the secret of the present dispensation.

Ephesians and Colossians are twin epistles. Both have two focal points—the Mystery of Messiah (Eph. iii: 4; Col. iv: 3), and the Secret Economy (Eph. iii: 3, 9, Col. i: 25-27, ii. 2). The point of difference is this:

Ephesians unfolds the latter secret at length, but sets forth the former in brief; whereas in Colossians the case is reversed. Again, Ephesians is *proleptic*; it looks onward to the coming procession of glory-laden ages (Eph. ii: 7); Colossians is *retrospective*, taking us back to the unfolding of the ages antecedent to the overthrow (Col. i: 17).

Placing the two letters side by side we shall note the marvelous analogies between type and antitype of the present dispensation.

In the era primeval all things were filled by Him (Col. i: 19): He has gone on high that He might fill all things (Eph. iv: 10).

As head of principalities and powers, He held the highest rank among all (Col. i: 18): He has become the head of every principality and power, exalted far above all (Eph. i: 21).

By Him were the ages displayed (Col. i: 17): by Him will the ages be displayed again to a wondering universe (Eph. ii: 7).

By Him were celestial and terrestrial spheres created and held together (Col. i: 16, 17): by Him will heavenly and earthly spheres be reunited (Eph. i: 9, 10).

All that was lost, and more, will be recovered through Calvary's sacrifice. The burden of past revelation rested on *wisdom* and *creative power*. But sin called forth a transcendent wealth of glory. The adversary's plot drew forth secret resources of wisdom beyond even the ken of celestial creatures, with their marvelous equipments, and elicited the resurrection power before which even creative might pales as death. But, above all, sin caused the outflow of grace and love, which form the basic principles of the revelation yet to come. Wisdom wearing countless favors, power clad in the livery of love—such is the august unfolding which creation is eagerly await-

ing. Love, the spring of exhaustless wisdom and the motive of limitless power, sprang forth from the recesses of God's heart in response to sin. "To the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be glory unto the ages."

# THE CHRIST OF GOD.

## II. HIS SINLESS HUMANITY.

"For hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: who his own self bare our sins in his body upon the tree, that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were going astray like sheep; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls."—I Peter ii: 21-25.

Let us first view the passage in its setting. The main drift of thought in the section of the epistle where our text is found is subjection to man for the Lord's sake. The apostle surveys the various spheres where the "children of obedience" are to practice the "obedience of Christ." First, we have subjection to authorities (ii: 13-17); then subjection to the established social order (ii: 18-20); next comes conjugal subjection (iii: 1-7); finally, the mutual subjection of saints (iii: 8-10).

The section commences with the injunction, "Be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake." This statement illumines the whole section and gives color to its arguments. The margin gives "creation" as the more precise rendering of "ordinance." Accepting this emendation, the passage runs: "Be subject to every creation of man for the Lord's sake." What is man's creation? Government and the then existing social order—so it appears from the context—are two specimens. Time was when the world—the world of man—was of Divine arrangement. According to Genesis, the



whole domain of man's affairs was of God's disposition. Everything in Eden was laid out in consonance with Jehovah's plan, and moved forward along lines indicated by Him. The Serpent urged our progenitors to abandon the path of progress marked out by God and venture upon his proposal. Adam and Eve, crediting his varnished representations, submitted to his leadership. With the fall of Adam, a new world-system was set afoot, with Satan in its van. The will of man asserted its independency by an overt act of opposition to God's express injunction and, under the fostering care of Satan, devoted its energies, and employed its resources, to the attainment of its own fancies. The Preacher who applied his heart to seek and search concerning all that is done under the sun, discovered this truth, and handed it down as an axiom of sociology: "Behold, this only have I found, that God made man upright: but they have sought out many inventions." (Eccl. vii: 29).

No sooner had Satan alienated Adam from his Maker than Jehovah intervened to aid of ruined mankind with the promise of the woman's seed. A Divine movement was thus initiated in the world-system administered by Satan. Henceforth two lines of development are traceable all down the map of time. As the benevolent plans of God develop themselves, the evil plans of Satan develop *pari passu*. Pitted against the Mystery of Godliness, ever seeking to discredit it, is the Mystery of Iniquity.

Peter sketches this *duplex* aspect of the world's physiognomy in four laconic sentences: "Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king" (ii: 17). Here we have two concentric circles: "all men," under the authority of the king, constitute the wider or external circle; the "brotherhood," a company recruited from the former category, and subject to the

authority of God, forms the narrower or internal circle.

The whole effect of our review of the text in the light of the context has been the discovery that the leading thought in this section of the epistle is the deportment of Christians in this world of man's creation after the model of their Redeemer.

The example of Christ is introduced with the phrase, "hereunto were ye called." Called whereunto? The answer is latent in the immediate context. The preceding verses enjoin upon servants maltreated by inconsiderate masters the attitude of patient endurance. The value of such submissiveness is enforced by a repetition of the phrase, "this is acceptable with God," or, if we adopt the marginal reading, "this is grace with God," viz., a conduct conformable with and reflecting the influence of Divine grace.

This sentence furnishes the answer to our question. His people are called to please God, and they may best please Him by walking in the Master's footsteps. "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk as that one walked." Christ has impressed His footsteps on the world's moral strata. The combined forces of opposition have not been able to efface these footprints: they are as fresh to-day as when the soil yielded to the pressure of His sacred foot, and they will remain to guide the progress of heaven-bound travelers until evil will be deprived of all power to act.

Within the brief compass of verses 22-25 there are three profound statements respecting the Person of Christ, each introduced by the relative "who." The first statement concerns His unmatched *nature* (v. 22); the second, His unparalleled *walk* (v. 23); the third, His unexampled *work* (v. 24).

## HIS NATURE.

"Who did not sin, neither was guile found in His mouth." The unique nature of Christ is expressed by two negatives—"no sin, no guile." The former marks the uniqueness of His relationship to God, the latter the uniqueness of His dealings with men.

The force of the word "sin" may be gathered from a striking Old Testament passage. There were in the Israelitish army 700 chosen men who "could sling stones at an hair-breadth, and *not sin*," viz., not miss the mark. Sin is a missing of the mark. Failure to conform to law in any sphere is sin. "In him was no sin"—no missing of the mark, no coming short of God's standard. "He that sent me is with me; he hath not left me alone; for I do always the things that are pleasing to him." He came, not to do his own will, but the will of the Father. To do that will was His meat, and therefore he said, "I am the truth"—the outbeaming of the invisible God, the embodiment of His will.

Truth is the exact correspondence between an ideal and its realization. When—to take an example—we speak of a painting as being a true copy, we mean that the contours of the figures, the shades of color, and the strokes of the brush in the original are, in every detail, exactly reproduced in the copy. Or, to further elucidate the point, when a witness in the courts of justice is said to speak the truth, it is meant that his version of the case coincides with its actual occurrence. Is not this correspondence the pivotal point in the dialogue of the Lord with the Jews in the eighth chapter of the Gospel by John? The discussion outgrew from His saying, "I am the light of the world." The import of this assertion becomes clear, recalling that "everything that is made manifest is light." God is light, because the Son has

declared Him. Christ is the light, because the Father has revealed Himself through Him. The Son has seen and heard the Father. The Father has sent His Son into the world. The Son has come and declared what He has seen and heard from the Father, and was thus the "image of the invisible God," God manifest in flesh. The Jews discarded His claim on the score that He was bearing witness of Himself. When the question arose, "Who art thou?" He pointed His opponents to the perfect correspondence between His claim and His walk, saying, "Altogether that which I also say unto you." What He said—the words which fell from His lips—revealed the things which He had seen and heard from God; what He was, in all the avenues of daily activity, was the translation of the things which He had seen and heard into actual experience. Between His teaching and His walk there was no discrepancy, the latter was an exemplification of the former; so that His word was an exact presentation of Himself and of the Father. The Jews sought to ignore this evidence. Thereupon the Lord pressed it upon them in a pertinent challenge, "Who of you convinceth me of sin? Can you prove that my walk is inferior to my claim, or is in any way inconsistent therewith?" The enemies were speechless; they could not gainsay this evidence; they could neither prefer a charge nor point out a flaw. The Lord then exposed the untenableness of their position: "If I say the truth (that I am the light and in me is no missing of the mark), why do ye not believe me?"

"Neither was guile found in His mouth." The word "guile" literally means a contrivance for entrapping, a bait. Christ did not speak to elicit admiration or win applause: He received not glory from men. He did not seek to arouse sympathy and enlist it to the support of His cause: He came not to be ministered unto, but

to minister. The guilelessness of Jesus is seen in this, that though He was Israel's King, and had come to proclaim the Kingdom, yet He persistently refused to pander to the crowds and be borne to the Davidic throne on the wave of popular excitement. His heart of love ached for the sorrows and burdens that were upon the men around Him, and He ministered to their needs. Once He fed thousands on the hillside. The allaying of hunger veered popular sentiment in His favor. A movement was forthwith set on foot to take Him by force, and to make Him king (Jno. vi: 15). Unscrupulous demagogues have oft grasped the sceptre by distributing to the idle mobs a daily largesse of bread. Roman history offers many instances of this kind. Had Jesus fed the fainting crowds with the same end in view, doubtless He would have seized this opportune moment, placed Himself at the head of the crowd and led a tumultuous procession to Jerusalem. But He withdrew into the mountain Himself alone. Although He had come to rehabilitate the Davidic monarchy, and restore the Kingdom of Israel, yet His offer was tendered on condition of repentance. He would only accept the homage of hearts in tune with God, and refused to wield the sceptre over a nation actuated only by fear of hunger and love of plenty, and not ruled by the fear and love of God.

We are not here entering upon a discussion whether Christ is divine or not. We address ourselves to those who have not for themselves answered that question in the affirmative and ask them to consider the portraiture of Christ in the Gospels and then compare it with the whole state of human affairs as revealed to them on the pages of history and in their intercourse with their fellow-men, and with what they find in their own hearts. Overwhelming discrepancy between principle and practice and a recurring discord between motive and act is

the dominant, clamant note of human experience. But mirrored in the life of Jesus is the wonderful beauty and order and harmony which prevail in nature. The blending of virtues is in Him as perfect as the mingling of the colors painted on the flower petal or flashed on the wings of the humming bird. How to account for this anti-thesis? It is explicable only on the ground of His supernatural generation as recorded in the Gospels.

#### HIS WALK.

With aroused interest we betake ourselves to the contemplation of the pathway trodden by Him.

"Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He was ill-treated, uttered no threats; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously." Although with perfect justice these words might be taken as descriptive of our Lord's deportment in the days of His flesh, yet they seem to be limited by the scope of the passage to the scenes of trial and crucifixion. As the flowers shed their sweetest fragrance before nightfall, so the aroma of Christ's obedient walk yielded its sweetest scent when the shadows deepened and He resisted unto blood, striving against sin.

Like a skillful painter, Peter strengthens the light of His moral glory by contrasted shadows of human deformity. "When He was reviled, reviled not again," describes the treatment accorded Him by the people. The same multitudes which were seeking to make Him king were now heaping upon Him invective and scorn and hatred. Forgetful of past blessings received at His hands, their only thought now was to aggravate His sufferings to the utmost.

"When he was ill-treated, uttered no threats." Such was the treatment He received at the hands of civil and

ecclesiastical authorities. His violent fate stands in strange contrast with the gentle innocence attested in suffering. He was ill-treated and abused; He was scourged and mocked; they hated Him without a cause, and condemned Him after a ghastly trial—so undeservedly! Like the sheep that is dragged to the slaughter, and the lamb which is dumb before its shearers, so He opened not His mouth. He neither made a speech of self-defense, nor appealed to higher authorities: His protest against such a flagrant miscarriage of justice was embodied in His conduct, which history and experience have shown to be the direct opposite of the one displayed by mortals on similar occasions.

We are now to hear the positive side of His conduct, as we have heard the negative. "He committed his (not *cause*, as in the text of the R. V. and A. V., nor *wrong*, as in the margin of R. V., but) enemies to Him that judgeth righteously." Here is a manifest allusion to the prayer on the cross: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Thus did Christ requite His enemies. The hellish mockery of the rulers, the vile oaths and imprecations of the mob, the brutality of the Roman soldiery, elicited intercession and called forth deep compassion.

O cross of Christ! O glorious tree!  
What place can be compared to thee—  
Where God's own Son was crucified,  
And for our sins a ransom died?

As we sit silently beneath its sacred shadow and muse on the Holy Sufferer, majestic in His loneliness, glorious in His uniqueness, how far—how infinitely far from His example—seem the years of our unworthy following in the footsteps of the Master!

## HIS WORK.

The contemplation of the pathway of the Just One has commanded our reverential admiration. His deportment through life, and more especially during the aggravated circumstances of the closing week, has been something unheard of, unparalleled afore or aft, so that we await the revelation now to follow with intense eagerness.

"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body upon the tree, that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed." While enduring the most terrible anguish, and bearing the outrages of the mob with a lamblike gentleness, while crushed to death by violence. He caused a savor of sweet smell to ascend to God and opened up streams of healing for sin and uncleanness. His death was precious to God and a blessing to man. It appeased the indignation of outraged Deity and met the deepest needs of condemned humanity.

"We all, like sheep we went astray; we turned every one to his own way." This is the profoundest definition of sin. Popular notion would have us think of sin as ugly, vulgar, repulsive. It is not necessarily so. Sin may be beautiful, refined, attractive. It presented itself to Eve as "good for food, a delight to the eyes, desirable to make one wise." This halo around the forbidden fruit made our ancestor turn her back on the fair things of Eden and take a leap into the unknown in an effort to grasp a higher goal. But she lost, in the attempt, both what she had and what she reached after. The sphere she was in was forfeited by disobedience to God's command, the goal she reached after eluded her like the phantom of a dream, for it could be obtained only by compliance with God's decree. The sin of our ancestors



lay in choosing their will in preference to God's. To walk in our way is sin. The following of our inclinations causes us to wander from God.

The complex mechanism of the world enveloping us is admirably adapted to the tastes of fallen man. The tinsel and glamour of the world's glory kindle in the eye the light of envious desire, fill the lustful heart with dull discontent or base dishonesty, and stir to action dormant proclivities. The first response of the heart to the gaudy lustre of the world's glory weaves about the soul a web which chills and deadens upward aspirations. This web is strengthened by every successive response, and, in our wandering from God, we became hopelessly entangled in the meshes of the world's ambitions and drawn into the vortex of its pleasures.

"He bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, having died unto sins, should live unto righteousness." He has snapped the ties that bound us and turned away the bitter fruits of our repeated responses to the world's appeals. He has not destroyed the power of the world over men that sinned, but he has found a way by which to deliver those who come to Him from its awful power, by letting its envenomed tail, so to speak, sink into His own bosom, and Himself bearing the retribution due to our succumbing to its power, in His own body on the tree. He has broken the gauntlet of the world's dominion and tied about our hearts the cords of Divine love.

As a Shepherd, He sought us out in our wanderings. He came to where we lay impotent, enfolded us in His embrace, and lifted us out of the pit. His love kindled in our hearts the flame of responsive love.

We may note in passing that all the shepherds in the Bible were men approved of God, as if their occupation was chosen to foreshadow something peculiarly dear to

Him. We need not look far for the reason. The care of sheep entails self-denial without prospect of returns. The shepherd gives without promise of compensation, God is a liberal Giver. He loves to give and illustrates the spontaneous flow of His philanthropy under the simile of a shepherd's solicitude for the flock (Ezek. xxxiv). "The things which are highly esteemed among men are an abomination before God." For this reason, too, "every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians."

The world is a taskmaster. It loves gain. It scatters bread upon the waters with the expectation of receiving a toast. It gives with a lavish hand, if giving can become a minister to self. The Egyptians gave the children of Israel fish "for nought" (Nu. xi: 15) because they built their "store cities" (Ex. i: 11). The suave cloak of "charity" was but a mask concealing gross egoism and base love of gain. So it was then, and so it is now. The world has not ceased to be the enemy of God. A formal profession of Christianity has not changed its heart. Its paltry spirit is enshrined in such peddling precepts of copy-book morality as "Honesty is the best policy," etc. The world upholds honesty so long as it pays, and flings it aside the moment it finds that dishonesty pays better. A shepherd *gives*. "The good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep" (Jno. x: 11). The cross is the standing manifestation of the heart of Christ.

He is our Bishop, exercising oversight over His people and shielding them from baneful influences. As the Shepherd must give, the Bishop must *think* and plan for others. "Have the same mind in you which was also in Jesus Christ, who, being in the form of God, counted the being on an equality with God not a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself \* \* \* becoming obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross." The

cross is the perennial manifestation of the mind of Christ.

Dear reader, does not the cross speak to you? Can your heart remain unmoved and silent in the presence of such love? Will you not now receive this Shepherd and submit to the benevolent will of this Bishop?

*(Continued from page 63)*

The words which stand upon the very threshold of the New Testament, link it on, in a marked way, to the two great heads of Old Testament covenant and promise:

“Jesus Christ,

The Son of DAVID,

The Son of ABRAHAM.”

In the Davidic promises we are brought into touch with those prophecies concerning the King and the kingdom. The main subject of Davidic blessing is connected with Israel. It finds its capital in Jerusalem; the Jew being the primary object of such divine favor and grace as flow through David's seed.

Abrahamic blessing however is not confined to the land of Palestine; it does not flow through an earthly capital, and is not confined to the people of a certain nationality, but embraces the world in its scope.

Under these two heads we may therefore divide the whole of the New Testament revelation; each of its books naturally coming under one or the other of these two prominent lines of blessing.

The writers of the New Testament were all Jews, a fact quite in harmony with such scriptures as Romans 3:2 “unto them were committed the oracles of God”: but when we come to study the writings of him who called himself “the least of the apostles,” we cannot help being struck with a most remarkable fact, for not only were his hopes, desires, and manner of life changed, but his very name was also changed from the Jewish form of Saul, to the Gentile one of Paul. His letters are in keeping with his name.

The manner in which the Gentiles will receive blessing, upon the ground of the Davidic promises, is well illustrated by the case of the Syro-Phoenician woman. Being a Gentile, she had to take her true place as such, before the Son of David could grant her request and extend His favor. She owned that the table belonged to the children, and that all

she could expect was the crumbs—the dog's portion. The means which the Master used, to bring her down to the ground on which He could meet her need, was the announcement of His mission, its limits and bounds: "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 15:21-28).

On Davidic grounds, the Gentiles could not receive blessing, save as it would flow to them through the Jew. Does not this explain the meaning of such scriptures as Acts 13:46 ("unto you *first*"), Romans 1:16 ("the Jew *first*"), and Luke 24:47 ("beginning at Jerusalem")? Thus the world's blessing depended upon the Jew.

The majority of modern commentators, assign at the very most, but the first twelve chapters of the Gospel of Matthew, to the ministry of the kingdom by Messiah. But as this view seems to owe its existence to the traditional theory—upon which Romanism builds one of its most monstrous doctrines—of the church being committed to the apostleship and founding of Peter, in chapter 16, a few remarks on what we believe is the scriptural interpretation will not be out of place.

The opening question lays bare the state of the nation at the time we are considering. Messiah's query, "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" How conflicting the public opinion was. For Peter replies, "Some say that thou art John the baptist: some Elias; and others Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." Whilst all the people looked upon the Master as being Someone, yet none of them attained to the acknowledging of Him as the long-promised Messiah, the heavenly King. Some indeed would allow Him to fill the prophetic office, but none, apparently, would recognize in Him, the One Who should sit upon the throne of David. Not long after this, we may hear the mob at Jerusalem cry, "We have no king but Caesar." Thus did Israel place its neck beneath the foot of the conquering Roman, and appear to glory in the very chains which were the insignia of their national shame.

When we bear in mind that the subject matter of John's gospel dates from the rejection of Christ by His own people (John 1:11), the language of the third chapter will be found to throw light upon this portion of Matthew.

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh:

that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

"Except a man be born of water and the Spirit,  
he cannot enter the kingdom of God."

"Ye must be born FROM ABOVE."

Bearing these scriptures in mind, we may perhaps be able to get a better grasp of what our blessed Lord meant to convey when He said, "My kingdom is not from hence." It has to be introduced from heaven, "from above."

The sphere of Peter's ministry, and that of his fellow apostles, is shown by the promise which Christ gave unto them: "Ye shall sit upon thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." There is surely something more than mere accident in the coincidence of the number of the apostles and the number of the tribes. That Peter's sphere of service is distinctly Jewish and national also appears from his epistles, where he addresses those to whom he writes as, "an holy nation," and a "royal priesthood" (*cp* 1 Pet.2:9; Ex.19:6), and throughout his ministry, as recorded in the Acts, he is always seen as being connected with Jerusalem and the Jews. We will do well to observe that it was the keys, not of the church, but of the *kingdom*, which he received.

Rome claims that Peter was not only connected with the church, but that he was its first papal head. The Word of God declares that he never had anything to do with it. Which then shall we believe—Rome or the Bible?

We make a great mistake if we imagine that the work of the Reformation was completed within the limits of a few generations, or that we have divested ourselves of all Romish traditions; and until we are content to seek the truth which *is*, and not the truth we *wish*, and until we learn to love truth because it is truth, no further progress in the cause of real spiritual liberty can be made.

The gospel of Luke gives us a picture of the King in His *universal*, rather than His national relationships. Hence His title here is not Son of David, but Son of Man.

The gospel of Mark presents us with a picture of the King *serving*, rather than that of the King reigning. The thought is more of what He *does*, than of what He *is*.

The gospel of John views the King in His *personal* rather than His *official* glories.

And, when we study any, or all of these gospels, let us ever remember that "Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers" (Rom.15:8).

That a radical difference existed between that of Peter's preaching and that of Paul's, is manifest; the former preached Jesus of Nazareth, Who went about doing good; the latter preached the Christ Who died, and was raised again from the tomb. The point to be noticed is, that while Peter dwells upon the *life* of Christ, Paul dwells upon His *death*.

The epitome of Paul's gospel, as we find it in 1 Corinthians 15, commences with the *death* of the Saviour; and if it omits any mention of the ascension of Christ, it is because that aspect of His work had more especial reference to revelations yet to be made, as seen in Ephesians.

In 2 Corinthians 5:16, we have the express statement by Paul, "Yea, though we have known Christ *after the flesh*, yet now henceforth know we Him no more. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation." The change in the believer's standing depicted here, is not the same as that which we find in the revelation of the secret economy. For while in Ephesians we are taken *upward* and given a place where Christ sitteth, at the right hand of God, in 2 Corinthians we see those Gentile believers taken—not upward, but *onward*, and given a standing and place in, or as belonging to, the new creation, as seen in Revelation 21.

(Continued on page 194)

## EDITORIAL NOTES.

The hearty welcome accorded *Unsearchable Riches* has been a cause of much joy to its Editors, proving that the number of Christians desiring to heed the injunction to "rightly apportion" the Word (2 Tim. ii. 16) and seeking to comply therewith is augmenting. Like every other truth, this divine principle must force its way through opposition, but as time goes on it is bound to win wide recognition as the fundamental canon of biblical exegesis.

It is said that Galileo, in the act of recanting the Copernican idea, exclaimed in a low voice

AND YET IT MOVES.

Observing the slow but steady displacement of stagnant theological ideas and stereotyped traditional tenets and the growing acknowledgement of the true principle of interpretation based on right apportionment, we, too, may exclaim

AND YET IT MOVES.

We extend our grateful thanks to the many friends whose appreciative words and kind gifts have strengthened our hands in the work and we request their prayers that sufficiency may be given us from God.

\* \* \*

The fourth chapter of Matthew records Christ's temptation by the devil. We are not attempting a review of its various aspects nor a consideration of its manifold les-



sons. We only wish to point out, briefly, Satan's hostility to the Cross and the Word shown on that occasion.

Perhaps the first thing to enhance attention is the appearance of Satan in a different character with every fresh onslaught. The first temptation reveals him as *Prince of this world*, manipulator of its resources, instigator of its whims and leader of its ambitions. The second presents him as *Prince of the power of the air*, master of the Fourth Dimension; while the third exhibits him as the *God of this Age*, craving for worship at human shrines.

His objective points, too, vary with each attack.

The first dart was evidently aimed at the *Incarnation*. The second was hurled against the *Cross*. And the third was calculated to frustrate the *Kingdom*. These three temptations, under altered forms and various ways, haunted our Lord throughout His ministry.

We wish to glance at the threefold recurrence of the temptation which had the cross as its objective point.

We meet it first in the wilderness of Judah, as the Lord was about to commence His public ministry (Matt. iv. 5-7); we find it again at its medial point in Caesarea Philippi (Matt. xvi. 22, 23); and once more at its close, on the hill called "the place of a Skull" (Matt. xxvii. 39-43). In the first instance Satan acts *personally*. *Peter* is his mouth piece in the second. The *nation and rulers of Israel* are his agents in the third.

The obvious intent of the adversary in suggesting a reckless leap from the temple ledge was to *precipitate* the cross by a premature advance and invalidate His sacrificial death

"Cast thyself down."

At a later stage, acting through a fervent disciple, he schemes to *avoid* it

God have mercy on thee, Lord:  
this shall never be unto thee.

Subtle Beast! He is always charitable and philanthropic! He dazzles and deceives. Before, in the garb of one attempting great things for God, he encouraged dash appealing to God's power. Now, assuming a sympathizer's role, he pleads God's mercy and counsels moderation! But, though the evil one changed his tone and tactics, the Master quickly recognized his overtures. "Get thee behind me Satan; thou art a stumbling block unto me: for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men." The third time, using the recusant nation and its mercenary leaders as his catspaw, he contrives to leave the cross *unfinished*

"Come down from the cross."

God's hour had arrived. The hands of lawless men were fulfilling His determinate counsel. No longer able to arrest its progress, the tempter strains his energy to deflect its course to another channel. Here we may discern the gruesome features of the subtle and gigantic deception which has since bewitched myriads. *He gives the dying world an empty symbol—a crucifix—and takes away its only hope—Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.* (I Cor. i. 24).

Thus did Satan plot in those days to destroy the cross, and thus he plots in these days to make its preaching of none effect. Within the pale of the visible church he raises men, who, under the specious pretense of scholarship and in the witchery of modern style, demolish and ridicule the cross: he intimidates the saints, leads them to half-hearted compromises, and so weakens their influence and discredits their testimony: he prompts men confessedly godless and inimical to Christianity to wear the cross as a badge and use it as an ornament.

May His people be enthused with the spirit of the great apostle. "But far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Gal. vi. 14.)

\* \* \*

In His refusal to comply with Satan's first proposal our Lord affirmed His trust in God and in His word. And the enemy forthwith plied his art to prostitute the one and pervert the other.

Lucifer alters the environments. The Lord is transported with lightning speed to the holy city, set on a temple pinnacle, and challenged to cast Himself down. After the stunning aerial flight he points to his feat and says: "You refused to help yourself, then let God help you. Behold your predicament! You cannot long keep your equipoise on this dizzy height. Your course is clear and easy. There is no alternative; just let yourself go and sink into the hands of waiting angels. Have not I carried you safely *upwards*? God's power surely transcends the devil's, yet I only ask you to slide *down*, and that in compliance with the Scripture." Here the devil with amazing audacity professes to endorse the Lord's position, prefixing the quotation with "it is written:"

He shall give His angels charge concerning thee:  
And on their hands they shall bear thee up,  
Lest haply thou dash thy foot against a stone.

"How remarkably your case dovetails with this prediction! Here is your chance! Fulfil Scripture, exhibit faith in God!"

The beautiful ninety-first Psalm assures the trusting soul of Jehovah's protection from the terrors of the way. As Hezekiah penned it in commemoration of his marvelous deliverance, the spirit of prophecy charged his language with higher doctrine and deeper significance

than could be realized in his day and generation. The angels are given charge over the lonely One whose weary feet *walk* and *tread* and *trample* along the path beset by a thousand horrors. Its words breathe the serenity of repose: dwell, abide, cover, keep. Its figures, too, are suggestive of quietude: the secret place, the shadow, the covering under the pinions, the habitation, the tent, the place on high. Its promises are to the patient *walker*, not to the venturesome acrobat.

Doubtless, Satan had an eye on Malachi's prophecy: "Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple." (Mal. iii. 1.) For thirty years the land of Judah had swelled with songs. Angelic visitors had brought strange tidings to the people.. Holy men and women looked for Jerusalem's consolation. Expectancy had risen to a high pitch. "Here," said the tempter, "the supreme moment has come! One leap, one step, and the day is carried. When you alight unharmed—and the Word guarantees immunity from injuries incident to a fall—the eager crowds will enthusiastically acclaim the long expected Messiah-King descending from heaven."

Satan's procedure with the Scripture is clear. The first instance is a case of *misappropriation*. A promise is isolated from its associations and explained in a manner repugnant to the sentiment and imagery of the Psalm. The second instance is a case of *misinterpretation*. Words are released from the rules which govern speech, and an arbitrary meaning is fastened thereon. The devil played on the adverb "suddenly," making it synonymous with *quickly*, whereas, here, its force is *unexpectedly*.

So we see, in this instance, Satan labors to overturn the truth, not by impugning its authority or impeaching

its credibility, but by interpretations which discarding the laws of context, interrelation of parts, etymology, syntax and right apportionment, wrench Scripture, make of it whatsoever they list, and in the end reduce all truth to nothing.

So in our day Satan performs his most effective work, not through the daring critic and blatant infidel, but through those who accepting the Bible as God's revelation practically destroy its authority by garbling texts and wholesale appropriation of "all that is in the Bible." The special need of the day are workmen rightly dividing the word of truth.

# THE DIVINE MYSTERIES.

## THE SECRET ECONOMY.

### THE RICH REDEMPTION.

"In Whom we have the redemption which comes through His blood, the forgiveness of offenses in keeping with the wealth of His favor, which He has lavished upon us, fraught with every resource of wisdom and activity of intelligence,

Having made known to us His secret resolution (corresponding with the gratification which He has proposed to Himself) to have an economy, which rounds out the cycle of the eras, in which to sum up the universe for Himself in Christ—the domains in the heavens, and those upon the earth—

*In Him*, in Whom we, too, have received an allotment, having been designated beforehand in accordance with the proposal of the One Who is operating the universe in accord with the advice offered by His own resolution; that we are to be the laud of His glory, who are in a state of prior expectancy in Christ."

### BLOOD REDEMPTION.

The firstborn were redeemed from the death stroke of the destroying angel by the blood of the Lamb (Ex. xii). The whole nation was redeemed from the armies of Egypt by the outstretched arm of Jehovah (Ex. xiv).

Redemption is by blood and by power. It averts God's just sentence in one case and delivers from the circumstances of human life in the other.

All Israel was shielded from the judgments that fell upon Egypt by the Divine mercy alone. But if Egypt's

firstborn are to be slain, justice demands that Israel's firstborn suffer the like penalty. Their only escape lay in a release acceptable to Jehovah.

As the firstborn are to be shielded, a lamb is taken for each household. There was not one lamb for each person, nor yet only one for the whole nation as in the Antitype. But there was, roughly speaking, a lamb for each firstborn.

So we see that the *firstborn*, and they alone, were *redeemed by blood*. They formed a distinct company in the wilderness. No wonder Jehovah does not wait a day before He tells them: "Sanctify unto Me all the firstborn . . . It is Mine" (Ex. xii. 1, 2). And no wonder that it became a statute in Israel that every first born animal was to be sacrificed to Jehovah.

Only the firstling of an ass and the firstborn of mankind might be redeemed, and each with a lamb. And if not, then the animal's neck was to be broken (Ex. xiii. 13.)

Thus it was when they came out of Egypt. But when Jehovah pitched His tent in their midst in the wilderness, the redemption of the firstborn passed over to the tribe of Levi. They were sanctified, or set apart, from the nation to wait on Him. They were numbered by themselves. (Num. iii. 12.) This is a precious picture of His estimate by the blood, and how He has only those near Him who know a blood redemption. *All* Israel was redeemed by *power*, but they all, except the priests, must keep at a distance.

But we miss very much indeed if we do not see in this history a type of God's Lamb, and the blood He shed on Calvary, which is the sole ground of confidence of the "congregation of the firstborn" (Heb. xii. 23) and

portrays the history of that later exodus, as told us in the treatise called "The Acts."

Once the nation was identified with Moses. Now multitudes follow the Master.

Once marvelous power was exercised to deliver them out of the hands of their enemies and bring them into the promised land. Now "the powers of the age to come" are put forth on behalf of the people, not only to deliver them from their enemies but to bring them into the promised Kingdom.

Once the land lay but a short journey across the desert sands. Now, though in that land, they lacked the spiritual power and blessing which will make it truly theirs in the coming Kingdom. This Kingdom came very nigh to them again and again. No long deferred delay was necessary. But, even as they spent forty years in the wilderness, so now for forty years they try God's patience by refusing to trust in His prophet, of whom Moses had told them (Deut. xviii. 15-18). Some, indeed, entered Canaan and brought back its goodly fruit. So now they were given a taste of the heavenly gift. (Heb. vi. 4.)

But, alas! The majority never reached that delectable land! They lacked confidence in Jehovah. So now, they fail to reach the Kingdom through lack of confidence in Messiah. They cling to the law and their own dead deeds.

The majority never knew the Divine side of redemption by blood, though surrounded on all sides by evidences of His might.

But if we dwell too long on redemption by power, it is only to keep it distinct from the theme before us: redemption by blood.

Redemption by power will come before us again. For us it is future. Redemption by blood, however, is a present portion.



The treatise upon the Kingdom of God called "Acts" will never be fully understood until these two distinct redemptions are acknowledged. By assuming that all were redeemed by blood, we find ourselves beset with difficulties which cloud the mind and rob us of our true place and blessing.

The epistle to the Hebrews, and those of James (or Jacob), Peter, John, and Jude should be read in this light. How needlessly have many of God's dear people shuddered under the dark shadows of the sixth and tenth of Hebrews!

In the richer tabernacle types we find the functions of the blood set forth more fully.

Death is an event which passes by. Only once each year the atonement victim was slain that brought Israel nigh. That death availed for a full twelvemonth. (Lev. xvi. 29.) The sign and token of it was the blood. The full benefits which that death conferred were preserved by the blood before, and on, the mercy seat. (Lev. xvi. 15.)

So with the great Antitype. The value and power of His death and all its precious fragrance will never cease. It is fitly figured by the blood.

They crucified Him. Nor did they know that in their foulest deed He showed them fairest favor. Little did they dream that on the cross He met their arch enemy and broke his awful power. But Satan knew: and heaven knew. After a triumph before which Roman triumphs sink into nothingness, earth gave Him nothing but a tomb. But heaven was loud in its acclaim.

The suffering all is past! This fact alone should make our hearts a spring of gratitude. We (who cannot help share God's love for Him) may well charge our heart to forget itself a moment and ponder what this means to *Him*. The wormwood and the gall have been displaced

by the perpetual pleasures at God's right hand. How deep those sufferings were—the darkness and the hiding of God's face—these are beneath our fathoming. And His glories, too, are higher than our eyes can reach, though we yet shall see and share them with Him.

A suitable reward for all He did we never could have offered Him. But God has given Him a place and a portion which it should be our delight to trace and bid our hearts confirm.

His death is past, but, though endless ages draw upon the resources of His blood, they never will exhaust the wealth it brought to God. Upon that death, upon the blood which speaks of it, rests this redemption, rich and rare.

The severance and release from doom well merited, wondrous as that blessing is, is but the lower score of the Divine harmony. Before touching the higher keys, let us sound these lower notes.

Through the blood of Christ they held the remission of offenses.

#### SIN—TRANSGRESSION—OFFENSE.

All lawlessness is sin.

The whole creation is under law. All else is confusion, chaos. Break God's laws in nature and nothing will stay the retribution due.

Failure to conform to law in any sphere is sin. Had man not swerved from his lawful course, then he would be perfect: he could measure up to the standard God Himself had set. To fall short of this standard, this Divine, ideal excellence is proof positive of sin, of lawlessness.

In the olden time there were men in Israel so expert with the sling that when they shot they never "sinned." (Judges xx. 16). That is, they never *missed the mark*.

This gives us an exact picture of the true inwardness of sin.

In spirit let us transport ourselves to the new heavens that shall be. Suppose (which cannot be) that in that bright scene a single ray of light should stray from its appointed, God-given path. Such lawlessness, such sin, would once again drag all to wreck and ruin.

So it was in the beginning of our human race. Adam's single sin brought about the moral chaos that we see.

Great indeed is a redemption capable of recovering from lawlessness—from sin!

But Adam's guilt was heavier far than this. Before he sinned God had spoken, showing him where sin's boundary began. God had said "You shall not." But he did. He walked right over the prohibition God laid down. This was more than sin. It was not the lawlessness of failure or of ignorance but the lawlessness of light. It was a *transgression*.

But a deeper, darker side than even this marked Adam's sin.

God had been with him as with a friend. He had supplied a present bounty for every need. He had given him a place superior to every creature that he knew. He had done everything to win his heart. He had even graced him with His company.

The serpent knew what most would wound God's heart. And so he aims directly at it, and insinuates that God is dealing deceitfully with His creatures.

*And Eve believes the lie!*

*Sin* brings *misery* upon mankind; *transgression* calls down *wrath*; but the *offense* is the *wound* that men know little of—the wound that aches God's heart.

Nothing could be further from favor than an offended

God. Will wounds open up their ruby lips and kiss the dagger's hand?

Does God, in mercy, with slow and cautious tread feel His way towards His enemies? Does He dole it out in dribblets, lest some should not meet due appreciation?

No! a thousand times, No!

The offenders, once admitted into favor, are brought to such a blaze that, as with the apostle, its very glory blinds them to its splendor for a time.

#### GOD'S SECRET INTENTION CONCERNING CHRIST.

Our God has pressed Wisdom and Prudence, with every resource at their command, into the service of this Rich Redemption.

And now, as we behold the work, well may we stand back to admire the forethought shown in every detail, the way that all has been brought about, the rich result in glory to Himself and in the response of fervent, unforced love it will surely harvest Him.

Christ is the Son of David, the Son of Abraham, the Son of Adam.

He is the King of Israel, the Master or Owner of the land, the Sovereign of the whole earth with its inhabitants.

That Messiah's rule included all the earth was a secret the initiated have known for ages past. To be with him in this earthly Kingdom was the high hope He put before His own. The apostle himself, like the dying robber, had looked for and longed for this earthly paradise.

But now, as we have seen, he looks for blessings in another—a heavenly—sphere. His hope is no longer fixed upon the earth, but in the celestial regions.

But is it possible there can be a blessed place, even in the empyrean, apart from his Master, Christ? The heart

revolts at such a thought. It cannot be content apart from Him. He must be unpeered by all around.

At this crisis God proclaims His secret intention concerning His Christ.

Christ's exaltation is not over the earth alone, but high above the highest heaven. His sway includes the whole universe in its embrace. Those heavenly realms, whose height and dignity we know so little of, are all beneath His feet.

Just as the seasons fill up the cycles of the year, and each fits the niche assigned to it, and altogether round it out, so with the eras, too. Each in succession plays its own peculiar part until the cycle is complete. And when the eras' harvest time comes round, when every seed which He has sown will yield its proper fruit, then will God set Him up on high above it all.

His highest and most glorious place, His richest honors, are in His heavenly realms.

So, after all, His people are not torn from His side, but in greatest, truest measure, find their blessing in His very presence.

#### SELECTED BY GOD.

God Himself chose Christ for this high place. He is the Elect of God; and with Him He has selected those who are to share His heavenly honors.

This is not *foreknowledge*. He knows all the future has in store, evil as well as good.

This is not *sovereignty*. As *God*, His Acts affect all His creatures, either for weal or woe.

It is not even *predestination*, which marks out beforehand the final state of blessedness of His selected ones.

Let us not miss the preciousness of God's *selection*! When God's love for us began we know not, if it ever

needed a beginning. But we know that its first impulse was to *choose* us for Himself.

#### THE ADVICE OFFERED BY HIS OWN DETERMINATION.

Jehovah had counselled with His people Israel concerning their blessing and their destiny. It was quite clear to the apostle in his earlier years that he would have his place in that earthly Kingdom of which the prophets and our Master Himself had spoken. How could he have looked forward to aught else but what Jehovah had revealed?

*But now his destiny and blessing both are changed.*

What right had God to make a change? Did He confer with them or any one else about it first?

Right well He answers (for He *will* be gracious, however we may meddle with His own affairs). He did not do it without competent advice. But to whom could He go? (In these drivelling days some of His dear people are not slow to offer Him advice!) He once asked Job, "Where were you when I laid the earth's foundations?" (Job xxxviii. 4).

And well might we ask Paul "Where were you *before* He laid the foundations of the universe?" Let us rejoice that there was but One to whom He could go—*Himself*—His own unbroken will—His own affectionate desire.

He determined thus and so. May His beloved people who reap the rich benefits of that determination, learn from it to cast themselves entirely upon that sovereign will!

#### THE LAUD OF HIS FAME.

*God's glory is the universal goal. His fame is foremost.*

The most of mankind dream that human weal is the

most important item. It is but a means, joined hand in hand with human woe, to reveal God's heart.

"It is all out" we say when some unfortunate can no longer hide his true character.

With God "it is all out" now that His latest (and earliest) and highest things are known. Each succeeding revelation has not changed Him, nor added to what He previously was. But every step He has taken, every turn and triumph has added to the knowledge and appreciation of His creatures.

God revealed is a synonym with His fame or glory, for all of Him is excellence.

#### THOSE WHO "FORE-HOPED."

The laud of His fame is drawn forth in various degrees according to the measure and manner of the theophany. The laud which is here elicited is not because of His general mercy to mankind, but based upon His favor to a peculiar class: those who hold a prior expectation of meeting Christ.

Hope cannot but look forward. How strange, then, to read of those who "fore-looked-forward!" (*proelpikotas*) (ch. i. 12).

In those days there were two entirely distinct lines of teaching concerning Christ's return.

The Circumcision held, according to the prophets and the words of the Master Himself while still on earth, that the heavens must receive Him until the times of the restitution of all things spoken by the holy prophets from of old (Acts iii. 21).

They expected a dreadful time of trouble and wrath upon the whole earth, through which "the-callers-upon-the-name-of-Jehovah" (*tois epikaloumenois*) should be delivered, even as Joel prophesied and Peter preached at Pentecost (Joel ii. 32, Acts ii. 21). This deliverance

will be in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem and the remnant whom Jehovah shall call (Joel ii. 32). In the midst of their distress they will invoke the name of Jehovah, the Covenant God of His people Israel.

They looked for Messiah to come as He went, and stand in person on the Mount of Olives. Then He will judge their enemies and establish the Kingdom of God upon the earth (Zech. xiv. 4, Acts i. 12).

This teaching was not departed from by the author of Hebrews, nor by Peter and James and John in their letters, even though they were written after Paul's epistles to the Thessalonians.

But we have already seen that, in Paul's case, the Messiah, in a sense, had already come in glory, though it was outside the land (Acts ix). In closest harmony with this a later revelation brings a secret (may He give grace to consider it at length some other time!)—a secret which made them look forward for a meeting with Messiah *before* His manifestation to the earth and Israel. They were thus fitly called the "fore-hopers."

No judgment scenes, no wrath, no "little while" between them and their Master! They looked for nothing but *Himself*! (1 Thess. v. 9-11, i. 10).

They did not expect His feet to touch the earth, but rather that they themselves should be caught up to meet Him in the *air* (not heaven!), before He came to Olivet (1 Thess. iv. 15-18).

Both views are true, for both will be fulfilled. Such a difference in their expectation was enough of itself to draw a definite line of cleavage between those who held them.

The amazing truths already brought before us in this epistle are concerned with heaven, and would never join



or follow the earthly advent which the Circumcision looked for.

On the other hand it seems almost necessary that the gathering together unto Him in the *air* be followed by a more harmonious sequel than a permanent return to earth, blessed though that, too, would be.

Praised be the God who gave Messiah His heavenly universal headship! Glory and honor and fame be to His great Name, who shall summon us to meet Him in the air thus to be forever *with Him*, even to share His celestial diadem, that jeweled crown which He had kept concealed from mortal gaze.

Ravishing redemption, rich and rare!

#### THE SPIRIT.

"In Whom *you* too, (having heard the truth expressed in the joyful message of your salvation in Whom, having also believed, you have been *sealed* with the promised *holy* spirit which is an earnest of our allotment, pending the redemption of the acquisition, to the laud of His glory."

#### SPIRIT VS. FLESH.

"Would that *all* Jehovah's people were prophets, and that Jehovah would put His spirit upon them!" (Nu. xi. 29).

The people craved flesh to eat as they were wont to have in Egypt. Moses breaks down beneath their murmurings and cries to Jehovah in his distress. But Wisdom knew that flesh was not the need, but spirit. So He bids Moses gather seventy elders to receive the same spirit that he had himself. A cloud, the emblem of His spirit in those days, covers them: His Spirit rests upon them: they prophesy.

A strange thing happens. Jehovah had said He would put His Spirit upon *seventy*. As it was, only sixty-eight are in the appointed place, standing near the tent of the

congregation. Two, whose names mean "Godloved" and "Love," remain in the camp. Did the Spirit pass them by? Such a breach as this in the tabernacle ritual were unpardonable.

The Spirit refuses the limitations of the flesh and ignores what it deems so important. Distance and time and place, so vital in physical affairs, are nothing to spirit. "Godloved" and "Love" (Eldad and Medad) are not left out, though not in the appointed place. They lift their voices in the camp, speaking Jehovah's word!

What must their neighbors have thought! How dare they! What an awful thing to do! It must be stopped!

So a young man runs and tells Moses. Joshua chimes in: "My lord Moses, forbid them." But Moses answers: "Are you jealous for my sake? *Would that all Jehovah's people were prophets and that Jehovah would put His spirit upon them!*"

So the seventy helped Moses to bear the burden of the people by the spirit that Jehovah gave.

Space forbids to tell of Joshua, who by this spirit brought Israel into the land Jehovah promised them; of Othneil and Gideon; and Saul and David; of Elijah and Elisha, and all the prophets, who served Jehovah's people as His spirit gave them capacity.

The Messiah fills up the measure of the Spirit's power and accomplishes all His mighty work by the anointing of that spirit. "I have put my spirit upon Him," said Jehovah (Isa. xlii. 1).

And in that coming day of blessing for this earth, the power behind material good will be Jehovah's spirit. The essence of that Kingdom does not lie, as some supposed, in food and drink, but in the righteousness and peace and joy which His spirit imparts (Rom. xiv. 17).

## THE PROMISE.

Is Moses' wish ever to come true, and *all Jehovah's people* receive His spirit?

Speaking of that glorious day, we read "\* \* \* a new spirit will I put within you." This is Jehovah's promise to the house of Israel through His prophet Ezekiel (Eze. xxxvi. 26).

What "new" spirit is this? "And I will put *My* spirit within you, and cause you to walk in *My* statutes, and ye shall keep *My* judgments and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be *My* people, and I will be your God" (Eze. xxxvi. 27, 28). Nothing less than the word of Jehovah can bring life to their dry bones. "Behold" says He, *I* will cause spirit to enter into you, and ye shall live."

"Except a man be born of water and of *spirit* he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God" is our Master's commentary (John iii. 5).

Isaiah bears a like testimony. "The desolation of the land shall continue until spirit be poured upon us from on high" (Isa. xxxii. 15). And again, "I will pour *My* spirit upon thy seed, and *My* blessing upon thy offspring" (Isa. xlv. 3).

Peter refers to this on the day of Pentecost. \* \* \* "and ye shall receive the gift of the holy spirit, for the promise is unto you and unto your children, and to as many as are afar off, as many as Jehovah, our God, shall call" (Acts ii. 39).

Many of Jehovah's people, like "Love" in the camp of old, are, physically, at a distance from the center of blessing. They are afar off, scattered among the nations. They are not eligible to the physical enjoyments which the land will produce. But this cannot hinder a *spiritual*

blessing, however it might interfere with their material welfare in Jehovah's Day. The promise was clearly to Israel's seed and their offspring, or as Peter puts it, "You and your children \* \* \*" (Acts ii. 39).

This spirit was not promised to the Nations before Jehovah's day.

Moses' wish went the great length, as he thought, of including all Jehovah's people.

God's promise, through Joel, goes further far than this. *All flesh* is included in it. Not all flesh at any time, but all flesh after the nation of Israel receives this blessing and thus becomes the needed channel to convey it to the other nations.

The Jews had no thought whatever that the spirit would be imparted to men of other nationalities before the time mentioned by Joel, after He has judged all nations in the valley of Jehoshaphat.

#### THE PROMISE CONFIRMED.

The greatest prophet of all was John the Baptist. He was filled with holy Spirit even before his birth. In spiritual capacity he was fitted for and filled the place of Elijah. As Elijah must first come and restore all things, so he came to prepare a people for their Master. Elijah himself shall truly come, but the spiritual power he will exercise has already been present in Israel (Matt. xi. 11-14).

But greater and higher than all is the One Whose very generation was by holy Spirit. He was that life imparting Spirit upon Whom the fulfillment of the promise depends.

As to His flesh He was indeed David's Seed. As to His most holy Spirit He was God's Son (Rom. i. 3, 4), God, the Father of Spirits, was His Father.

But while the Master was on earth He did not fulfill the promise concerning the spirit. Once and again He spoke of it, telling why it could not be fulfilled at that time.

#### THE HINDRANCE.

What hindered?

Strange words fell on their ears when He spoke of this and His departure. Sorrow fills their hearts at the thought of His leaving them, but He tells them "It is to your advantage that I go away: for if I do not go away, the Comforter (or Assistant) will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you \* \* \* (John xvi. 7). While He was with them in the world He had kept them and taught them and comforted them. He was their Paraclete (John xvii. 12).

His departure would not bereave them, for He would send them another Paraclete, who would not only stay with them for a season, as He had, but would dwell in them forever. The Spirit would be their Teacher, and Keeper and Comforter (John xiv. 16).

But why not have both Paracletes at the same time? Once before, speaking of His departure, He cried, "If anyone thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth in Me, as the Scripture says, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake He concerning the spirit which those who believed on Him were about to receive, for holy spirit had not yet been given, *because Jesus was not yet glorified*" (John vii. 37-39).

He Himself was the alone temple of the Divine spirit during His humiliation (John ii. 21). He alone could furnish a draught for the thirsty. But, wonderful to relate, the time was coming when those who believed on

Him should become a channel for this living water—this life imparting spirit.

Let us imbed this deeply in our hearts: *The spirit was not given by the "lowly Jesus" but by the glorified Christ.* The measure and plentitude of the gift of the spirit is the gauge of the glory that He bears.

After His sufferings all were past and He is once again with them in His glorious body, we may look for some intimation of this coming glorious gift. And He does give it, but in a private way to His own disciples. This fell far short of the promises given by the prophets. Indeed, it could not be a fulfillment of His own words, for He was not yet gone away (John xx. 22).

So He bids them tarry at Jerusalem for the fulfillment of the Father's promise, while He Himself ascends the heights of heavenly glory and sends back the gift (Acts i. 4).

#### THE PROMISE FULFILLED.

At Pentecost *began* the fulfillment of the long expected promise. True, the secret disciples had anticipated the public presence of the spirit. The Master Himself had breathed upon them while yet on earth, in harmony with the truth they stood for. But even they were told to wait until the fiftieth day for the filling of that spirit for the enduement which empowered them for service.

Peter proclaims the exaltation of Messiah, thus removing the hindrance to the free outflow of the spirit He had promised. He proclaims the conditions upon which the spirit will be imparted. "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus, Messiah for remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of holy spirit—for the promise is to you and to your children, and to

all who are afar off, as many as Jehovah, our God, shall call" (Acts ii. 38-39).

This is not the general promise of blessing in the land. Like all the spirit's work, it is unhindered by place or distance. The sons of Israel (like Eldad and Medad at a distance from the tabernacle) scattered among the nations were eligible to this spiritual blessing as well as those who dwelt in Jerusalem.

They knew, from Joel's prophecy, that after Jehovah's Day set in, it would be extended to all flesh. But at this time they dreamed of no such thing: not even that it might include non-Jewish proselytes in the land of Israel.

Indeed, until His people had once more rejected Him by stoning Stephen, this blessing was confined to the narrow pale of Israel and the city of Jerusalem.

But after that, Philip proclaims Messiah to the Samaritans, and they were baptized in the name of the Master, Jesus. But holy spirit did not fall on them, for they were not included in the strict sense of the promise. The kinship they claimed with Israel was based upon the flesh. The spirit of God knows nothing of flesh and ignores its claims. The flesh cannot channel spiritual gifts. Later, in answer to the apostles' prayers, and the laying on of hands, they too, receive this gift (Acts viii. 5, 15-17).

How different is Cornelius' case! Though he dwelt among Samaritans, physically he is further removed than they. In fact, although a proselyte, a devout worshipper of Jehovah, the God of Israel, and dwelling in the land He gave them, he was loathed by them instead of loved, as Jehovah's law commanded (Deut. x. 19). Israel had forgotten Egypt and their bondage, so, instead of loving the stranger as themselves, they bade him keep his distance.

It becomes necessary for God to use great efforts to

induce Peter to proclaim to him *that which was sent to the sons of Israel* (Acts x. 36).

But, having been convinced that God is not bound by the letter of their law, he is persuaded to go with Cornelius' messengers.

His first words are not very encouraging or reassuring. "You know yourselves that it is an unlawful thing for a man who is a Jew to join himself to one of another nation \* \* \* (Acts x. 28).

While Peter was yet telling them of what Jesus of Nazareth did by the power of holy spirit, and of the remission of sins through His name, holy spirit fell on all those who heard the word! And not only so, but they spoke with tongues and magnified God, even as the apostles themselves had done at Pentecost! (Acts x. 44, 46).

The Circumcision were astounded! It was too late for baptism or prayers or any ceremony of the laying on of hands prior to the spirit's coming. The flesh had such a large place with them that God's gracious action seemed inexplicable! So Peter is forced to join them by baptism to the cleansed company at Jerusalem.

Chief was he of all the apostles, but even *he* had to answer for such a flagrant transgression as this!

"Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them!" (Acts xi. 3).

He had to show all the facts before he could stop the contentions of these "believers."

All these things happened in the land of Israel.

Until this time the disciples, the repentant, the baptized, the proselytes, receive this gift. God has not exceeded the boundaries of His promise.

But when did He say He would pour it upon His



enemies? If we read His word aright, they were to be utterly destroyed from among His people.

#### THE SPIRIT'S SWIFTNESS.

The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. The spirit is swift, but the flesh is slow and lags behind.

This is true, not only in individuals, but also in the dispensations.

We have an illustration of this at about this time. The most malignant enemy Messiah ever had among mankind arose and wrought havoc with His congregation and destroyed His saints. In the very height of his rebellion Saul of Tarsus is stricken to the ground, blinded by the glorious presence of Messiah. Ananias (i. e. *whom Jehovah graciously gave*) is sent to him to restore his sight and that he might be filled with holy spirit. He eventually becomes a prophet and teacher at Antioch (Acts xi. 19-29; xiii. 1).

The *first* mission ever directed by the *holy Spirit* is that of Saul and Barnabas. Messiah Himself, before His ascension had sent the twelve. But this mission and ministry was not only distinct from theirs, but also from the previous ministry of Paul and Barnabas themselves.

The *holy Spirit separated* them from the rest.

The *holy Spirit sent* them forth (Acts xiii. 1-4).

It is only as we see this that we are enabled to apprehend the intensely spiritual character of the work they did. The first extended account of this work is concerning their visit to another Antioch in Psidia (Acts xiii. 14-52).

For the first time we hear of *justification*.

For the first time we read that the *law is superseded by faith*.

For the first time the *nations* are brought into the light and receive æonian life.

After they have been forced to leave and we find them at Iconium, their spirits revert to the work done and we read: "The disciples were filled with joy and with holy spirit."

It is hard to appreciate the intense spirituality which pervades all this.

They are sent by the holy spirit.

The blessings proclaimed are spiritual.

The disciples are filled with holy spirit.

After the work had been accomplished, and they were once again in Antioch, certain men came down from Judea, teaching the necessity of physical circumcision for salvation. In the subsequent discussion the one point which outweighed all others and which finally decided the matter against the Judaisers was thus put by Peter: "God, who knows hearts, bore them witness, giving them the holy spirit even as to us, too, and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith" (Acts xv. 1, 5, 8, 9).

So it was well understood and acknowledged, even by their opponents, that believers among the nations received the holy spirit *by faith, when they believed, apart from repentance, baptism, or laying on of hands.*

But this was a departure from the strict letter of the promise, which contained no hint of the spiritual blessings of other nations until after the Master had entered upon His earthly glories.

The key doubtless lies in this: Though His glorious feet have not yet stood upon Mount Olivet nor touched a spot of Israel's land, yet He has come, in sun-dismaying splendor, *outside that land*, descending upon the distant

Damascus road, leading to an "Activity" (Damascus) in harmony therewith, claiming the worship and fealty of His worst enemy.

And the work of Saul (or rather Paul, his Gentile, spiritual name) is based upon and proceeds from that glorious sight. Just as John the Baptist anticipated Elijah, being endued with his spiritual capacity, so Paul goes about doing the work of Israel in the age to come by means of his indument with the nation's spiritual power. Messiah cannot be present in person among His people Israel in their land, but in spirit He now goes outside the land, where He never could have gone while still on earth. In spirit, Joel's prophecy, which poured spirit upon all flesh, is given a place.

Saul met Him on the way to an "activity" of such spiritual force and scope that it speedily transverses the whole earth.

This brief economy, in point of time, runs parallel to the distinct ministry of the twelve in Jerusalem, preparing the way for the present.

Peter had already acknowledged that God had "borne witness" to the nations, i. e., acknowledged them as His (Acts xv. 8). Paul goes further and tells the disciples of the other nations that God has put His seal upon them, thus claiming them as His and guarding them against all comers (ch. i. 13).

#### THE SEAL.

When the Pharisees were afraid that the Lord's body would be stolen from the tomb, Pilate said to them: " \* \* \* Make it as sure as you know how. So they went and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone \* \* \* " (Matt. xxvii. 65).

Of course God mocked their pretensions and Messiah broke their seal.

But when *God* seals, when *He* makes "as sure as He knows how," safety is assured. How wonderful that God should put His seal upon sinners of the Gentiles! He brands them His and challenges the universal powers to tamper with His own.

He has made them His "as much as He knows how!"

Comforting as this is, the most important point for us to note is the character of this seal. The seal of faith was given to Abraham in his flesh, because his blessings were material. Not so this: it is a purely spiritual seal, because these blessings are spiritual exclusively.

*It coincides with the pledge given to those of Israel whose faith was placed in Christ Jesus, who looked for his presence in the air, and whose changed destiny and new spiritual inheritance in the heavenly regions now depended upon its possession.*

This pledge was an earnest in kind of the possessions purchased for them, but which had not yet been redeemed.

Now an earnest is but a part or portion of the promise, given ahead of time. A spiritual earnest brings a spiritual possession. The changed destiny of the believers in Christ Jesus brings them into spiritual possessions.

*Those of the other nations who believed received the same spiritual seal, the same spiritual pledge, the same spiritual earnest, as the believing Israelites, hence were entitled to the same spiritual blessing and inheritance.*

Physical differences cannot be transported into the heavenly spiritual sphere, hence they vanish.

The secret is that

THE NATIONS ARE JOINT-SHARERS  
OF THE HEAVENLY ALLOTMENT.

Beloved, *this is where we come in.*

This is the first and chiefest portion of the three-fold mystery. It reveals our relationship to God. The others deal with our relationship to Christ, as members of His body, and with our relationship to one another.

Now, if we wish, we may read the first part of our letter again, with the comforting assurance that, though in its first intention it is concerning Paul and those of Jewish blood, its extended arms enfold us, too, in its embrace!

Some time before this, when Paul wrote to the Galatians and to the Romans (among whom he now was), he had taught them that they were sons of God and consequently joint possessors with Christ. Wherein, then, lies the secret which he now reveals?

At that time, Christ's heavenly glories had not been revealed. His highest place was over all the earth. The blessings of His people were all in the earth. It had already been clearly defined by the prophets. The hope set before them was not a heavenly possession, but an earthly one.

But in this *earthly* scene *there could not be equality of blessing* for the nations. Israel must have the first, the highest place. They must rule. Even in Pentecostal days the apostles at Jerusalem lorded it over the faith of the nations and laid down laws for their observance.

However high the spiritual blessings, as sons of God, or as members of the body of Christ, these spiritual blessings never raised the nations to the same level or rank as Israel.

It is only after the Mystery of Messiah has been re-

vealed and the consequent destiny of the "fore-hoppers" changed also, from an earthly to a heavenly possession, from a partly material to a purely spiritual inheritance—it is only then that equality is possible.

This is the secret: not that the nations were to be heirs, but to be *joint* heirs, on an equality with those of the favored nation. Just so with the second item. They were not only to be members of His body, but members of a *joint body* (*sussoma*) in which every member is equally joined to the one Head. Just so, too, with the third item of this secret. It is not that the nations are to be blessed at Israel's board, to partake of her spiritual benefits. That had been true before. It is that those of them who believed on Christ Jesus, partook of the heavenly spiritual blessings *on equal terms*.

The nations are the peers of Israel! A true sense of what we are and the covenant relation He sustained to them, coupled with a sight of that latest highest destiny, in which we share, should moisten every eye with tears of abundant gratitude!

#### THE LAUD OF HIS FAME.

As we review the Grace Glorious and the Rich Redemption, which His spirit has made ours as well as theirs, our heart strings are attuned to sing His praise.

Our God has wrought wonderfully on our behalf!

We have tried to sound the depths of His grace, but could not touch the bottom. We have tried to telescope the heights of glory, but are all too conscious of our infant grasp of these celestial orbs of truth.

The goal universal is God's glory. From the tiniest insect in its aimless seeming way, to the most sovereign sun-star, in its parabolic path—all have one common aim, one pure purpose to perform. Men may deem the one

a foolish, fruitless wondering; they cannot tell the star's objective; but our God has harnessed both to His chariot of glory.

The earth is God's most fruitful field: humankind the fittest to display His varied excellence. To trace His footsteps in the earth—that is a true history of mankind. And such a history will transform this darkling world into the brightest of all the heavenly luminaries, whose effulgent rays will reach the utmost borders of the universe, and radiate the deepest recesses of God's love.

But never, in the history of this dark earth, had come an hour so dark and dismal as the days that followed the apostle's final visit to Jerusalem and his imprisonment.

Israel will not have Messiah. Neither will they allow the other nations any place. Paul is a prisoner in the clutches of Rome. Every avenue of blessing thus seemed effectually choked; everything seemed ripe for judgment.

So it *seemed*.

But, like the universal dissolution of Jehovah's Day, a place is prepared for a new creation. God creates a new thing, unheard of and unknown.

He reveals the Secret Economy which fills the hosts of heaven with admiring wonder and the hearts of His hallowed with unceasing praise!

# THE ACTS.

## GENERAL SURVEY.

With the character of the book thus determined as a treatise relating to the Kingdom, we are prepared to consider the plan, which is exquisitely simple and suggestive.

It consists of a suite of three cycles of ministry, interrupted by two digressions or parentheses, and bound together by a preface and appendix. The three cycles, each embracing a wider area than the preceding, narrate the proclamation of the Kingdom and its rejection by Israel; the digressions trace the several and successive steps which led to the inauguration of the present economy among the nations.

The subjoined analysis may aid the reader to grasp the scope of the book.

i: 1-11. Preface; foreshadowing the character of the Spirit's ministry to Israel.

i: 12-vii. Preaching of the Kingdom in Jerusalem, culminating in the murder of Stephen.

viii-ix : 30. Preaching in Samaria. Call of Saul of Tarsus.

ix : 31-xii. Preaching of the Kingdom to the Jews and Proselytes in the land, culminating in the murder of James.

} PETER



- xiii, xiv. Separation of Paul as a minister to the Nations.
- xv-xxviii : 29. Preaching of the Kingdom and the Gospel of God to the Dispersion and the Nations, culminating in the Spirit's rejection.
- } PAUL

xxviii : 30, 31. Appendix; announcing the termination of the Spirit's ministry to Israel.

A glance at the above analysis reveals the existence of two concurrent movements, each leading up toward a definite climax. One concerns *Israel*, the other the *Nations*. The former follows the orbiting course of Israel's setting sun; the latter pursues the widening stream of grace to the aliens,—ever surging higher out of the ever-deepening abyss of Israel's apostasy. In nature, plants thrive best in congenial soil. But grace lives, blooms and blossoms in gorgeous resplendency in the asphyxiating atmosphere of sin. "Where sin abounds, grace superabounds."

A marked feature of the book is the resolve of the component parts into a common unity. It begins with the descent of the Spirit: it traces the rejection of the Spirit: it ends with the Spirit's repudiation of Israel. At the beginning, Peter, at Jerusalem, opens the door of the Kingdom to the Jews; at the end, Paul, at Rome, closes the door of the Kingdom and shuts up Israel in disobedience. Thenceforward they pass out of His reckoning.

Another notable feature is the Gentile-ward tendency. As in Ezekiel the glory of Jehovah vacates the temple, slowly receding before the advancing tide of corruption, so in the Acts the Spirit gradually withdraws toward the far-off regions of the uncircumcised foreigners.

Jerusalem is the centre at the beginning, Antioch in the middle, Rome at the close. Messiah's appearance to Saul on Gentile soil; the dispensation-making separation of Paul as a minister to the nations; the public proclamation of transferred favor to the nations are but a few way-marks accentuating the increasing volume and momentum of heathen-ward drift, which is carried to the utmost limit. *From the one extreme, where the Gentile seemed to have no place, we arrive at the opposite where the Jew has no priority.*

Yet the transition is not accomplished at one bound. But, each outbreak of Jewish hostility augments the munificence of grace to the nations. Mercy streams to the outcast Samaritans, beckons the Ethiopian eunuch, draws in the uncircumcised proselytes, skirts the dim drab mazes where idolaters dwell, and fixes its abode in the dark places of the earth. As the end looms up, enough years have elapsed to disappoint those fervid hopes excited by the early successes of Pentecostal preaching. The congregation has grown worldly and careless. Many, forsaking their covenant-love, lapse to Judaism. The twelve apostles, who during former persecutions remained in Jerusalem, vanish from the scene. Peter dwells in Babylon. The earthly Kingdom seemed as distant now than in the days of the Babylonian exile. Israel is deposed. The sword of vengeance hangs over the rebellious city. And we are left with a grand vague vision of the immeasurable heathen world, with its benighted myriads, and God's favor brooding over all.

THE FIRST CYCLE (ch. i : 12—vii).

The Master, in parting, charged the disciples to tarry at Jerusalem until endued with power from on high. Pursuant to His order, they returned to Jerusalem, and,

closetted in a chamber, continued steadfastly in prayer.

During those days of waiting Matthias was chosen to replace Judas. In the manner of election the apostles were ruled by the Scriptural precedent of the lot, which in Israel decided all matters of importance. It is thus that Joshua apportioned the land to the tribes by Jehovah's order (Josh. xiv : 2, xviii : 10), and David assigned the twenty-four courses of priests to their respective spheres of Temple service (I Chr. xxiv : 5, 31). The Jewish institution of the lot is sanctioned by Scripture. "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord" (Prov. xvi : 33). "The lot causes contentions to cease, and parteth between the mighty" (Prov. xviii : 18).

With the number of the apostles to the tribes completed, all was in readiness for the Spirit's action.

Shameful and criminal had been Israel's career. She had added sin to sin. John had been thrust into prison and beheaded. Messiah had been ignominiously hung to the cross between two malefactors of the deepest dye. Great had been the nation's guilt, but Messiah's love exceeded it. Nailed to the tree, He interceded for His murderers, "Father, pardon them, for they know not what they do" (Luke xxiii : 34). The fragrance of Messiah's intercession ascends before the throne and secures a respite from judgment. Mercy continues toward Israel. The risen King delegates to the apostles authority to proclaim pardon (Jno. xx. 23). The offer of the Kingdom is renewed at Pentecost.

Pentecost has a definite connection with the Kingdom. In Genesis xi all nations were scattered and their tongues confounded; here we see their representatives (ii : 5) gathered together and their languages unified. Things

were being prepared for the event of Messiah's acceptance by Israel.

Peter called upon the nation to repent of Messiah's murder, promising pardon of sins and the gift of holy spirit (ii : 38). Enmantled with power from on high, Peter offers to his nation the two blessings which they themselves had potentially received fifty days before (Jno. xx : 22, 23). "The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts ii : 39).

Since the Babylonian captivity the Israelites among the nations were known as "those afar off" (Dan. ix : 7). The blessings dispensed to the Jews assembled at Jerusalem would reach to these. That Peter did not include the Gentiles among "those afar off" is evident from his subsequent conduct in the case of Cornelius.

The mention of "Greeks" in Acts xi : 20 has bewildered Bible students. But the word there is the same as in ch. vi : 1 and ix : 29; not *Hellenes*, *Hellenes*, but *Hellenistas*, *Hellenists*—Jews who spoke Greek; had they been Greeks, it would follow that those scattered abroad after the death of Stephen had insight into the purpose of God before Peter, which was not the case.

Those who attended to Peter's call received the gift of holy spirit and were organized as the assembly of "saved ones" (ii : 47). When the Master was on earth the rite of water baptism unified those looking for Israel's consolation and separated them from the nation as a whole. Now the outward rite was strengthened by a spiritual, vitalizing medium. Water baptism left its objects unaffected: Spirit baptism equipped for service and transformed its recipients by cyclonic force.

In former days, during the tedious desert journey, the sons of Israel shared a common table furnished by Je-

hovah's bounty. When they entered Canaan, each family received an allotment in the good land which Jehovah had promised their fathers. Now, once more, they own all things in common in view of Messiah's return and the impending redistribution of the land among the tribes.

The first proclamation of the Kingdom had begun by the descent of the Spirit upon the Master standing in Jordan's waters and was accompanied by mighty signs and wonders in the land of Israel.

The proclamation was resumed by the descent of the Spirit on the apostles and was immediately followed by signs and wonders to confirm the word in the land of Israel. Peter stands and proclaims the crucified and risen Nazarene that He is the Messiah, the Son of David, in whom all hopes of the Kingdom are centered.

But Israel remains unmoved. Nothing can arouse her out of her death-like lethargy. When He came, they said, 'Come, let us kill Him' (Matt. xxi : 38). Now that He stands ready to return and bless them, they act the part of the nobleman's opponents, confronting His messengers with the loud-mouthed cry, "We will not that this man reign over us" (Luke xix : 14).

Vainly is the offer repeated. Each successive appeal intensifies the outbursts of frenzied hostility. The council which decreed Messiah's death actively persecutes His witnesses. Only fear of a general uprising restrains its murderous intents.

The redoubtable ministry of Stephen is vehemently resisted. The confuted Libertines, mad with rage, arraign him before the council on the same accusation as was brought against the Lord Himself. "We heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered unto us (Acts vi : 14, Matt. xxvi : 61).

The bulk of Stephen's speech to the Sanhedrim is oc-

cupied with Joseph and Moses (ver. 9-41). Both characters are drawn with amazing clearness. Their bearing on the condition of the time is unmistakable. Both had come to their brethren on a mission of deliverance, but were rejected the first time. The patriarchs said to Joseph, "Shalt thou indeed rule over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us?" (Gen. xxxvii:8.) And the people said to Moses, "Who hath appointed thee a ruler and a judge?" (Acts vii: 35). Misfortune and calamity came on the wake of their rejection. But great deliverance accompanied their reception by the brethren the second time. From Moses he glides on to the Messiah (ver. 37), "the prophet like unto him," whom they have similarly disowned. Then after a pungent resume of their rebellious career (ver. 41-50), he fastens on them the murder of the Just One with overwhelming force (ver. 51-53). The address finds a fitting climax in the beatific vision of Israel's Sovereign in standing posture, eager to return and bring to them a greater deliverance than those experienced under Joseph and Moses (ver. 54-56).

The lapidation of Stephen closes the first cycle. The city of David is in revolt against his greater Son. Jerusalem does not want her King. Everything trumpets into our ears the speedy approach of the final crisis. All the features of the last days are everywhere in evidence. Famines and persecutions devastate the land (viii: 1, xi: 28, xii: 1); the earth trembles and moves, with earthquakes and seismic convulsions (iv: 31, xvi: 26); wizards and false prophets infest the land (v: 36-38, viii: 9-11); unclean spirits are abroad deceiving the people (v: 16, viii: 7); and the sinister figure of Herod, a precursor of the last Anti-Christ, is worshipped as God (xii: 20-23). Meanwhile bright glimpses of the King-

dom flit now and then across the scene. The man restored to perfect soundness at the Beautiful Gate shadows Israel's restoration; the powers of the age to come herald the dawn of that era of physical marvels; ministering angels hold intercourse with the heirs of salvation; a representative Ethiopian stretches out his hands unto God (Ps. lxxviii : 31); the ready reception of the glad tidings at Samaria presages the obliteration of the long standing quarrel between Ephraim and Judah (Isa. xi : 13).

## THE CHRIST OF GOD.

### III. HIS ATONING DEATH.

For hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, threatened not; but committed his \* \* \* to him that judgeth righteously: who his own self bare our sins in his own body upon the tree that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were going astray like sheep; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls."—I Pet. ii. 21-25.

There are two things on the very surface of this text:  
The life of Christ—an Example.

The death of Christ—a Sacrifice.

Speaking of the life of Christ, Peter—or rather, the Spirit of Truth by him—declares it to be an example. An example of what? An example of God's ideal of man—an example of what God expects of man—an example of what man must be in order to dwell with God.

Having premised as much; the writer proceeds to depict the moral excellence of the man Christ Jesus—the archtypal man—setting forth the leading traits of His character in a few phrases.

"Who did no sin." Who had no part in the sin-stained Adamic nature which is essentially evil, and therefore tends to evil only and continually.

"Neither was guile found in His mouth." His conversation was devoid of that artificiality of speech and con-



duct which seeks to please everybody, and bestows profuse flatteries to promote its own advantages.

"When He was reviled, He reviled not again." He was absolutely free from such vindictiveness of spirit as is wont to manifest itself on provocation. His conduct was not framed after the stern Mosaic precept, "eye for eye, tooth for tooth."

"When He suffered threatened not, but committed \* \* \* to Him that judgeth righteously." He never vindicated Himself, but trustfully left His enemies with God. Praised or defamed, tempted or glorified, He retained a dignified bearing, and the expression of His countenance, although varying with surrounding conditions, was always pervaded by a serenity reflecting a celestial calm not found among mortals. In the greatest hurry and pressure of public life, He still preserved His recollection and heavenly mindedness. He was never hasty nor loitering, but did each thing in season, with an even, undisturbed composure and tranquility of spirit.

I love to think that this portrait of Christ is sketched by one who knew Him intimately; that this estimation of His Person has come down to us from the pen of an eye witness. Peter followed the Master through the entire chain of events which crowded the years of His public ministry as a close observer and a keen critic, and men are not slow to criticise. He escorts the Lord to the wedding and the funeral; he listens to His conversations with the rulers and the children of the streets; he gazes upon Him imparting a healing touch to the leper and rebuking demons with authority, and exclaims in amazement: "No sin in His nature! No guile in His speech! No violence in His action! Behold a sinless, pure, and harmless man!" Peter is lost in wonder. His vision is captivated. His heart throbs. He muses on the perfections of the

Nazarene, shining through the avenues of daily life. As he placed himself, as well as those within the circle of his acquaintance, in the light of that grand revelation, the mingled rays of purity and glory radiating from the Only-begotten of the Father, passing through the prism of mind, reflect upon the screen of conscience the deformity of his own nature. Peter is stunned and cries out in despair, "We all like sheep have gone astray!"

The contemplation of Christ has resulted in a self-discovery. The innermost recesses of the heart are laid bare, and the unsearchable depths of being are explored. The virtues of Christ have brought out in vivid contrast their human counterpart in sin. Peter perceives, and reluctantly admits, that the direct opposite of what is true of Christ is true of man.

It is written of Christ: "He did no sin;" of man—"all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."

It is written of Christ "no guile was found in His mouth;" of man—"their mouth is full of bitterness and cursing." Probably no fruit of the flesh clings to us so tenaciously as guile. It is mankind's second nature; and,—so dead is conscience in moral matters,—that the worst type of guile that stalks shamelessly abroad is extolled as the ideal of cleverness and *savoir faire*.

It is written of Christ "when He was reviled, He reviled not again." Who has audacity to deny that the opposite sentiment governs the procedure of our individual, social, national—and must it verily be admitted?—of our church life? Notwithstanding the progress of civilization, human life today is little more than a disguised ravening, and, though wit and handiwork take the place of teeth and claw, the fight for bread is as keen and cruel among men as it is among the beasts that tear each other for their prey. Grinding competition wears out men's

tenderer instincts, and the baneful effects of selfish rivalry are seen all around us.

Commercialism strongly leans towards great monopolies, which have as the very base of their operations the enrichment of the few and the detriment of the many. The masses who not long ago were jubilant over the downfall of absolutism and the broken power of vassals, awoken to realize that, gradually yet surely, they are being brought under the more cruel servitude of trusts and commercial combines.

The corruption of politics and duplicity of international relations is appalling. Procrastination and venality; coalition with the guilds of Mammon against truth, righteousness, and justice; the encouragement of anti-christianity for the sake of gain; the oppression of the poor and needy and guilty trade with the strong; a reckless policy of self-aggrandizement regardless of the right of weaker nations are too well known to need comment. Christendom presents the spectacle of a gigantic military camp and navy yard, where talent and genius weary themselves out in endeavors to increase the already phenomenal deadliness of destructive weapons. Nations vie with each other in warlike preparations, while no less than 30,000,000 woman-born, armed to the teeth, stand ready at a moments' notice to wet their hands in each other's blood.

Ah me! we all like sheep have gone astray! It is significant that, adverting to the condition of man, Peter employs the favorite biblical figure of a lost sheep. The ass will return to her stall, and the ox to his crib. But a strayed sheep will not return. It must be *brought* back. Fallen man is like a lost sheep: his self-efforts are futile: he must seek outside help. His forlorn condition may be compared to a harp which, through accident, has become incapable of yielding those subdued, melodious sounds

which swayed audiences into breathless silence, and which must remain silent and useless until the master hand of a skilled workman repairs the broken parts and restores it to perfect order. Adam's fall was so far-reaching in its consequences, and so complex in the problems involved, that the omniscient mind which gave us being could alone devise a plan of salvation from sin's thralldom.

Peter wastes no time in theological definitions, he brings us in the presence of the Exemplar; and, as His glory breaks upon our eyes, the consciousness of immeasurable distance creeps over us. Overwhelmed by a sense of guilt and failure, we realize the impossibility of imitation, and stand speechless before the Exemplar, while the voice of conscience echoes the apostle's cry, "We all like sheep have gone astray!"

There is floating about in the world much theological lore representing the Savior's death as having no other value beyond that of a mere example. Such teaching is as unbiblical as it is unphilosophical. The exponents of this doctrine ignore the patent fact that an example reveals an ideal, but does not impart capacity for its realization. The painting of a master points out the blemishes of a dilettante, but does not *remove* them. We may admire a statue or a poem, but admiration does not *transmit* the talent necessary for their production. It is a law that imitation is possible only where there exists identity of nature. Thus to use the brush with an artist's effectiveness, we must have an artist's genius. To wield the pen with a poet's gracefulness, we must have a poet's talent. Every reader of the New Testament must concede that Christ's life presents a unique exhibition of moral glory; but this admission does not enable the admittor to walk in His steps. To walk in His steps we must have His life. Now, as in Him was no sin, and as man was con-

ceived in sin, it follows that, before Christ can become an example, He must impart new life.

The soul's first vision of Christ is of Him as Savior, bearing our damnation on the cross. When life has been received through His death, He becomes our example and controls our life by a vision of His own.

Having discovered in the presence of Christ the fact of man's ruin, the apostle passes to the consideration of His death as the means of salvation from sin.

Holy Writ affirms with unfaltering certainty, from Genesis to Revelation, the hereditary nature and damnable character of sin, representing it as the inherent disease of humankind. Science, on the other hand, has gravitated in the opposite direction, favoring a view divergent from the biblical.

We wish to guard ourselves against possible misunderstanding. We do not disparage science nor treat it with contumely, neither do we belittle its worth. We wish only to remind that, like all good things, science has numerous counterfeits which are apt to be mistaken for the real article; and that it can have no more claim to infallibility than theology.

What is Theology? Man's interpretation of the Bible.

And what is Science? Man's interpretation of nature.

Hence both are equally fallible and imperfect—one aiming to interpret the *words*, the other the *works* of God; and the common attitude of science is that of revising and rectifying its own dicta. While forever harping on the "settled results of science," its apostles, are, nevertheless, forever recognizing its defects and inadequacies by tinkering with them, changing, experimenting, and every now and then "revolutionizing" its theories. This fact alone, quintessent of others, should suffice to preclude the aban-

donment of clear, well-defined biblical doctrines on the mere "authority of science."

The tendency of the age is to regard sin lightly. The idea gains ascendancy among professing Christians that sin is not the heinous and damnable thing which a crude Theology has led us to believe, but a natural instinct inherent to humankind.

Before pronouncing on the merits of these respective theories, we must have a clear idea of the distinction between disease and instinct.

An instinct (in animals as well as in men) is a propensity the exercise of which promotes the welfare of the species to which the being belongs, or at least of the being itself. The raptorial habits of wild beasts are not conducive to the happiness of the cattle, but they certainly increase their own comfort. They have been fitted with weapons of offense, and are endowed with corresponding instincts for their use. The healthier the instinct of a beast, the greater its capacity of enjoyment, and the greater its ability to inflict injury to animals of other species. The rapacity of the wolf and the predatory habits of the fox are truly natural instincts, because while detrimental to the sheep and the poultry, they are beneficial to themselves.

Can the same be said of sin? Does it promote the welfare of humanity? Does it lead to the happiness of the individual committing it? No! The man who sins wrongs society but harms himself most.

The craving for strong drink leads a man's family to destitution, but the inebriate himself suffers the heaviest consequences. The rogue who goes out to corrupt innocence prepares a harvest of misery and pollution, but implants in his own organism awful seeds of self-destruction. Prostitution, drunkenness, etc., contribute to the deterioration of humanity, but inflict their heaviest pen-

alties on those addicted to them, and are thus shown to be both *homicidal and suicidal*. This doubly destructive character of sin is positive proof of its abnormality.

Furthermore the abnormal character of sin is also evidenced by the sense of condemnation which it begets in its dupes. Take a child who meets the first temptation. He stands trembling, as it were, on the brink of fate. A mysterious force pushes him on to the desired object; while conscience lures the child in the opposite direction. We will suppose the child gives his will over on the side of evil. No sooner the fatal act is consummated than it begets fear, and to the darkened understanding of the child it appears necessary that it should be *hidden*. Accordingly, he commits, perhaps, ten more sins in order to hide the first, and these in turn produce a harvest of corruption. These facts amply vindicate the truth of the biblical doctrine.

We are apt to be misled by appearances. In this world things are not always as they seem to be. A veneer of attractiveness often hides from our gaze the source whence things spring and conceals the end toward which they tend. There is in every human heart a craving after something—a reaching after the gratification of some undefined but ever present heartfelt want. It is to this “something” that the world with its lust of the flesh, lust of the eye, and pride of life appeals. The bright light of a dancing hall, the gay sounds of music, the sparkle of jewelry, charming faces and graceful figures dazzle the eye, stun the imagination and spell happiness to the inexperienced eye of youth. But gratification is not happiness. It has a sting. What Solomon said about wine is equally applicable to all earthly pleasure

"Look not thou upon the wine when it is red,  
When it giveth its color in the cup,  
When it goeth down smoothly:  
At the last it biteth like a serpent,  
And stingeth like an adder."—Prov. xxiii. 30, 31.

The things of the world cannot assuage the thirst of the heart. The laws of nature spell over every fountain of earthly pleasure the Divine decree,

"Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again."

To return to our subject: the popular idea of the atonement, as based on the sole principle of substitution, is to a certain extent responsible for the repugnance felt toward it in certain quarters.

Substitution works well in commercial legislation. Here is a man whose failure in business involves him in a financial wreck. There is, however, a benefactor, it may be some acquaintance, or some distant relation, who, in this crisis, assumes all liabilities, pays all debts, and thus fulfills the demands of the law. Justice requires satisfaction to the creditor, and when his requirements are met, personally or by proxy, the claims of law against the debtor are dismissed.

But substitution is out of question in criminal legislation, and that for reasons too obvious to be named. The electrocution of an innocent man in lieu of a murderer is not a satisfaction of law, but as flagrant a violation thereof as the justification of a criminal.

The Bible presents the doctrine of atonement as resting on union and substitution. Union is essential, and for this cause "it became him in all things to be made like unto his brethren" (Heb. ii : 17). Substitution is equally essential, therefore "it became him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons into glory, to make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering" (Heb. ii : 10).



Some years ago, there appeared in one of the dailies in the city of P——, an article relating how a society lady was saved by her devoted husband. The lady had been ailing for years. A specialist called upon to examine her informed the relatives that her case was hopeless. Questioned if nothing could be done for the patient, he returned a negative answer. The lady, said the physician, is suffering from want of blood. If a fresh supply of blood could be procured, the lady could recover, but as there is no possibility of obtaining such supply, she must die. Whereupon the husband unbared his arm, requesting the physician to extract the necessary quantity of blood. The physician consented. The operation was successfully performed, and the lady recovered. The inexorable laws of nature required that the lady possessed of that disease should die; but they were equally satisfied when a fresh quantity of blood was infused into her veins, and she recovered.

Now, in this case, substitution alone would have been of no avail. The husband might have spilt his blood to the last drop, but unless it could have been infused into the veins of the wife, his sacrifice would have been to no purpose.

In like manner, union without substitution would have been useless. The mere forming of a connection would not have saved the lady; the blood must be shed, and the husband must be weakened that the wife might be strengthened.

A life preserver will not save a shipwrecked sailor unless it be tied about his body. The sinking of the life-preserver apart from the sailor, and the floating of the sailor apart from the life-preserver are both contrary to natural law. But when the sinking sailor ties the life-preserver about his body, his deliverance is effected with-

out interference with the operation of natural law. The life-preserver bears the sailor's weight, and the sailor is lifted up by the buoyancy of the life-preserver.

When God saved Noah's household from the cataclysm which engulfed all living creatures, He did not suspend the normal course of nature's laws, but effected the deliverance in consonance therewith.

The secret of that salvation lies in the fact that Noah and the Ark were treated as a *unit*. The Ark bore Noah's weight, and Noah was lifted up by the buoyancy of the Ark. This is the whole philosophy of the atonement.

These considerations impress upon us the simplicity and effectiveness of the way of salvation through Christ, and enable us to reconcile the fate of the Christ rejector with the character of a God whose very nature is Love.

A liner carrying several hundred of passengers was once lost in mid-ocean. Another vessel chanced to near the scene of the catastrophe, and its captain did all within his power to save the sinking ones. He lowered the life boat and threw out life-preservers. But in the consternation that ensued the wreck many lost their senses, failed to catch the life-preservers, and hundreds of lives were lost. When the news of the disaster reached port, all who read the reports regretted the occurrence, but could fasten the blame on none save the frightened passengers themselves.

I dare say you discern in this incident a parable of God's dealings with humankind.

The wrecked liner is Adam, the passengers are his posterity, who, at the time of his fall, were in his loins and were therefore, without their volition, involved in the consequences of his transgression. The captain is Christ, the life boat the Gospel. "The grace of God hath ap-

peared, bringing salvation to all men" (Titus ii : 11). God has done all that could be done to save man. "What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?" Isa. v. 4) is a Scripture that well fits this case. He has provided a life boat. Whose fault will it be if man refuses to enter it?

"How can we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?"

## THE NICOLAITANS.

The Nicolaitans are mentioned in the New Testament but twice, namely, in Rev. ii : 6, 15. The former passage adverts to their "works," the latter, to their "doctrine."

The Lord's unqualified detestation of their works (Rev. ii : 10), and the solemn threat to make war against them with the sword of His mouth (Rev. ii : 16), has caused reverent souls to linger on these mysterious phrases with mingled feelings of perplexity and wonder.

### THE VARIOUS INTERPRETATIONS.

For some reason almost without explanation some have supposed the Nicolaitans to have been the adherents of an anti-Christian cult founded by a certain Nicholas. History, however, knows nothing of such a cult. Want of documentary evidence has suggested a possible connection with Nicholas, one of the seven deacons elected by the Twelve, but the case has never been proven; and in the absence of positive proof we have no right to link the memory of a servant of Christ with the delinquencies here named.

Others have attempted to explain the word by its etymology. These had the right clue; but lacking the key to the book, could not use it advantageously. Etymological analysis yielded a meaning no less recondite than the name itself, so imagination was allowed to usurp the place of evidence, and the mystic name applied to the pretensions of the clergy!

The advocates of this view regard the apocalyptic epistles to the churches of Asia as forecasting seven successive historical periods of the Church's career on earth. The first four epistles, according to this theory, are a compendium of Church history from the Apostolic Age to the close of the Mediaeval Era. Sardis ushers the Reformation.

If this interpretation is correct, the first four epistles are today *past history*; so the Nicolaitans and their doctrine, must, perforce, be sought somewhere between the first century and the Reformation. The leading features of Nicolaitan doctrine are sanction of fornication and the eating of things offered to idols. Where, we ask, were such doctrines ever taught? Search where you will, there is no trace of them anywhere.

Both these interpretations rest on pure assumption, and have neither biblical nor historical support.

The question, *Who are the Nicolaitans?* is as yet unanswered. There is ample room, therefore, for inquiry and research.

#### THE KEY TO THE APOCALYPSE.

Before undertaking a fresh treatment of the subject, it is essential to have a clear idea of the perspective of the Apocalypse.

The key to the book is in ch. i : 10, "I was in the spirit on the Lord's day."

In the first place, a revision of the Authorized Version (with which the Revised agrees) is necessary. The preposition *en* is translated once *in* and once *on*, though the dative case occurs after it both times, and the definite article is inserted before *pneumati*. The exact rendering therefore is: "I was in spirit in the Lord's day," or if this be translated literally, giving full play to the sense

of the words, we shall get: "I came into a new state of being (namely), in spirit, in the day of the Lord."

We hold it to be self-evident that *he hemera kurion* (the Day of the Lord), and *he kuriake hemera* (the Lord's Day) mean, and refer to, the same thing—in fact, that they are interchangeable terms in the New Testament. The *Lord's Day* here is the same as the *Day of the Lord* elsewhere, and has not the remotest reference to the first day of the week, or as we call it, Sunday. The only other place where the adjective *kuriakos* occurs in the New Testament fully bears out this explanation. In I Cor. xi: 20, we read of *kuriakon deipnon*, and nobody will deny that this phrase may with equal accuracy be translated "the Lord's Supper," and "the supper of the Lord," or that these two translations can convey only the same idea. Rev. i: 10 will thus mean, that John was in that state in which prophets see visions, namely, *en pneu-mati*—in spirit, for the special purpose of seeing the events which will take place in Heaven and on Earth in the Day of the Lord.

This interpretation gives the key to the Book of Revelation, and makes the whole of that book perfectly intelligible and clear.

#### THE SECRET ECONOMY.

The Apostle Paul writes: "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the Church; whereof I was made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which was given me to you-ward, to fill up the word of God, even the mystery which hath been hid from all ages and generations" (Col. i: 24, 26).

This remarkable passage contains four statements, arresting thought:

In the first place, Paul was the first minister of the Church, which is His body. Again:

The present economy was a secret concealed by God from the ken of ages until made known to Paul by special revelation. Yet again:

The dispensation of the Mystery was committed to him: Furthermore:

The circle of truth relating to the Mystery filled up the word of God.

The fact that the Apocalypse and certain General Epistles were written after Paul's departure from the scene of earthly labors precludes a reference to the completion of the New Testament canon.

The Apostle has in view, not the *books* of revelation, but their *contents*. The books of the Bible move in orderly sequence along the line of the Divine counsels respecting the Kingdom of God on earth. The triad of prison epistles (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians) discloses a new vista and unfolds a new secret. This precious cluster of epistles is an exotic. It strikes a heavenly chord silent during the run of former ages; it unravels a vision hidden from other apostles and prophets; it sounds depths of grace unheard and undreamt of before. It takes us back before the overthrow of the world—before the present stage was built, and carries us forward to that cycle of coming ages that lie beyond the visions beheld by the Patmos seer.

Thus there are two streams of revelation: one relating to the earth, the other to heavenly realms. The former begins at the first page of Genesis and was completed by John. Paul received the revelation of the latter, and "filled up" the word of God, adding to it a body of truth

relating to a different purpose and concerned with a different sphere.

This declaration detaches the truth apportioned to the present economy from the rest of revelation, and bids us, if we have ears to hear, not to "reconcile" it with truth relating to the Kingdom, but to keep it distinct therefrom.

#### THE THEME OF THE APOCALYPSE.

The reader of the Apocalypse finds himself in Old Testament area, surrounded by the symbolism and imagery of the prophets, and moves amidst the shadows of a revived past. Its contents revolve around three themes:

- (1) The Mystery of the Seven Stars (i : 20).
- (2) The Mystery of God (x : 7), and
- (3) The Mystery of Babylon (xvii : 5).

The former and latter concern the Hebrew nation exclusively. The Mystery of the Seven Stars unfold's God's dealings with Israel through an elect remnant in the hour preceding Messiah's return to earth. The Mystery of Babylon shows the climax of Israel's apostasy.

#### THE SEVEN STARS.

The scenes of the seven churches of Asia are laid in that future day of physical and spiritual marvels—the Day of the Lord. The stars twinkle in heaven's vault; and the lampstands shed their flickering, pale light in the darkest night of the world's history.

In former days, when Israel was apostate, Jehovah spoke to her by prophets. When she rejected the Holy One, the Twelve heralded His message in the land, and Paul was set apart to convey the message to the Dispersion and to the Nations. He went from place to place preaching the Gospel of God "to the Jew first."

The Spirit's voice was heard in the synagogues of



Asia, as it is written, "All they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of God, both Jews and Greeks" (Acts xix : 10). But their ears were heavy: they could not hear. *The Jews of Asia* laid hold of the Lord's ambassador and delivered him into the hands of the Romans (Acts xxi : 27, 28). The formal announcement went forth: "All they that are in Asia turned away from me" (2 Tim. 1:15), and the solemn *Ichabod* was pronounced upon Israel (Acts xxviii : 25-28).

John, after Jerusalem's destruction, gathers up the history of those assemblies and transports them to the far off Day of the Lord. Once more the Spirit's voice is heard in the synagogues of Asia; once more, there are (as before) those who have "ears to hear" and who become the instruments through whom the Son of Man conveys His message to the synagogues.

The stars are Abraham's spiritual progeny (Gen. xv : 5). Daniel's visions show the role which these will play in the closing days of the Warfare Great. He beheld "the host of heaven and the stars" cast down to the ground and trampled by the horn (Dan. viii : 10). The interpretation is, "He (the Horn) shall destroy the mighty ones and the people of the saints" (Dan. viii : 24). If we translate the emblems of the vision in the terms of the interpretation we shall get:

The Host—the people of the saints, viz., Israel.

The Stars—the mighty ones—Who are they? The interpretation does not seem to afford help: it merely substitutes a symbol by a vague expression.

In the eleventh chapter, where "the craft and policy" of the Horn are dwelt upon with minuteness of detail, we read: "Such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he pervert by flatteries: but the people that know their God shall be strong, and do exploits: and they that

be wise among the people shall instruct many: and they shall fall by the sword and by flame, by captivity and by spoil, days" (Dan. xi : 32, 33).

We thus arrive at the conclusion that the "mighty ones," or stars, are the sons of Abraham, who, in the day of the nation's crisis, will instruct the people in righteousness amidst deepening apostasy, and will shine in Messiah's Kingdom as the stars in nocturnal blue. These passages in Daniel furnish the background for the scenes developed in the apocalyptic churches.

Our way is now clear to take up the question of

#### THE NICOLAITANS.

The word is made up of *nikos*—conqueror, and *laos*—people. The etymological meaning is Conqueror of the people—what conqueror?

#### THE CONQUEROR.

Under the first seal, a rider on a white horse goes forth *conquering and to conquer* (Rev. vi : 2). His parousia is followed by wars, famines and seismic disturbances. Desolation and death follow in his wake. Society is upheaved, the world drenched in blood. He is no other than the False One.

In Rev. xiii, the Rider attains the zenith of power. He wields the scepter over a monarchy embracing "every tribe and people and tongue and nation" (Rev. xiii : 7). He makes war with the saints and *overcomes* them (Rev. xiii : 7). He slays the two witnesses and *overcomes* them (Rev. xi : 7). He is Israel's conqueror, breaking in pieces the power of the holy people (Dan. xii : 7).

The victory over the Two Witnesses lifts him to the pinnacle of fame. They were invulnerable; their molesters were consumed by fire proceeding from their mouth.

The elements were subject to their word; they stopped the rain, turned the water into blood, smote the inhabitants of the earth with all manner of plagues. Their testimony, backed by such formidable power, terrorized the dwellers on the earth, and reminded them of Jehovah's claim over the earth. But the Beast *overcomes* them. Their power succumbs before the great authority wielded by the Beast. He rids the world of its tormenters and is in consequence acclaimed as the World's Deliverer. "Who is like unto the Beast? and who is able to make war with him?" (Rev. xiii : 4). The power exercised by the Witnesses in God's name has apparently suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of the Beast who now receives Divine homage. "The whole earth wondered after the Beast . . . and they worshipped the Beast" (Rev. xiii : 3, 4).

The conclusion to be drawn from these facts is that the Nicolaitans are the Israelitish votaries of the Beast who receive his hellish brand (Rev. xiii : 16, xiv : 9).

#### DANIEL'S LAST WEEK.

The last or seventieth week of Daniel is the framework of biblical eschatology, and provides the outline of the tableau of the end elaborated in the Mount Olivet prophecy and the Apocalypse. The last week is an epitome of the reign of the last Gentile ruler, the Mock-Messiah, who perishes in the flood-tide of Divine indignation. Its star events are the Dawn, Dominion and Doom of Anti-christ.

In the prophetic sermon our Lord bids the disciples, as representatives of the Jewish remnant hereafter, to beware, first of all, against the deception of the false Christ (Matt. xxiv : 5), and after a rapid survey of the first half, "the beginning of sorrows," reaches the middle, quoting Daniel's prophesy (vs. 15), and in a forcible

description of the horrors of the last half, "the shortened days," leads us to the close, ushered by his Second Advent in the clouds of heaven (ver. 30).

Paul's programme of things to come is also founded on the last week. The "falling away" (ensuing the translation of the Body to glory) is followed by the Parousia of the Man of Sin opening the week, "his own season." The middle is seen when the Lawless One sits in the temple, being worshipped as God; this, ensued by a brief period of unparalleled woe, brings about the crisis when the daring offender is slain by the breath of the Lord's mouth (ii : 2-10).

The first chapter of the Apocalypse is introductory. With the seventh verse of the twentieth chapter commence the glories following the advent. The intervening portion of the book (chap. ii to xx : 6) has its root in Daniel's last week, and gives an *eightfold* presentation thereof.

#### THE SEVEN CHURCHES.

In chapters ii and iii the week is seen in relation to the synagogues of God (Psa. lxxiv).

Before reviewing these chapters, it is well to bear in mind certain features of the Day of Wrath.

We know that the apostates from "the holy covenant" will be in league with the king (Dan. xi : 32); that they will feignedly join themselves to the remnant (Dan. xi : 34), and deceive some of the wise by "flatteries" (Dan. xi : 34). We know, too, that those who know their God will be strong, and do exploits, and fall by sword and flame, by captivity and by spoil (Dan. xi : 33).

The epistles to the seven synagogues are divided into two groups. In the first group of three, the injunction to hear *precedes* the promise to the overcomer; in the

second group of four, the injunction *follows* the promise. Why the change? Because, the masses in the synagogues have turned a deaf ear to the Spirit's voice, fallen a prey to "Satan's depths," and dwell where Satan's throne is (ii : 13 cf. xiii : 2) ; only a remnant has heeded the message (ii : 24). The transposition of the injunction marks the middle of the week.

Our way is now clear for a more extended view of the epistles.

In *Ephesus*, the Nicolaitans, or apostles of the Conqueror of the People, disguised in sheep's clothing, seek admission to the synagogues in order to promote their "work," which is the Covenant with the False One (Rev. ii : 2-6).

In *Smyrna*, the false apostles, foiled in their overtures, change their tactics. They divulge libellous statements concerning the elect and arouse against them the Gentile mob. A violent outbreak results in the confiscation of goods and reduces the servants of God to a state of beggary. The horizon teems with gloomy forebodings. The atmosphere is charged with uncertainty and unrest. Devilish agitations are simmering. Gentile hate, fanned by apostate Jews, is about to burst upon the remnant and tax the fidelity of each to the utmost capacity of endurance (Rev. ii : 7-10).

In *Pergamos*, the threatened persecution is raging. Force and guile combine their strength against the saints. Sword and seduction perform their destructive work. Messiah's witnesses are killed; the people are enticed to eat things sacrificed to idols and commit fornication.

*Thyatira* exhibits the ravages of Nicolaitan work and doctrine. The ranks of the faithful are thinned by death; their strength is broken; they can bear no burden; they are stripped of everything, except the seal of the living God, stamped on their forehead, and are encouraged to

hold out until the Lord's appearing. The apostates (branded as Jezebel) triumph. Their heyday has come. The harlot nation, exalted to millennial bliss and splendor by the strong arm of the Beast and his tributary kings, enjoys the fruits of her covenant with death. The "depths of Satan" have been sounded. The faithful are warned of the snare. "But to you I say, to the rest that are in Thyatira, as many as have not this teaching, which know not the depths of Satan, as they say; I cast upon you none other burden" (Rev. ii : 24). The words "*as they say*" point to the supreme claim set within Jezebel's teaching. The apostate nation will claim that its status of luxury and outward prosperity is a fulfilment of the wealth and glory which Jehovah covenanted to give the sons of Israel.

*Sardis* displays the magic potency of this blasphemous claim to bewitch the people. The majority fall into the trap. Promises of reward and sensuous attractions complete the deadly work of persecution and deception. Many defile their garments; only a "few names" walk in white.

In *Philadelphia* the heavenly election of the seed of Abraham is taken (after the fashion of Enoch) out of the Great Tribulation. They leave the earth and passing through the "open door" (the one beheld by John in chap. iv : 1) are ushered into the presence of Christ, who then will have descended into the air to receive them unto Himself. Israel's King is ready to return with His body-guard.

*Laodicea* surveys the situation just before the Lord's return to earth. The ranks of the saints, wasted by persecutions and diminished by translation, are reduced to extremity. Lawlessness is supreme. The field is ripe for the sickle of judgment. The Judge stands at the door.

The last call to hear God's voice is sounded. Everything trumpets the speedy approach of the end, and yet the deluded masses sleep on and on, and will not be warned nor turned to prepare for the coming of the King.

#### NICOLAITAN DOCTRINE.

In the course of our study we have noted the salient features of Nicolaitan doctrine—(1) Eating of things sacrificed to idols, and (2) Sanction of fornication. The identification of Nicolaitanism with the teaching of Balaam simplifies the task of exegesis very much. We have but to turn to Numbers and read the story of Balaam.

"And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab; for they called the people unto the sacrifice of their gods; and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods" (Num. xxv : 2). The scene at Shittim will have its counterpart in the Day of Jehovah.

The language of Numbers leaves no room for doubt that the sacrifices to the gods were accompanied by *cere-monial prostitution*. So it will be again. The worship of the Beast will be accompanied by similar lewdness, as the following Scriptures attest:

"They cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication" (Rev. ii : 14).

"And she teacheth and seduceth my servants to commit *fornication*, and to eat things sacrificed to idols" (Rev. ii : 20).

"And the rest of mankind . . . repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship demons, and the idols of gold, and of silver, and of brass, and of stone, and of wood; and they repented not . . . of their *fornications*" (Rev. ix : 20, 21).

"These are they which were not defiled with women" (Rev. xiv : 4).

The same pollutions are referred to in Rev. xxi : 8 and xxii : 15.

The "defiled garment" in Rev. iii : 4, and the "garment spotted by the flesh" in Jude 23, are intelligible only in the light of a literal interpretation.

#### THE THREAT.

Balaam was killed with the sword (Num. xxxi : 8, Josh. xiii : 22). The Nicolaitans are threatened with a like fate. "I will fight against them with the sword of my mouth" (Rev. ii : 16). This threat is carried out in chap. xix : 21, at the Lord's descent from heaven, when the followers of the Beast are "killed with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse."



(Continued from page 128)

The number four in Scripture, is always used in relation to the earth, and earthly things: the four winds of heaven; the four corners of the earth, etc. The very square in which the Israelites formed their wilderness camps, speaks of this number, with indisputably earthly connections.

The gospels are bound together by the number four, each being indispensable to the others.

When we come to the writings of the twelve, connected with Jerusalem and subjects of the kingdom, we find a parallel as far as numbers go. For if we have four writers giving us a history of the earthly ministry of the King, so we have four writers continuing His ministry to His earthly people, Peter, James, John, and Jude.

The number four again appears prominent in the Pauline epistles. The seven church epistles from his pen, divide themselves naturally into two groups; one of four, and one of three.

The first group of four—Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, and Thessalonians—covers his ministry up to Acts 28, *before* the last offer of the kingdom was officially made to Israel, and the threatened doom pronounced upon them. We notice in these epistles, the presence of many of those gifts and signs, which evidently ceased when the new era was inaugurated.

The last group of three—Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians—written *after* the events of Acts 28, contains no mention of these sign-gifts, and the field of action is transported from earth to the heavenly realms. God's dealings with a heavenly people commenced when His dealings with the earthly people ceased.

While we should not fall into the error of making everything of these numerical coincidences, on the other hand we should seek to guard against making *nothing* of them.

#### THE BOOK OF ACTS

We now come to briefly consider the book, which above all others, has been misinterpreted and misunderstood.

At the very threshold of religious inquiry, we should remember, that though a man's character may be everything that is good, his opinions may be anything but true. In other words, the goodness of a man's life does not prove the truthfulness of his doctrines. Some of the saintliest characters in the church have found themselves on opposite sides, as touching many doctrinal questions. Have not Calvinism and Arminianism arrayed the goodliest against each other?

Neither majorities nor minorities prove doctrines true. If majorities do so, then Eastern beliefs must be nearer to the truth than those of the West. If minorities do so, then for truth we must go to that system of belief which claims the fewest of adherents.

The antiquity of a belief does not prove it to be true. Confucianism antedates Christianity.

The modernity of a belief does not prove it to be false. It is but yesterday that popular teaching looked for church truth in Isaiah, to which folly, the chapter headings in the Authorized Version bear ample witness.

We should, in consequence, be influenced by nothing in our search after Truth, save the ruling of Scripture: the final test of a doctrine's correctness lying, not in whether it is new to us, but in whether it is new, or not, to the Word. Many truths could be enumerated, which, though new, as far as our conception of them is concerned, are in reality old, as touching God's revelation of them.

The book of Acts may be spoken of as being the Exodus of the New Testament. In fact not only have we a Pentateuch of the Law, but we also have a Pentateuch of the Spirit.

The divisions naturally arrange themselves thus:

Genesis—The Four Gospels

Exodus—The Acts

Leviticus—Hebrews

Numbers—James, Peter, John and Jude

Deuteronomy—The Apocalypse

The Acts is not a *commencement* but a *continuation*. The Gospels relate to us the preaching of the kingdom with the

king on *earth*. In the Acts we have the record of that preaching continued with the king in *heaven*.

The forty days intervening between the resurrection and ascension of Messiah were spent by Him in speaking of the "things pertaining to the kingdom of God." From this we may gather that the disciples were not left in ignorance as to the character of that period. Having thus instructed His disciples, He ascends from earth to the Father's throne, in keeping with Psalm 110:1.

The parting question of the disciples, and the Messiah's parting promise as to His return, stand forth prominently on the very threshold of the book. When the Holy Spirit selects just *one question* from the intercourse of the forty days, it must be that particular attention thus is directed toward it. We would, in addition, point out that the disciples' question helps to show the character of the forty days' communion and teaching. "The kingdom to Israel" is the burden of their thoughts, and the time of its restoration the root cause of their query.

But if the *time* of that restoration is kept secret from them, the *occasion* of it is shown to be the return to earth of the Messiah Whom the nation had murdered. The kingdom would be restored when the King returned. Messiah's return is definitely promised by Peter ("and He will send Jesus," Acts 3:20).

We learn from the prison epistles of Paul that the present economy was one of God's secrets. But when we study Pentecostal history, we cannot help noticing the manner in which it dovetails into Old Testament prophecy and promise, the Old Testament Scriptures being repeatedly appealed to by the twelve. Pentecost was no secret. It was a Jewish festival having particular reference to God's earthly people. John the baptist prophesied as to Pentecost. So also did the prophet Joel. Christ Himself promised it. Nothing secret is attached to it. Now Scripture does not contradict Scripture. Paul whose ministry was connected with a secret, does not contradict Peter whose ministry was connected with prophetic fulfillments. But their teachings and

ministries have reference to two different and distinct periods or ages.

Two cities are prominent in the history of the Acts; Jerusalem and Rome. Jerusalem is foremost in the earlier portions of the book; Rome in the latter two portions. In this we may trace the transition of the divine dealings, the Gentile capital looming into view, accordingly as the Jewish one recedes from it. Such transition took place very slowly, God, in His wonderful grace, hovering over the nation which had crucified His Son. The final offer of the kingdom to the Jews in Rome fittingly closes this remarkable book. Here we may trace a comparison between the New Testament Exodus and its Old Testament counterpart. For as the Exodus closes with the nation in the wilderness, shut out from the land through unbelief, so in the Acts the nation is left outside the Kingdom, excluded from it by the same wretched sin of unbelief.

#### THE PAULINE EPISTLES

The epistles to the Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, and Philemon were written from the Roman prison.

The remaining epistles, Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, and so on, were written prior to his imprisonment, and were, without exception, addressed to Gentile believers.

Bearing in mind that the personal ministry of the Messiah was confined to the land of Palestine, and limited to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," we may, perhaps, better understand why, in these epistles, no reference, or at least no emphasis is laid upon His earthly ministry.

Neither His miracles, His sermons, nor His interviews have any prominence in these letters. Everything seems to date from the cross. For instance, in Paul's definition of his gospel in 1 Corinthians 15, he mentions the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ as being its epitome, but he makes no mention of either the life or the ascension.

Contrasting Peter's ministry with that of Paul, the following division of the work of Christ, with reference to the various bodies benefited by it, may prove correct:

## THE JEW

*The life, death, burial, and resurrection of Christ*

## THE GENTILES

*The death, burial, and resurrection of Christ*

## THE SAINTS OF THE SECRET ECONOMY

*The death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Christ*

Peter's ministry does not overlook the fact that Messiah ascended, but it does not contain any teaching connected with it, save as it is covered by Old Testament scriptures such as Psalm 110, cited by Peter in Acts 2:34 and 35, "Sit thou on my right hand, *until* I make thy foes thy footstool." Hence, while Christ is spoken of as being in heaven, He is looked upon, from the standpoint of the twelve, as being there only for a little while ("until").

In Peter's ministry, earth is the sphere of Messiah's rule..

In Paul's ministry to the gentiles, as recorded in Corinthians, and so on, the sphere considered is the new creation, the new earth.

In Paul's ministry as contained in his prison letters, heaven alone is seen as the region of blessing.

We would here remind the reader of one of the first principles which Bible students should remember, namely, that while all Scripture is *for* us, not all Scripture is *about* us. The evil results arising from the evil purloining of scriptures having particular reference to other saints, of a different dispensation, and having a distinct hope and future, is only too easily seen in the confusions and contradictions of Christendom.

## HEBREWS

The epistle to the Hebrews stands uniquely alone. The difference between Hebrews and Ephesians is partly this: in Hebrews believing Jews are seen as being *represented in heaven*, but in Ephesians we are seen to be *seated there, in Christ*.

Hebrews commences, we might almost say, with Peter's confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Emphasis is laid upon Messiah's divinity with this

difference, that in Matthew it is divinity as connected with kingship; in Hebrews it is divinity as connected with priesthood.

While Hebrews may well be called the Leviticus of the New Testament, it is well to notice that priesthood is not predicated of the believers at Corinth, Galatia, or Rome. This is but right and fitting, for the priesthood is the prerogative of Israel. And while it is in place in the epistle to the Hebrews, it would be out of place in Paul's epistles to the Gentiles.

#### THE PETRINE EPISTLES

As already pointed out, we have four writers in this division of the New Testament: Peter, James, John, and Jude.

As far as three of these writers are concerned, we notice that their names are often found grouped together in the gospel accounts.

Pauline revelation finds no place in these writings, and instead of being addressed to Gentiles, as Paul's letters are, we find them uniformly directed to Jewish believers.

Peter plainly addresses the *diaspora*—the dispersed ones. The Jewish thought and style are very prominent in Peter's message. He reminds his readers thus: "For ye are not redeemed with corruptible things such as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers," which could not be said if Gentiles were the subjects of his teaching. He also speaks of his readers as being "an holy nation." Now while the church is spoken of as a body, or a temple, the only *national* people, considered as such by God, is the one nation, Israel, which He redeemed unto Himself.

James addresses himself thus: "Unto the *twelve tribes* scattered abroad." At the close of his epistle he gives directions for the healing of the sick. How often has ridicule been directed against modern Christians, who, failing to notice *the divine guide post* of the opening verse, have endeavored to bring into the present age matters pertaining to another economy!

The figures of the shepherd and the sheep, so prominent in John's gospel, and which Peter also uses in his epistles, are used with peculiar reference to the Jewish people. David, the shepherd king, is recognized by all Bible students as being one of the foremost types of the Messiah to be found in the Old Testament. The shepherd psalm is David's. The green pastures and waters of quietness all speak of the shepherd's care and solicitude for the flock. Isaiah too, speaks of, and for, the nation thus: "All we like sheep have gone astray." And here too Messiah is seen as the sacrificial Lamb, for "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter." In the New Testament the "Son of David" looks with compassion upon the multitude, they being as "sheep without a shepherd." He speaks of Himself as the "good Shepherd Who giveth His life for the sheep," and pointing to Him, the forerunner cried, "Behold the Lamb of God." In the closing chapters of the gospel of John, we read of the Master's command to Peter, "Feed My sheep!" We learn from the history in the Acts, backed by the evidence of the New Testament epistles, that Peter's ministry was confined to the Circumcision, the "sheep" of Old Testament prophecy. The words of Peter in his epistle, "Ye were as sheep going astray," will thus be seen to be in perfect harmony with the words of Isaiah, "All we like sheep have gone astray."

*(Continued on page 247)*

## EDITORIAL.

So abundant has been God's blessing upon our little magazine that we are constrained to publish abroad our thanksgiving, that it may redound yet more to His glory and encourage the hearts of those who have taken such a kindly interest in this effort to exalt His Name. We wish also to thank those who have sent us letters of commendation or encouragement or have subscribed or sent donations. We heartily appreciate unsolicited efforts many have made to spread the magazine among their friends. We shall be glad to furnish extra copies to those who wish to interest others, or who will send names to whom sample copies may be sent.

We are no less indebted to those who have sent criticisms and questions. Though we are not able, at present, to conduct a question column, the contents of future issues will be largely determined by the questions and criticisms we have received. In this way we shall be able to respond more satisfactorily than in a brief, dogmatic way.

Many questions which have arisen have already been treated in detail in the manuscripts which we hope to publish in due time. One, concerning the distinction between the Mystery of Christ and the Secret Economy, is briefly set forth in this issue, but will be more fully developed as the Divine Mysteries are unfolded. Another, concerning Repentance as distinguished from Faith, will be given a separate article in the next issue. Another, the great gulf between Pardon and Justification, will find its



proper place when the Mystery of the Gospel comes before us.

Many of these precious truths will be new to our readers, but we trust that their novelty will in no wise deter anyone from testing them by the most exact and searching scrutiny of the Word of God. We desire for all our readers the rank of Berean nobility (Acts xvii. 11) who "*examined (anakrinontes)* the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so."

Perhaps we shall add that such an examination should be founded upon the inspired original alone. Reference to versions or even the so-called "Authorized" may mislead and can only draw us back into the traditions which they reflect and perpetuate. Such excellent helps as the various analytical concordances make it a simple matter for a mere English reader to check what is put forth. We have found much more profit from a month's study of *one* of God's words than we should ever be able to extract from the whole vocabulary of theology.

And let us here protest that our confidence in *His* Word is such that the smallest word, or even the slightest variation of a word, if it is *His*, infinitely outweighs all human reasoning even though it be called "the truth" and be so skillfully harmonized with other truths, so well interwoven into a system of doctrine that it seems almost a sacrilege to call for its credentials.

We are not ashamed to stand for intense exactitude in dealing with the words of God, though this has often put us to shame. In His material creation the microscope is *unable* to find the limits of His infinite perfections. His spiritual creation is no less exact and perfect in its sphere. To shun exactness is to shun the light. It is, in measure, to reject the Word of God for the philosophy of man. We do so only to gloss over and conceal those

uncomfortable details which mock our theology and endanger our reputation before others. Nothing but a divinely implanted desire to please *Him* can deliver us from this plight.

We have rejoiced greatly to find that God has not only given the message, but that he has prepared hearts to receive it. Both are His work: both are essential. For, of ourselves, it is not only impossible to discover the truth in His Word, but we are so dense that, apart from His gracious operation, we cannot even recognize the light when we see it.

So we are utterly cast upon God; and we are glad that it is so, for here we can rest. He has given the message, and He is able to prepare hearts to hear it.

And here, at rest, and filled with thanksgiving, we can worship and say:

Who is like our God, who, in giving us riches unsearchable, has enriched Himself with surpassing praise?

### EPH. III. 3—9.

We have received a number of letters requesting an elucidation of Eph. iii. 3-9. Several inquirers ask why we, contrary to current interpretations, emphatically distinguish "the mystery of Christ" in Eph. iii. 4 from "the dispensation of the mystery" in Eph. iii. 9.

Old notions of every kind, and most of all religious notions, are very difficult to dislodge from the mind. It does not matter how unscriptural they may be, or illogical, or even absurd, if only they have been believed for generations, if only they have been entertained by good and learned men, they are reverently received, and become "fixed ideas." The vast majority of Christians are likely to adhere to what they have received. Nevertheless we are confident that the interpretation here advanced will commend itself, as time goes on, to an ever-increasing number of patient and unprejudiced seekers for truth; and most of all to those who wish to know *Him* in His manifold excellencies.

Let us at once exclude all questions of personality as having no weight in a quest after truth. Interpretations must stand wholly upon their merits, apart altogether from their exponents. Right views and grace of character, unfortunately, are not always co-existent: the presence or absence of the one does not imply the presence or absence of the other. Let it also be understood that *our* knowledge of the Word is neither the measure nor test of truth. While it is the function of the church to teach, it is the function of the Word to prove. The momentous question is not whether an interpretation agrees

with our ideas, but whether it agrees with the Scriptures. Neither must we discard a doctrine because it is new *to us*. The weighty point is not whether a doctrine is new to us, but whether it is new to the Scriptures. Many things which may be new to us may be old so far as the Scriptures are concerned. When Luther preached justification by faith many repudiated his teaching on the score of its being contrary to what was then in vogue. But we know to-day that while that doctrine was new to the theology of the church, it is as old as Abraham, so far as the Bible is concerned. The sacred writers were divinely inspired men, and therefore all their statements on a given subject are in full accord one with another; but the founders of ecclesiastical organizations were not inspired, and were not infallibly led into the knowledge of the truth any more than are teachers and preachers in the present day. The peculiar reverence frequently given to their opinions is not grounded in reason, and would often be amusing if it were not sad. We welcome every ray of light coming through any human instrumentality, and gladly use it for advancement in the knowledge of the truth; but we refuse to invest our time in stereotyping the views of predecessors and entrenching ourselves therein. Our concern is with the Scriptures themselves. Nothing save the ruling of the Bible should influence our decisions in matters of truth. We uphold the mother-right of exegesis to control dogmatics and the prerogative to test accepted doctrines by Scripture out of which more and more light is constantly breaking forth.

We hold that the Scriptures say what God intended they should, and the most simple and natural interpretation of their declarations is the best. The Ephesian letter, like other parts of the Bible, was given to reveal

and enlighten, and not to confuse and mystify. Its teaching is stated with sufficient clearness to be understood, if only we take its declarations as they stand and not import into them the conclusions which were handed to us. The various interpretations of the passage in question have all arisen out of the mistaken supposition that the Body is the secret disclosed in Ephesians. This idea has been taken to the Scriptures by students, who have tried to harmonize their statements with this preconceived notion; and the result has been—just what might naturally have been expected—vague, shadowy ideas, which do not clarify the subject to any rational mind.

It is a fact that ancient writers—Hebrew, Greek, Roman—and European writers who were influenced by the literature of antiquity, used lengthy and complex parenthetical sentences such as would be used by no modern writer in any language. This is not a difference in habits of thought, but a difference due to a more advanced mechanism of exhibiting literature to the eye. In punctuating, bracketing, and in paragraphing, the printed page does far more to assist the comprehension of the subject matter than was done by the manuscripts of antiquity or the earliest printed books. But the most important device of this kind is the "footnote." It is clear that the footnotes of modern books are no more than parentheses, removed to a distance so as not to disturb the main flow of the argument; their matter has an indicated place in the order of the thought, but their removal from the body of the text assists the mind to hold the train of thought suspended while the subordinate or additional matter is being taken in.

The recognition of the parenthesis in the passage before us enfolds the key to its right understanding. The parenthesis commences after the word "mystery" in the

middle of verse three, and extends to the end of verse five; thus:

" . . . (3) how that by revelation was made known unto me the mystery [as I wrote before in few words, (4) whereby, when ye read, ye can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ; (5) which in other generations was not made known unto the sons of men, as it has now been revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit]: (6) that the nations are fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel whereof I was made a minister . . . ."

For the convenience of readers we use throughout this article the text and terms of the Revised Version, contenting ourselves to remark that the Greek words translated "as" in ver. 3 and 5 are, respectively, *kathos* and *hos*, and that the verb "*paragrapho*" is also translated "evidently set forth" (Gal. iii. 1), and "ordained before" (Jude 4). We propose the following rendering of ver. 3b, as conveying more exactly the sense of the original, "in harmony with the above written brief notice . . . ." The reference is to ch. i. 9, 10, where "the mystery of God's will" respecting His Anointed is briefly set forth.

The wording and scope of the passage demand that vs. 3b-5 be treated as a parenthesis and that "the mystery of Christ" be regarded as distinct from "the dispensation of the mystery." What is predicated of one mystery excludes what is predicated of the other and makes identification impossible. To treat the two mysteries as being one and the same is to make language useless for purposes of revelation: it means to confuse (instead of distinguishing) what relates to Christ with what relates to His people: it means to destroy the interrelation and disturb the harmony of the Divine mysteries

and to make the Holy Spirit contradict Himself by asserting of the mystery in one verse what is denied in another verse at close proximity.

For the sake of clearness we will separate the parenthesis from the body of the text and present the two in parallel columns.

THE DISPENSATION OF THE  
MYSTERY  
(*ver. 3a. 6-9*)

" . . . the dispensation of that grace of God which was given me to you-ward; how that by revelation was made known unto me the mystery [ ] that the nations are fellow-heirs, fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of that grace of God which was given me according to the working of His power. Unto me who am less than the least of all saints, was this grace given, to preach unto the nations the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery which for ages has been hid in God who created all things . . ."

THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST  
(*vers. 3b, 4 and 5*)

as I wrote before in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ; which in other generations was not made known unto the sons of men, as it has now been revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit.

By thus removing the footnote to a distance we are able to see how radically the two mysteries differ in their features, the time and manner of their unfolding.

*The Dispensation of the Mystery* concerns the pres-

ent status of the nations: it was revealed to and through Paul alone: it had been positively withheld by God from previous generations: its burden is "that the nations are fellow-heirs, fellow-members of the body, fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel whereof I (Paul) was made a minister," in other words, that the nations are accorded equal share in the inheritance, equal rank in the "joint-body," and equal partnership in the promises of the gospel which Paul preached with those Israelites to whom they were united. These three items (not the Body) constitute the secret until then unknown and unknowable. The Reconciliation made the Jew one with the Gentile in condemnation, but left him priority in blessing (Rom. i. 16, ii. 9, 10). The Roman letter establishes the equality of Jew and Gentile in the matter of guilt (iii. 22), but unequivocally affirms the advantage of the Israelite (Rom. iii. 1, 2, ix. 1-5). The difference between Circumcision and Uncircumcision existed even in Justification (Rom. iii. 30). But with the inauguration of the dispensation of the mystery such distinction vanished and equality of blessing in the heavenly realms is proclaimed for both parties reached by Paul's gospel.

*The Mystery of Christ* relates to the reunion of the celestial and terrestrial domains under Messiah's headship: it was made known before, but not to the *extent* to which it is *now* made known: it was revealed to the other apostles and prophets as well as Paul, though he was granted special insight into it—a fact he is anxious to establish: "that, as ye read, ye may perceive *my* understanding in the mystery of Christ."

It is important to observe that Peter corroborates Paul in the matter of the parties to whom the two secrets were originally confided. He speaks of the unsearch-



able riches of Christ, that is, the heavenly honors which the Master wears (1 Pet. iii. 22), and thus shows that he too had been initiated into the "mystery of Christ." As to "the dispensation of the mystery" Peter speaks as something "hard to be understood" (2 Pet. iii. 15, 16) which his beloved brother Paul set forth in his writings, and thus confirms Paul's reiterated statement that he alone was to enlighten all as to that grand secret.

Once we perceive that the pivotal truth of the dispensation of the mystery is that the nations share the blessings of the gospel which Paul preached on equal footing, with an election out of Israel, we can appreciate the appropriateness of the parenthesis and grasp its illuminating force.

Until the writing of the Ephesian letter mankind never dreamed that Christ would rule in any other sphere save our planet. The Prophets, the Gospels and the Acts afford no vista other than this sublunary sphere. But after Israel's defection, after the favored nation refused Messiah's offer of the Kingdom and the Spirit's promise of His return—*after that* the heavens swing their portals open and our wondering eyes behold the Saviour whom the earth thrust out wearing the diadems and swaying the sceptre of celestial realms (Eph. i. 9, 10). *The revelation of Christ's celestial headship made possible the inauguration of an economy where Jew and Gentile are on even terms.* The counsels of God respecting the earth are founded on the political supremacy of Israel. Israel is the head: the nations are subordinate; their inheritance is apportioned according to the number of Israel's tribes (Deut. xxxii. 8). So long as the earthly Kingdom was proclaimed the equality of the nations with Israel was impossible. But when the earthly Kingdom receded to the distant horizon before the gaping chasm of

Israel's apostacy and the inheritance of believers is in consequence transferred from earth to heaven (to which Israel has not the slightest claim), God can, without "changing" His purpose, and without encroaching on Israel's portion or infringing her rights, make the nations the peers of Israel. The grand Dispensation of the Mystery, so stupenduous in the transcendent wealth of grace and glory toward us sinners of the nations, is "according to the purpose of the ages which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. iii. 11), and though posterior to other economies in point of revelation, yet—harmonizing with the Divine principle "the last shall be first, and the first last"—is prior to them in conception, antedating the disruption of the mundane system (Eph. i. 4).

From this we can see that, while the Mystery of Messiah differs radically from the Dispensation of the Mystery, it is in closest harmony therewith. The disclosure of a new realm leads to an unfolding of loftier honors and higher glories of God's Anointed with a corresponding elevation of the position of His people and a corresponding augmenting of their glory.

While the manifestation of the earthly glory is delayed; while the god of this age uses that delay as dust to blind Israel's eyes (2 Cor. iv. 4) and mockers recklessly press it into service to substantiate their bold challenge "where is the promise of his coming?" (2 Pet. iii. 4); while the advent of the earthly Kingdom seems a forlorn hope; while the Old Testament visions of restored Israel and glorified Jerusalem seem a vagary to the sinner and an utopia to the saint and both pile their arts in making them pictorial representations of poetic fancy—while this delay lasts those who have learned the exclusive place of Paul's ministry and gospel and feed on the delicious store dealt out in his writings are

rapt with him into the third heaven and soar with him—soar in spirit—in those peerless empyrean heights into which ere long translated by an eclectic resurrection in a transfigured body attuned to that supernal sphere, we shall find our permanent, better, brighter, happier, HOME, SWEET HOME.

## THE PATHWAY OF THE SON.

"Not so, Father!" were the words of Joseph (Gen. xlviii. 18). "Even so, Father!" were the words of Joseph's Lord (Matt. xi. 26). And this was the keynote of that precious life, "*even so, Father.*" Well may we pause and worship, when we remember that not only was this His expression, but that even yet it is His title. "These things saith the Amen." (Rev. iii. 14). Christ the Lord is the only One who ever truly said "Amen" to God—He is the *even so* of the Father.

The pathway of the Son is traced for us in the Gospel of the Beloved, in words chosen by the Spirit of Truth. As we meditate, may that same Spirit grant us illumination in divine things, "For what man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of a man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. ii. 11).

In John i. 1-34 we have a beautiful description of the Son of God, divided naturally into four sections, which we will look at briefly in their order. It will be seen from the analysis that the witness of John is the dividing line marking the close of each section.

### SECTION I. John i. 1-8.

Subject:—THE SON OF GOD IN ETERNITY.

v1.—His Godhood. v2.—His Christhood. In Eternity.

v3.—His relation to creation—*Power.*

v4.—His relation to mankind—*Life and Light.*

v5.—The creature's relation to Him—*Incomprehension*.

Verses 6-8—JOHN'S WITNESS.

## SECTION II. John i. 9-15.

Subject:—THE SON OF GOD IN TIME.

v9—The Son of God seen as *coming*.

v10—The Son of God seen as having *arrived*.

v11—The Son of God rejected.

v12—The Son of God accepted.

Verse 15—JOHN'S WITNESS.

## SECTION III. John i. 16-28.

Subject:—THE SON OF GOD IN GRACE.

v16-17—*Moses* and *Christ* contrasted.

v18—*Man* and *Christ* contrasted.

Vs. 19-28—JOHN'S WITNESS.

## SECTION IV. John i. 29-34.

Subject:—THE SON OF GOD UNVEILED.

Verses 29-31—Jehovah Jireh.

Vs. 32-34—JOHN'S WITNESS.

In John's witness we may readily perceive a continued ascent or progress of thought—the perfections of Messiah being so numerous and varied, that the Baptist can dwell upon but one at a time. His witness is fourfold:—

- (1) vs 6-8. Testimony to the *Character* of Christ.
- (2) v15. Testimony to the *Superiority* of Christ.
- (3) v27. Testimony to the *Holiness* of Christ.
- (4) v32-36. Testimony to the *Work* of Christ.

He first owns Him to be the Light, and finally confesses Him to be the Lamb. And when this gaunt son of the desert is last seen by us, it is in the attitude of a prophet gazing upon the grand climax of all prophetic visions; feasting his eyes and soul upon the Alpha and Omega of all prophetic utterances, seeking, before he

finally passes from the stage, to likewise focus the mind and attention of all upon the Lamb of God.

The first section dwells especially upon the *necessity* of Christ, that is, it has for its object the unveiling of the fact that Christ was *necessary*.

In verse 1—Necessary to *God*.

verse 4—Necessary to *man*.

verse 3—Necessary to *creation*.

verse 4—Necessary to *revelation*, and we add

verse 29—Necessary to *redemption*.

Christ ever was, and ever shall be the grand necessity of both God and man. Without Him it was impossible for God to reveal Himself to man. Without Him it was impossible for man to draw nigh unto God. Hence in the opening verse, in that dogmatic language which pertains to divine certainties, we are admitted into the secret of a past eternity,

“In the beginning was the word,  
and the word was with God,  
and the word was God”

First, *being*: next, *association*: lastly, *identity*. Three golden steps leading up to the throne of the Majesty on high.

In vs. 1, 2, we have His relation to the Godhead.

In verse 3, we have His relation to the Universe.

And who that has studied the record of His walk and work, but will at once recognize that nothing less than a universe unbounded could serve as platform on which to display His manifold graces and untold glories. Here the Word is seen as having been the

MAKER OF ALL THINGS;

In Hebrews i:3 He is shown to be the

UPHOLDER OF ALL THINGS;

In Colossians i:20 He is recorded as the

RECONCILIATION OF ALL THINGS.

And Hebrews i:2 makes known to us that He is to be the

HEIR OF ALL THINGS.

What a wondrous circle of Infinity! What a destiny for the Man of Sorrows! What grace that brings us into fellowship with Him in His glories!

But the inspired writer pauses in his description of the Logos, to note the relation of the creature to Him, which is—we think inadequately—expressed in the word “incomprehension.” “The darkness comprehended it not.” What is comprehension? It is the encompassing of a truth or thought in its entirety by the mental powers of man. Its symbol is a circle. What is apprehension? It is the laying hold on a part of that thought the entirety of which our minds cannot encompass. Its symbol is a hand. Let us now look at some of the renderings of our verse.

J. N. Darby's translation:—“The light appears in darkness and the darkness apprehended it not.”

Rotherham:—“The light in the darkness is shining, and the darkness of it laid not hold.”

R. Godett:—“The light is shining in the darkness, and the darkness received it not.”

R. V. Margin:—“The darkness overcame it not.”

In our humble opinion the latter approaches the truth more nearly than do the other renderings. In their natures light and darkness are eternally opposed in deadly conflict. It is not therefore that darkness merely lacked the sympathy to lay hold upon light, or merely lacked the power to comprehend it, but that instead in the very nature of darkness existed that spirit of bitter enmity and hate which could neither give nor receive any quarter from its opponent.

"The Light." This speaks of revelation. Light has come to man in various ways. It has ever shined in the works of God's creative power. "The heavens declare . . . the firmament sheweth . . . Day unto day uttereth speech." The Universe is vocal with truth: Creation luminous with light. But what is light to a blind and sightless eye? What is music to an ear gone deaf? Or taste to a tasteless tongue? But He is more than Light, He is also Life. Light alone may reveal the ruin and disclose the chaos of sin. Its beams may fall upon the corpse, and unveil the gaping chasm of the grave. But Life flows in, and with the alchemy of divine power robs the grave of its prey, and changes the prison with a touch into the very paradise of God. "Light?" we think of Sinai, and the tables of the Law. "Life?" we think of the empty tomb and the folded garments of the grave, emblems of the victory of the Unconquered One. "The darkness overcame Him not."

Verse 6. The testimony of John. In contemplation of such an One as his pen had just described, the beloved disciple forgets himself, as well indeed he might. In the presence of such glory the flesh is withered out of sight. So can he afford to write of another John without aught to distinguish that John from the John who was writing of him. Little cares he for such distinctions, a sight of the glory has blinded him to all else save the Majesty of the Prince of glory.

Part II. Verses 9-15. We pass this over merely drawing attention to the change of title recorded here. In eternity He is the Logos. In time He is the Son. In birth He is the Only-Begotten. In resurrection He is the First-Born.

Part III. Verses 16-17. "His fulness." This is the fulness of verse 14,—“full of grace and truth.” The



Law was not a full exposition of God. The Son alone rounded out the entire circle of revelation. He revealed the *Father*.

"Grace for grace." This does not mean "grace upon grace," as if it spoke of various *graces*, but as Rotherham puts it: "favor over against favor," or as we might render it: "grace corresponding to grace." The lesson taught is this: the peace I have now is the same in character as He has; the love I have now in my heart is the same in nature, though not in quantity, as that love which reigns in His.

"He hath declared." Or "He hath *interpreted*." The Person and Pathway of the Son was the *translation* of the Divine feelings into the language of humanity. Apart from Him the heart of God could not pronounce, or articulate itself to man.

And, as we follow the Pathway of the Interpreter, truly we might say that "deep calleth unto deep." We saw Him on the Throne of God, we followed the path as it led Him out of the Glory down into the Virgin's womb. We have seen Him as the Son of God, and now we are introduced to the great climax of His abnegation, for we learn from the words of the "Voice" that here before us stands the Lamb of God—Heaven's Sacrifice for the World's sin.

"The sin of the world." Bright and happy are the thoughts which have entertained our minds and have called forth the worship of our hearts. What a contrast here! As our minds halted in very feebleness before the glory (v. 14), so do our minds now halt again before the guilt. On the one hand we have gazed *up* into the presence of the Almighty; on the other we are now called upon to look *down* into the abyssmal depths of depravity and degradation. No depth of iniquity too far

beneath the plane of righteousness but that man can sink to and revel in its putrid filth. No crime too awful, no deed too desperate for man to adventure on. We listen to man's drivel about his "innate divinity" but in his actions we see more devil than deity. And the history of the ages is lurid with the light of hell, and not as angels, not even as men, do the children of Adam appear upon the records of Time, but rather in the garb of fiends of the Pit doing the work of damnation upon themselves and upon their fellows.

But—wonder of all wonders—the sin is borne away. The Light shines down into the very deepest depth of such an Inferno. *Such* guilt, *such* crime is laid upon the head of the Guiltless, and in grace divine the Lamb of God bears into oblivion the "sin of the world."

"EVEN SO, Father! Christ said "YES" to the awful horrors of the Cross. Let us, as we close this brief meditation upon the pathway of the Peerless One of God's Glory, gather together in spirit around that place where He was numbered with the transgressors, and remembering how He poured out His soul unto death, pour out our hearts in praise unto Him that loveth us, and hath loosed us from our sins in His blood. So shall we too feel constrained to join in that great ascription of Heaven's hosts: "Unto HIM be glory and dominion for ever and ever."

## THE DIVINE MYSTERIES.

### THE SECRET ECONOMY.

#### THE PRAYER TO GOD

"Therefore, I also, having heard of your consistent faith in the Lord, Jesus, and your love for all the saints, do not cease returning thanks for you, making mention in my prayers of my wish that the God of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the Father glorious, may give you a wise and revealing spirit, your heart's eyes being illumined with an appreciation of Himself. \* \* \*"

The two prayers of this epistle are two wings of an eagle which soars into the empyrean, bearing us upon its pinions.

We do not know the proper thing to pray for (Rom. viii. 26). But here we have God's Spirit Himself inditing a petition! It is the unceasing prayer of Paul; yet at the same time it is God's expressed desire on our behalf.

Here is a prayer for us to pattern after! How pleased He would be if we followed the spirit of these petitions!

First of all the apostle returns thanks for what he had already heard concerning them. He will not need to ask for faith and love, but rather present these before God upon the golden altar of incense.

He gives thanks for their faith in their Master. How it warms the heart of a master to see that his slaves have confidence in him! An exquisite and delicate distinction lies in the title which the apostle uses. Their faith *Christward* is part of the following petition. He prays for that.

The blessing for the nations hitherto was restricted to the great truth that though He was only *Israel's* Messiah, He was *Master* of all nations. This they had consistently believed. But beyond this they could not go. For this the apostle rendered his thanksgiving.

He gave thanks also for their love to all the saints. And does this please God?

Fain would the writer of these lines repeat the apostle's thanksgiving! But, alas! how rare these spiritual graces have become! Faith in our great Master seems at its ebb. Love to *all* the saints—where can we find that? But great is our gratefulness to Him for the few who furnish a pinch of incense on His glorious altar! ,

He gives thanks for faith and love; for what then, does he pray?

He asks for A SPIRIT—Wisdom's spirit—Revelation's spirit. This one brief request is the sum of his petition.

This is not a prayer "for the Spirit." Their title to this letter and to the allotment it conveyed was the Spirit by which they had been already sealed.

But they had God's spirit in measure. The capacity it gave them was not unlimited, like our Master. This prayer is to the effect that its limits might be enlarged in the direction of wisdom.

God's Spirit alone can give capacity to enter into Divine affairs. God's wisdom would be concealed from them apart from this spirit, and such amazing multifarious, wonderful wisdom would need an especial endowment, an overflowing measure, an enlarged capacity, to take it in.

And Paul has something to tell them direct from God himself, which not only displays His wisdom, but was so novel, so different, so far above the reach of mortal mind, that their spirits not only needed enlargement, but

an entirely new apartment must be added, as it were, to house it properly. He prays for a spirit to accommodate the new disclosure, the novel revelation.

This request is quite superfluous if those to whom he is writing had received these truths from him while he was amongst them in person. He had declared the whole counsel of God to the Ephesians (Acts xx: 27), but the purposes he now unfolds were quite unknown to them during the period of his personal ministry.

Before proceeding, will the reader kindly charge his heart to pray this prayer, too? Not for himself alone, but for all his fellow saints, not omitting the writer of these words?

To Whom shall we go for these spiritual gifts?

Who, may we first inquire, has them in fullest measure?

Christ—the Anointed—as His title indicates, is spiritually peerless. Our Master, Jesus, is the Christ.

Where did He get His anointing?

From His God.

And so we, too, may go to His God, for He is become our God, too. But since we have His spirit, we are related to Him by a closer tie than that of Creator. He was Messiah's Father, as well as His God, and delighted to call Him His beloved Son.

By the grace glorious we, too, have become His sons.

So He is *our* Father, and in such splendid style was this relationship conceived, that we may well entitle Him "The Father Glorious."

To Him we go for this spirit which will illumine our dark hearts and give us such an undimmed, unobstructed, clear perception of Himself that our further flight will be unhindered.

## GOD'S CALL.

"For you to perceive what the prospect is which His invitation presents."

The degraded dribble which we hear around us about "going to heaven" is Satan's counterfeit of God's most marvelous grace.

Before the time of Paul's imprisonment in Rome, who dared to dream of dwelling in the heavens? True, indeed, that *every* good and perfect gift was "heavenly." Every blessing, even for Israel, has its source above, and, like the New Jerusalem, comes *down* from God. But because they are "heavenly" it does not follow that they are found only in heaven.\* That an assembly of His saints should ascend to their source and enjoy them there was both beyond reason and unrevealed (2 Pet. i. 11, 1 Jno. iii. 9.)

The hope of the Circumcision was to pass through the great tribulation to a renewed earth, with bodies sinless and glorious, but essentially unchanged.

But for those in "Christ Jesus" Paul reveals the secret that the bodies of those who did not die would none the less be changed in the resurrection from an earthly to a heavenly stamp. A body dominated by the soul, which is in the blood, would be changed to a bloodless spiritual body, and not only this, but their resurrection would take place *before* God's wrath is poured out upon the reeling

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\*"Heavenly" in the genitive case denotes the *source* from which anything proceeds. An example in point is the "heavenly calling" (Heb. iii:1) which, like the "heavenly gift", (Heb. vi:4) is not the place of its enjoyment, but refers to the fact that He Who once spake on earth, then spake from heaven (Heb. xii:25).

Not so in Ephesians. Here the dative is used and the reference is to the *location* of the blessing itself.

earth. They (who trusted in Christ Jesus) would be taken out of harm's way, caught up into the air, so to be forever with the Lord—(1 Cor. xv. 51, 52, 1 Thess. iv. 17).

These were true symptoms of the truth which now has finally come out.

Only a spiritual body, bearing heaven's impress, glowing with His glorious effulgence, would harmonize with a spiritual, heavenly environment. To be forever with the Lord, before they knew of Christ's *heavenly* dominion, would almost seem to bring them back to the earth for the thousand years. In this, unlike Israel, they could have no allotment, but if He is to make earth His abode and the foundation of His throne, then they must needs be with Him there.

They did not know that, *as the Son of God*, His spiritual domains and glories eclipsed His earthly honors; that earth is but the footstool of His feet.

Nor dare we dream that He for one moment drops the sovereignty of Israel and of all the earth. These lesser dignities—the highest that the earth can give—take a subordinate place. His spiritual supremacy extends from the Throne Magnifical to the utmost limits of far Tartarus.

Israel shall be blessed with Him in His earthly sovereignty. Through them His government of the earth will be administered.

We are blessed with Him in His heavenly sovereignty. Through us His universal empire will be administered.

This is our expectation!

He has called us for this high honor!

#### OUR GLORIOUS WEALTH.

"What a wealth glorious is His allotment among the saints."

High as the heavens are above the earth, so high are our blessings above the most magnificent mundane display of wealth or glory.

It is intensely human to desire property and position. Men literally *spend* their lives in pursuit of them. And then, too often, when they are within our grasp, they afford but little real satisfaction, they cannot shield their owners from death and corruption. But we must await, by thousand years, for her still rarer bliss and beauty in the golden jeweled city, Holy Jerusalem, to appreciate the sum of earthly blessedness.

But even this is glory terrestrial. Celestial glory secures possession and a position so surpassing, so supreme, that human, earth born speech has hardly the capacity for its expression.

For if a sinless earthly scene is almost incomprehensible how much harder to grasp the blessings of a sphere which we have never entered yet?

Jehovah has apportioned the earth among the nations. He has allotted to Israel the choicest land, the hub of the earth hemisphere, and the place of sovereign rule. Likewise to us, in Christ, He has allotted the choicest portion and the chiefest place in heaven, and in consequence in all the universe!

How like our God to do this! For did we not excel all in poverty and degradation? Which of His intelligences were so poor and so contemptible as our rebel race?

But nothing less than raising us from the depths of despair to the pinnacle of glory would serve to blaze forth His brilliancy.



## THE ACTS.

### THE SAMARITANS. THE CALL OF SAUL (VII-IX. 30).

The lapidation of Stephen was a signal for onset. A great persecution arose against the church at Jerusalem. All were scattered abroad throughout adjacent regions, except the apostles. The events at the metropolis were of evil omen. Its defiant attitude was an apparent index of popular sentiment. The outlook for the Dispersion and the Nations, dependent as they are for blessing on the Jews in the land, became fearfully gloomy. Just then two notable events relieve the tension and dispel the dark forebodings inspired by the terrific pace of Israel's downgrade course.

Since the division of the Kingdom under Solomon's successor Judah and Ephraim had been at variance. "And there was war between them continually" is the weird repetition of the chronicler as he traces their fortunes under David's successors (1 Ki. xiv. 30, xv. 6, etc.). Hezekiah's attempt at reconciliation proved abortive (2 Chr. xxx. 1-10). The survivors of the ten tribes mixed with the various nationalities which the Assyrian kings placed in the cities of Samaria. These peoples were instructed in the law of Jehovah by an Israelitish priest residing at Bethel. Their religion was a strange medley of deities and their doctrine a mixture of Judaism and heathenism of various stripes. "They feared Jehovah, and served their own gods, after the manner of the nations from whom they had been carried away" (2 Ki.

xvii. 33). The return of the captives under Zerubabel instilled new vigor into the old time animosity which continued unabated down to the time of our Lord (Ezra iv. 1-4, Neh. iv. 1-5). The Samaritans (as their name now becomes) were ostracised, regarded as aliens, and treated contemptuously by the Jews (Jno. iv. 9, Luke xvii. 18, Jno. viii. 48). And yet, alienation from the Jewish commonwealth did not wholly extinguish Messianic expectations (Jno. iv. 25). They readily received the Christ, and some, like the woman of Sychar and the cleansed leper, exhibited a faith not found in Israel (Jno. iv., Luk. xvii. 11-19).

Albeit the Master had sojourned among them, yet their villages were excluded from the itinerary of the twelve (Matt. x. 5). After the resurrection, however, He included them in the charge to the disciples (Acts i. 8). The murder of Stephen, which was the concrete expression of Jerusalem's hostility toward Messiah, furnished the occasion to act upon the Saviour's mandate.

They that were scattered abroad went about preaching the word. Philip went forth to Samaria, and these outcasts gave heed with one accord to the glad tidings which he preached. The portals of mercy swung wide open before them.

The multitude gave heed with one accord unto the things that were spoken by Philip. The reception of the Kingdom tidings in Samaria marks an important turning point in the history of the Acts. Henceforth Divine mercy takes its Gentileward flight on the wings of Jewish hate.

The other consequential event intimately connected with the tragic death of Stephen is the emergence of a personage destined to play thenceforward a leading part in the furtherance of the Divine counsels.

Saul of Tarsus, a zealous young Pharisee trained at the feet of Gamaliel, rises to prominence with meteoric suddenness. Nursed in the lap of tradition, this obdurate religionist considered the persecution of renegades a sacred duty. He felt a very frenzy of hate. Breathing threatening and slaughter, like the snorting of a war-horse before the battle, he went from house to house to search out and drag forth to punishment the adherents of the new heresy. He made havoc of the church at Jerusalem, spoiling it like a captured city. His ardor, dash and indomitable energy pushed him to the front as Messiah's chiefest antagonist.

The persecution rapidly spread from Jerusalem to Judaea, Samaria, and Galilee; but Saul's enterprising spirit was not content with the limits of Palestine. He dreamed greater things, for hate, like love, longs for expansion. He sought and obtained letters from the central authorities to take as prisoners to Jerusalem any whom he found to belong to the "Way." Determined to stamp out the very mention of the Nazarine's name, he set out for Damascus. In sight of the city, he is suddenly overpowered and dazed by a celestial brilliancy which eclipsed the noonday sun. Messiah has come down and intercepted his way. Saul's provocations invited a fearful fate. He had wished himself accursed from Jesus! (Rom. ix. 3.) Behold him now face to face with the One he has defied! With bated breath we watch the encounter of Israel's august Sovereign with His archenemy, expecting him to be hurled into abysmal darkness. But, instead of a furious blast, we hear a gentle, plaintive moan, soft as the zephyr.

Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

The chief of sinners is not consumed by the awful heat of His jealous rage: his stony heart is melted in the

crucible of love. Saul courted damnation, but got grace instead. Truly here is something new under the sun! Search the Scriptures and see, where is there any thought of mercy to a high-handed rebel before the Lord's appearance to Saul? The Old Testament denies the thought; the Gospels give no license to it; the twelve do not even hint at it. They know of no leniency to those who turn traitors to their King: they deal out justice; stern, even justice: the obedient are rewarded, the enemies are either slain in His presence, crushed under His footstool or delivered to the tormentors. Here, then, is a new departure, a novel way, unheard and undreamed of before: an opponent receives favor, and that far in excess of the measure of punishment due his crime.

Yet, startling as this is, there is something more startling still. When on earth the Master never set His foot outside the Holy Land. His mission was confined to the strayed sheep of the house of Israel (Matt. xv. 24). Accordingly, sending forth the twelve to proclaim the Kingdom, He said: "Go not into any way of the Gentiles, and enter not into any city of the Samaritans" (Matt. x. 5). But now He appears to Saul on foreign soil, far away from the holy city, among the hated *goyim*! Through this move transpire Messiah's intentions toward the regions beyond. The nations must praise God for His mercy. Jehovah's name shall be great among the heathen (Mal. i. 14). To enlighten these is Israel's exalted mission. But when, unstrung through apostasy, she becomes unfit for her functions, He called one of her sons to be a teacher of the nations in faith and truth (1 Tim. ii. 7), to supply that which was lacking in Israel's service toward the nations.

Every circumstance of Messiah's wondrous appear-

ance to Saul of Tarsus presages a new departure. The declaration that he is a chosen vessel to bear the Master's name before nations and kings (ix. 15) points to the remote corners of the earth; his self-baptism at Ananias's direction enhances the distinct and unique character of his apostleship (xxii. 16); his preaching at Damascus of Jesus as the Son of God (ix. 20) is the opening wedge which brought blessing to the nation.

#### THE SECOND CYCLE (IX. 31—XII).

While the Jews were stoning Stephen, he, like the crucified Master, prayed for his murderers.

Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.

In consequence of this prayer mercy still lingers over Israel, and the preaching of the Kingdom is resumed.

The one absorbing event of this section of the book is the extension of the proclamation to the proselytes in the land.

There were two classes of proselytes: the proselytes of righteousness, and the proselytes of the gate. The first, through circumcision and conformity to the Jewish ritual, became incorporated with the Jewish people. The latter renounced idolatry and acknowledged the God of Israel as Creator, but were not circumcised and, in the observance of the ceremonial law, restricted themselves to a few leading points, and so were regarded as outside the fellowship of Jewish communities.\*

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\*Leander and Shürer have vainly striven to relegate the proselytes of the gate to the realm of mythology. Shürer admits having found one mention of them, and affirms the existence of two classes of proselytes: (a) God-fearing Gentiles who adopted the Jewish (i. e. monotheistic and imageless) form of worship, but were not circumcised; and (b) those who were circumcised (Shürer, *Jewish people*, II. 2, 287-326).

That Cornelius was a proselyte of the gate is apparent from the description of the man. "A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, who gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always \* \* \* well reported of by all the nation of the Jews" (Acts x. 2, 22).

Here are five weighty identification marks.

(1) "*A devout man.*" This is the common designation of a proselyte (Acts xiii. 50, xvii. 4, 17).

(2) "*One that fears God,*" literally, "a fearer of God." The "fearers of God," otherwise "worshippers of God," which are carefully distinguished from the "men of Israel," are proselytes (Acts xiii. 16, 26, xvi. 14, xviii. 7).

In the Old Testament the "fearers of God" (*yare yehovah*) appear as a third class of worshippers, distinct from the house of Aaron and the house of Israel (Ps. cxv. 9-11, cxviii. 2-4, cxxxv. 19, 20). In all these places the Septuagint renders *yare yehovah* by "*hoi phoboumenoi ton Kurion.*"

(3) "*Who gave much alms to the people.*" This was done in recognition of Israel's supremacy, as we may glean from the case of the centurion (Luke vii. 5) and the offering which the nations sent to Jerusalem through Paul (Rom. xv. 25-29).

(4) "*And prayed to God always.*" He invoked the name of Israel's God. Solomon's dedicatory prayer implored Jehovah to hear and grant the petitions of the men

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Whether "proselyte of the gate" is a later term makes no matter: *the distinction which it conveys is actual and historic.* The proselytes proper were circumcised (Acts ii:10, vi:5), the "fearers of God" were not circumcised (Acts xi:3). The discussions on this subject are mere pedantic hair-splittings about terms.

of other nations who invoked His Name. "Moreover, concerning the stranger, that is not of thy people Israel, when he shall come out of a far country for thy name's sake; (for they shall hear of thy great name, and of thy mighty hand, and of thy stretched out arm;) when he shall come and pray toward this house; hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for" (1 Ki. viii. 41-43). The case of Cornelius is a remarkable instance of Jehovah's condescension. "Thy prayers and thine alms are gone up for a memorial before God" (Acts x. 4).

(5) *"Well reported of by all the nation of the Jews."* This report was based, as with the centurion at Capernaum, on the fact that, though of another nationality, he was their co-religionist and sympathizer (Luke vii. 4, 5, Acts x. 2).

Having settled this vital point, we may proceed to consider the circumstances attending this new departure in apostolic ministry.

Some years ago, a certain government ordered two of its agents, stationed at the time in different cities, to proceed abroad and unravel an imbroglio. The detectives were not acquainted with each other, so a parchment was rent in twain, and each received one half bearing the government seal. In the course of a few months, the agents met at a watering place. Suspecting each other's identity, both produced their credentials, and when the torn halves of the parchment were brought together, the zig-zaged edges coalesced.

The admission of proselytes was brought about by a similar process. Peter and Cornelius—one at Joppa, the other at Cæsarea—are divinely warned; but their monitions are interdependent. Cornelius must await Peter's arrival for further instructions; while Peter, perplexed

by the strange vision, began to perceive its significance only with the coming of the soldiers from Cæsarea. The meeting in the house of Cornelius welded the sundered parts of the duplex vision and produced in Peter, as it did later in his disputants, a certainty transcending all conjectures and superior to all changes of human feeling. The Jews were jealous of Jehovah. They wanted to monopolize His compassions. They could not bear to see the love promised to them alone, and cherished by them, lavished equally upon her heathen foes and tyrants. With magnificent reserve Peter's vision vindicated God's love to the jealousy of those who claimed it for themselves alone; and told into the prejudiced faces of those "believers" that out there, beyond the Covenant, in the great world lying in darkness, there live, not beings created for ignorance and hostility to God, elect for destruction, but men with consciences and hearts, able to turn at His word and to hope in His mercy—that to the farthest ends of the earth, and even on the high places of unrighteousness, Truth and Mercy work just as they do within the Covenant. See how, later on, Peter gives expression to this before the assemblage at Caesarea. "Ye yourselves know how it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to join himself or come to one of another nation; and yet unto me *hath God showed* that I should not call any man common or unclean \* \* \* Of a truth I perceive *that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him*" (Acts x. 28, 34, 35).

Peter, while praying, beheld the heaven opened, and a great sheet, containing fourfooted beasts and wild beasts and creeping things and fowls, was let down by the four corners upon the earth. And there came a voice, "Rise, Peter: kill and eat."



"Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean," returned Peter.

"What God hath cleansed, make not thou unclean," rejoined the voice (Acts x. 9-16).

The sheet includes all the dominion of glory in the eighth Psalm. The animals are the same in both cases (Ps. viii. 6-9, Acts xi. 6). As David's Son, Messiah rules over the house of Israel; as Son of Man, His dominion extends to earth's remotest bounds, embracing Jew and Gentile in its universal sweep. "Ask of me, and I will give the nations for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession" (Ps. ii. 8). Since the nations parted company with God at Shinar, they were suffered to walk in their own ways (Gen. xi. 1-9, Acts xiv. 16). But they, too, will be reclaimed from darkness, prove Jehovah's goodness, and find repose under the protecting wing of Israel's God.

The glad tidings which God sent to the children of Israel are extended to these men of the nations on the ground of Messiah being "Lord of all" (Acts x. 36). "Is God of the Jews only? is he not of the Gentiles also? Yea, of the Gentiles also; if so be that God is one" (Rom. iii. 29-30). The circumcised proselytes had shared the blessings dispensed at Pentecost equally with the Jews (Acts ii. 10, vi. 5). Now the proselytes of the gate, without circumcision or law-keeping, have come in for a share. Like the Jews they are preserved through wrath by repentance and baptism (Acts x. 48, xi. 18); though in their case water baptism followed, instead of preceding Spirit baptism.

The admission of the nations to Israel's board was no secret. Their unity with Jehovah's people was prefigured by the annual offering of two loaves baked with leaven on the Feast Weeks (Lev. xxiii. 15-21), and pre-

dicted by every prophet and seer. "Neither let the stranger, that hath joined himself to Jehovah speak, saying, Jehovah will surely separate me from his people; neither let the eunuch say, I am a dry tree. For thus saith Jehovah, of the eunuchs that keep my Sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and hold fast by my covenant: unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a memorial and a name better than of sons and of daughters; I will give an everlasting name that shall not be cut off" (Isa. lvi. 3-8).

The meeting at Caesarea shows how this was brought about by the establishment of a spiritual unity. Why should not these proselytes become one with the baptized company at Jerusalem, since God made no distinction between them, giving them the gift of holy spirit? (Acts xv. 9).

One more point demands attention. Rehearsing to those of the circumcision the matter of Cornelius, Peter said: "And he (Cornelius) told us how he had seen the angel standing in his house, and saying, Send to Joppa, and fetch Simon, whose surname is Peter; who shall speak unto thee words, whereby thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house." The salvation in point can only be ascertained from the sermon which he preached.

The sermon is in three parts:—

I. ver. 36-39. The ministry of Christ in the land of Israel, culminating in the cross.

II. ver. 40-42. The resurrection of Christ and His charge to the apostles to preach Him to the people (Israel) as Judge of the living and the dead.

III. ver. 43. The witness of the prophets concerning pardon of sins by faith in Him.

The pivotal points are two: the Master's charge to proclaim Him to Israel as "Judge of the living and the

dead"; "pardon of sins by faith in Him" certified by the prophets.

When the Kingdom as proclaimed by the Master had been rejected, He changed His plain proclamation into parabolic teaching. Thenceforth He never spoke to the multitude except by parables. The keynote of these parables is the judgment of the impenitent.

The Israelites are rated according to their attitude toward Messiah. This solemn scrutiny is depicted in the parables of the *Husbandmen* (Matt. xxi. 33-44) and the *Nobleman* (Luk. xix. 11-27) and echoed in Peter's pentecostal sermon which holds before the "men in Israel" the Redeemer's murder (Acts ii. 23), and His exaltation at God's right hand, till His enemies be made the footstool of His feet (Acts ii. 34, 35). Perceiving themselves to be "the enemies" the crowds cried out, "What shall we do?" and Peter exhorted them to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the pardon of sins, so as to save themselves from the fate reserved for the crooked generation (Acts ii. 40, Deut. xxxii. 5).

The Nations are judged according to their treatment of the King's heralds, who had warned them of His coming to judge the earth (Matt. xxv. 31-46). There is nothing in this judgment about redemption, nothing about the ultimate fate of the disobedient. That is settled at the Great White Throne. The question at stake is entrance into Millennial bliss, and the surest way to secure admission will be to shield and help His people Israel. When the King returns, the nations which loved the Israelites are preserved for blessing, while those that hated them are cast into Tophet (Isa. lxvi, 24). The Prophets assure the eunuch and the stranger who has joined himself unto the Lord exemption from the fate awaiting the disobedient and part in Israel's blessing (Isa. lvi.)

Cornelius invoked Jehovah's name and helped His people, his alms and prayers had come up for a memorial before God, hence he is assured of salvation from the judgment enacted at Messiah's return and of a share in Israel's rich portion.

As we draw near the close of this period nocturnal shadows fall over the scene. In consonance with the Master's order the testimony had been sounded in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and Samaria. But the faithless nation only hardens in rebellion, and will not be warned nor turned to welcome back her King. One instance follows another, showing the fulfillment of Isaiah's word until there was no remedy. Like the testimony in Jerusalem, the preaching in the land ends in rejection. Civil and ecclesiastical authorities combine their strength against the congregation. Herod leads the opposition. James is killed with the sword. Peter is imprisoned and liberated by Divine intervention.

Never did Israel encounter foes more dangerous than in her Idumean dynasty of the Herods. Anti-Messianic feeling perpetuated itself in their family with savage relentlessness.

The first Herod slew the babes of Bethlehem (Matt. ii. 16-18).

The second Herod sought to kill Him (Luke xiii. 31), and afterward took occasion of His sentence to bury His enmity with Pilate (Luk. xxiii. 12).

The third Herod filled up the trio and reached the climax (Acts xii. 20-23).

The Jews in the land have rejected the Spirit's ministry. Will the Dispersion receive it?

## THEY THAT DWELL ON THE EARTH.

This apocalyptic phrase has given rise to diverse interpretations. Most of these, however, invest it with a significance other than that conveyed by the combination of words.

The commonly accepted application of the phrase to those rejecting the gospel in this dispensation is at variance with the context and fraught with difficulties. Why, for instance, should the everlasting gospel be preached to them?

Satan's minion comes "with power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceit of unrighteousness for them that are perishing because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God sendeth them a working of error, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be judged who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thes. ii. 9-12). Lie, not truth; woes, not glad tidings, will be sent to those who now turn a deaf ear to the appeals of grace.

We prefer to take the phrase *au pied de la lettre* and elucidate it by reference to the context and the scope of the book. But what have we to steady our thoughts amidst the jarring, discordant interpretations floating about us? There are two supports: (1) the meaning of the phrase, and (2) its employment.

First of all, the Greek word *ge* combines the cognate ideas which we express by "earth" and "land." Therefore its import must be determined by the scope of the passage and the immediate or remote context.

It is clear that where our versions render it "land" or "country" it could bear no other meaning, since it is restricted to specified localities, such as "land of Judah" (Matt. iii. 6), "land of Israel" (Matt. ii. 20, 21), "land of Zebulun" (Matt. iv. 15), "land of Sodom and Gomorrah" (Matt. x. 15, xi. 24).

That "the land," without such qualifiers as Judah or Israel, sometime refers to Palestine is witnessed by the context of each occurrence (Matt. ix. 26, 31, xxiii. 23, xxiv. 30, xxvii. 45, Mark xv. 33, Luk. iv. 25, xxi. 33, etc. ). Luke xxiii. 44 also belongs to this category. The tenor of the narrative and the parallel passages insist on the reading "land" (Matt. xxvii. 45, Mark xv. 33).

Matt. xxiv. 30 and Rev. i. 7 likewise demand the reading "land," both referring to Zechariah's portrayal of the sorrow and mourning of Israel's tribes gathered in their land at the time of Messiah's return (Zech. xii. 10-14).

In Luke xxi the same word is rightly rendered "land" in ver. 23, and "earth" in ver. 25; because the former views the coming tribulation in relation to the favored land and people, whereas the latter views it in relation to the nations and the earth at large. Thus the phrase is more accurately rendered "they that dwell in the land."

Secondly, "they that dwell in the earth" are distinguished from "every nation and tribe and tongue and people" (xiv. 6). Herein lies the solution of the problem. Only *one* nation is thus singled out from every other nation: only *one* land is thus differentiated from every other land. *That nation is Israel; that land is Palestine.*

This fixes for us the translation "land" and proves that the phrase is a sobriquet of the renegade Jews which will then reside in the land of their fathers. And the various

texts where the "dwellers in the land" appear give us a connected view of the part which apostate Israel will play in the great transactions of the Day of the Lord.

This fact well accords with the Jewish character of the Apocalypse, which is too obvious to need comment.

The symbolism and imagery are Jewish throughout, as are also the titles of Christ.

The very first reference to the advent points to Zechariah, and views it in relation to Israel's tribes (i. 7) Zech. xii. 10, Isa. lii. 8).

The seven churches are Jewish in number, in name, in types, in symbols, and figures of speech, in Old Testament quotations, in warnings and promises, in responsibility, in the titles of the Lord, in their angels, in their relation to earthly government (ch. ii and iii).

A vision in heaven discloses the patterns of which the tabernacle and temple were copies (ch. iv and v).

The symbolism of the seals mingles the mystic horses of Zechariah with Jeremiah's fourfold types of doom (ch. vi).

With the opening of the seventh seal there breaks upon us the vision of the numbered thousands from the tribes of Israel (ch. vii. 1-8).

The stormy scenes in the eleventh chapter are laid in Jerusalem, which becomes (as of old) the battle-ground of the powers contending for suzerainty.

The magnificent symbolism of chapter xii bodies forth the invisible contest between Israel and the spiritual powers of wickedness, while the monstrous forms of the next chapter enhance the visible phase of the same fierce contest—the final clash of Israel with the nations.

Then, before judgment reaches the final stage, there appear the followers of the Lamb, emerging victorious from the conflict and arrayed for war, with the names of

the Lamb and of the Father on their foreheads (ch. xiv. and xv.).

The Mystery of Babylon unveils the climax of Israel's apostasy—the horrid marriage of the recreant nation with the son of perdition (ch. xvii. and xviii.).

Chap. xx. contemplates the favored nation reinstated at the head of the nations, while ch. xxi. and xxii. present their transcending glory in the New Earth and the surpassing splendor of their new metropolis.

We may now take up each passage separately.

To the synagogue of Philadelphia, as a reward for keeping the word of His patience, is promised exemption from that hour of temptation, which is to come upon the whole inhabited earth (*oikoumenē*), to tempt them that dwell in the land (Rev. iii. 10). In ch. xiii. we have both the "temptation" (ver. 1-8), and the "patience" (ver. 9, 10). The sons of Israel holding the faith of Jesus are persecuted by their unbelieving brethren which are branded as a "synagogue of Satan" (ii. 9, iii. 9). When the dark and dismal hour arrives, the perverts are caught in the snare, whereas those who have patiently endured are kept therefrom; some by an ascension in triumph like Elijah's (xii. 5), others by a concealment in the wilderness similar to Elijah's when Ahab sent ambassadors to every nation and kingdom to search for him (xii. 14, 1 Ki. xviii. 7-10).

"And they (those slain under the altar) cried with a great voice, saying, How long, O Master, the holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell in the land?" (vi. 10).

A previous chapter noted the slander circulated by unbelieving Jews to incite the Gentile mob against their faithful brethren (ii. 9) and the Lord's exhortation to fealty unto death in view of impending persecution (ii.



10). Now, under the fifth seal, the threatened persecution has broken out and claims numerous victims. It follows on the wake of the fourth horseman who received authority over the fourth part of the earth, "to kill with the sword, and with famine, and with pestilence, and by the wild beasts of the earth" (vi. 8). This Rider, whose name is Death, is the Destroyer of ch. ix. 11, and the Conqueror of ch. xiii. His methods of extermination establish the identity.

He kills with the *sword*. This is the penalty for refusal to bow to the Beast's image (xiii. 15).

He kills with *famine*. This is the sequence of the prohibition to buy and sell (xiii. 17).

He kills with *pestilence*. This will be accomplished by the fire which he causeth to come down from heaven (xiii. 13).

He kills with *wild beasts*. This will be a revival of the ghastly scenes which drew crowds of excited Romans to the Coliseum. In these tyrannical ways the Beast will deplete the ranks of Jewish saints. The connection between the fourth and fifth seals is apparent: one shows the *persecutor*, the other the *persecuted*; the one enumerates the *forms* of torture, the other pictures its *victims*, calling on the Lord to avenge their blood "on them that dwell in the land." There is a fine touch of naturalness in this appeal. The martyrs implore vengeance, not on the executioners acting under orders, but on the real instigators of these bloody scenes—their renegade brethren.

In the next two occurrences (ch. xi. 10) "those that dwell in the land" are the chief objects of the testimony of the Two Witnesses and the chief jubilants over their death. While the assemblage of the nations (who then hold the city) looks on and denies them burial (xi. 9),

"they that dwell in the land" celebrate the murder of their opponents by exchanging gifts. It is notable that here, as in ch. xiv. 6, the dwellers in the land are differentiated from those of "the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations."

Ch. xiii, where the phrase is found thrice, beings before us the Beast, the man of the hour, the popular idol of the time. We see him in relation to humankind (ver. 1-5), and in relation to the people and the land of Israel (ver. 6-10). First, we behold the unanimous reception and divine homage accorded him by the "whole earth" (ver. 3-4). Then, in verse 8, we learn that he will be as cordially received and worshipped by "them that dwell in the land." Here the dwellers in the land are distinguished both from the Israelites whose names are written in the book of life, and from those of other peoples and tongues and nations.

In the description of the second Beast, too, our attention is first drawn to the universal extent of the influence he wields on behalf of the first Beast (ver. 12), and then is pointed to the special effect of his lying miracles on "them that dwell in the land" (ver. 14).

"And I saw another angel flying in mid heaven, having eternal good tidings to proclaim unto them that dwell in the land, and unto every nation and tribe and tongue and people" (xiv. 6).

This gospel concerns creation, which shares with man in redemption. By man creation was subjected to vanity, by man also creation will be redeemed from the bondage of corruption. The commission in the last chapter of Mark is the *Creation commission*, based on the resurrection of Christ as Son of Man, and accompanied by powers requisite to restore it to primordial bliss.

Once this fact is apprehended, we possess a key which

gives point and color to some seemingly strange details. Isaiah pictures with fondness the blessedness of material and animal creation under the personal rule of the Messiah (Isa. xi. 6-9, lxv. 25). Mark's words, "And he was with the wild beasts" (Mark i. 13), are in keeping with these prophesies. He begins with a foretaste of that coming transformation, and ends with the signs directed to earth's restoration (Mark xvi. 15-19).

All apostles carried on that commission in connection with their special ministry. This is clear from Paul's experiences at Malta (Acts xxviii. 1-6) and the explicit statement that "the gospel was preached to the whole creation under heaven" (Col. i. 23). Unlike the others, this commission was *finished*; there is no place where it did not reach; every creature heard the glad tidings of emancipation from vanity through the resurrection of Christ. Though its proclamation was finished, its fruition awaits the manifestation of the sons of God (Rom. viii. 21). When therefore the apocalyptic visions are in course of fulfilment and the manifestation of the sons of God is impending, the Holy Land, which will be the centre of blessedness and enjoy it in a higher degree than the rest of creation, will be accorded especial place in the good news.

The last reference dwells once more on the magic potency of Satan's lie on "them that dwell in the land" (xvii. 8). An earlier text implied the refusal of the followers of the Lamb to receive the Beast (xiii. 8). This reiterates his apotheosis by seceders from the covenant.

Our inquiry has led us to identify "those that dwell in the land" with apostate Israel. This interpretation leaves the words intact, harmonises with the context and the general theme of the Apocalypse, clarifies various texts, and establishes links with other prophesies.

Space forbids enlargement. But, before drawing this essay to a close, it seems fitting to point out how the variant reading "land" removes some otherwise insuperable difficulties.

The doom of Babylon closes with the words, "And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all that have been slain in the land" (xviii. 24).

As translated in our versions, this passage is inexplicable; for whether the Whore represents the revived city of Nebuchadnezzar, Imperial or Papal Rome or apostate Christendom—in *neither of these is found the blood of ALL that have been slain in the earth!*

The translation "land" lifts the passage from obscurity. The Mystery of the Woman and the Beast that carries her, as already stated, pictures Israel's apostasy at its zenith. The shedding of innocent blood was one of the reasons for the Babylonian captivity (2 Ki. xxiv. 3-4). The dreadful massacres of God's witnesses by the dwellers in the land have been already commented upon. And now, in the day of retribution, God requires the blood of His servants at the hand of the Whore (xix. 2). This explanation is supported and amplified by the searching words of Christ in Matthew xxiii. 35.

The teaching of these apocalyptic passages dovetails remarkably with Zephaniah's representation of that day. "The great day of Jehovah is near, it is near and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of Jehovah: the mighty man crieth there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of gloominess and darkness, a day of trumpet and alarm, against the fortified cities, and against the high battlements. And I will bring distress upon men, and they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against Jehovah; and their blood shall be poured

out as dust, and their flesh as dung. Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of Jehovah's wrath; but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy: for he will make an end, yea, a terrible end, of all them that dwell in the land" (Zeph. i. 14-18).

*(Continued from page 200)*

#### THE APOCALYPSE

The Apocalypse does not connect itself with the Pauline epistles, but with the four Gospels and the Old Testament. In it, Christ is seen in the characters of the Son of Man (1:13), the Lamb of God (5:6), and many others, all of which are portrayed from His character as seen either in the four Gospels, or in Old Testament prophecy.

The Lord's day, or the day of the Lord (1:10), is the inspired index to the time, or period, of which it speaks.

The seven lamps of chapters 2 and 3 indicate very plainly what people its prophecies are concerned with. In the tabernacle the seven branched lampstand evidently told forth the perfection and unity of Israel before Jehovah. In the Apocalypse the lampstand appears once more before us, but with this difference, that while in the Old Testament we see seven lamps united in one, here we see seven lamps, each distinct from the other. The separation of the lamps may possibly be speaking of the condition of Israel as viewed in this prophecy, dispersed among the nations. The number seven witnesses to the fact that however they might appear in the eyes of men, in the eyes of God, their perfection and unity remained the same.

In New Testament study, numbers will be found to have a prominent place; they are peculiarly connected with the people of Israel. Hence, in the earlier portion of the book of Acts, when Peter's ministry is confined entirely to the Jews, the numbers of the converts duly appear (3000 and 5000). But when the Gentiles are brought into the sphere of God's operations, numbers are not mentioned at all. So also, when we study the earthly and heavenly ministries, we notice that in connection with the former, *twelve* apostles are frequently mentioned, whilst in connection with the latter, the number of apostles is not given. In the Apocalypse, in the very heart of the prophecy, two different bodies of people come forward: of the Israelites who are sealed, the number,

144,000, is divinely given. But of the Gentiles, we only read of "a great multitude, which no man can number." Who, save God, could teach by the things which he did not mention?

#### CONCLUSION

A book is still published entitled, *God Spake These Words*. A further work might well be written bearing the title, *God Meant These Words*.

Man employs faulty terms in his language. God never does.

Man's words are often but empty sounds. God's words are always full of compressed meaning. And, from Matthew to Revelation, every word which God used was used by Him because there was not another which could more plainly declare His meaning. Let us remember that it is the highest wisdom just to bow unquestioningly before the Word of God.

To seek truth is a costly pursuit. It means hard labor, and diligent study, and is often accompanied by the loss of friends and associations held dear by us. But whilst truth is ever costly, it is never too dear.

We close then these scattered thoughts of ours by asking our readers to join with us in prayer, that God may, in these dark closing times, raise up a great army of those who will "*Buy the truth and sell it not.*"

## EDITORIAL.

### "BEING DEFAMED WE ENTREAT."

"Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required in stewards that one be found faithful. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or in man's day; yea, I judge not even my own self.

\* \* He that judgeth me is the Lord.

\* \* Being defamed, we entreat"—1 Cor. 4. 1-4, 13.

This issue contains another article on the word *katabole*, translated "foundation" in the current versions. As a similar study appeared in our pages only a short while ago, some might ask, Why another paper on the same subject? For this we wish to offer an apology and an explanation.

A recent review\* of the first article contains serious charges against us, which, for the sake of the truth, demand recognition.

As to the personal indictments. We are guilty, it is said, of affection, or love, and some of its kindly fruits. As these have hitherto been quite prominent in our brother's own ministry, we need only plead with him that he, as well as we, continue to manifest the Spirit's precious fruit (Gal. 5. 22). *We* dare not refer

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\* "Tests for Strange Doctrines," by F. C. Jennings. *Our Hope*, March, 1910, pages 576-578.



the operations of God's Holy Spirit to the energy of Satan (Matt. 12. 24, 33).

The next charge is *vain glory*. This is founded upon a "pedantic display of assumed learning" and illustrated by reference to the study of the word *katabolee*. Our critic claims that the meaning "overthrow" or "disruption" brushes aside "every authority" consulted, and, so unquestionable is the meaning "foundation," that "nothing but a combination of conceit and superficiality would ever have suggested any other, and that combination so clearly evidenced, makes the writer a most dangerous guide."

We plead guilty on this point, for our Lord Himself has instructed us to glory. But "He that glorieth, let him glory IN THE LORD." Since writing the articles we have been told of another (an "authority," too) who had rendered *katabolee* "overthrow" before us, but we will not mention so much as a single name lest it be supposed that we own *any authority but the bare Word of God*.

In the same number of *Unsearchable Riches*, on page 75, we gave "disruption" as the translation of *katabolee*. Knowing how contrary to traditional theology this rendering was, and not desiring to have our readers rest upon *our* authority, we spread the evidence before them, which we found exclusively in the *only authority*—the Word of God. But why should we be so conceited as to question the ordinary rendering? In one case its incongruity struck us in studying a passage. In the other it was the result of a systematic attempt to discover the meaning of all the words used in Scripture. This system includes the association of an English word or group of words with each Greek word. But in no case was any English word to do duty

for two or more words in the original. This was done in order to preserve all the distinctions God Himself has made. Where He uses two terms He has two distinct thoughts. But two Greek words have hitherto been rendered "foundation." Since *themelios* is clearly right (upon the "authority" of the inspired contexts), then *katabolee* must have some meaning distinct from it. This is the "combination" which led to the writing of the article in this issue.

Further, to avoid "a pedantic display of assumed learning" it was thought best not to dwell upon Heb. 4. 3. The word "finished" presented another grave mis-translation. A little "authority" would soon have settled it. But to give our "authority" *the Word of God*, would have lengthened the article too much. But now, since this passage has been used to bring the truth into ridicule, we have added a few lines upon it in this issue.

The interests of truth and justice, compel us to say that, in connecting the "overthrow of the world" with Adam's fall, our critic mistakes our position. A cursory glance at our study shows that we refer it to the disruption consequent on Satan's deflection from the path of rectitude.

We do not wish to think that his haste in condemning us has led him to willfully misrepresent our teaching, but that an eager desire to denounce has kept him from apprehending even the surface meaning of the article.

Furthermore, in denouncing us for supposed errors on the state of the departed and the Lord's Supper, without any basis in aught we have said or written, he flaunts inferences wholly gratuitous as positive facts, and places us in a false light before the public. All these subjects, as time and space allows, will receive due consideration,

The last accusation is that of *heresy*. This, combined with the first warning, "Be not carried away with divers and strange doctrines," is one of those sad instances of a passage unraveled from its context and twisted into a whip for the back of a fellow servant. In Heb. 13. 9 we read: "Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines, *FOR it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.*" Let anyone read the pages of our magazine and see, Are we occupied with meats, or grace?

So it is with the charge of heresy. The context connects it with "*foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions and strivings about law.*" Are these our burden? How far are we involved in these things? We gladly acknowledge that our critics are like Jephthah the Gileadite, *i. e.* they have "opened up" the Scriptures and borne "witness" to precious truth (Judg. 11. 12). And shall the author of "Judges and Ruth" deal with us as Jephthah did at the fords of Jordan because we cannot frame to pronounce his "shibboleth"?

But how foolish to plead before a human bar! Why should we even appear before their "tiny tribunals." If we do descend to this folly, it is only that we may entreat our judges, if they cannot spare us, let them at least deal tenderly with His gracious Word.

In view of the favor our Lord has shown to us, we cannot force ourselves to denounce them. We, too, once held for very truth that which they so ardently defend. But as to causing factions in the church, nothing is further from our thought. The factious spirit of our brother's closing exhortation may indeed cause division, but nevertheless we shall earnestly endeavor to preserve the Spirit's unity in the bonds of peace. We

refuse every other unity. We acknowledge none but the one which includes our beloved brother himself as well as all God's saints.

We entreat him then, by the grace of Christ, to cease from man and his authority, and, with the love that is not easily provoked, bear with us in our weakness and frailty, as we seek to discover the rich redundancy which still lies buried in His revelation.

The meaning of *katabolee* may not be so important: but the principle involved of founding *all upon His word*, apart from human learning and theology, is vital and must be sustained at all hazards.

The Bible is our only authority. There are helps (and hindrances), but no "authorities." Expositions represent fallible human endeavors to grasp God's truth as revealed in His word, and are neither authoritative nor inspired. The opinions of the founders of evangelical movements, however great or godly, are no more authoritative than those of other Christians, are equally amenable to the tribunal of Holy Writ, and must stand or fall by its verdicts. To set up the teaching of any man, or set of men, as an "authority" is a return to Romanism.

All God's works are characterized by order, symmetry and harmony. The perfection of workmanship displayed in nature exists also in His Word. Each part is perfect: and the perfection of the parts augments the perfection of the whole. As in music, each note blends in melodious unison with the symphony, so in Scripture each word accords with the general plan and blends beautifully and consistently with the context. From the first word to the last there is no expression which is out of place, or could be dispensed with. Word hangs together with word in perfect balance. When a dis-

cordant note ruffles our ear, we know it is no part of the original composition, but a blunder of the performer. Likewise when a word jars the context and disturbs the even flow of a passage, we may be sure it is no flaw of the Author, but an error of transcription or translation.

To ascertain the import of a word we are not dependent on man's learning, but upon its usage by the Holy Spirit in the word of God, which is the only guide to the true understanding of it. We seek support not outside the word, in human lore and skill, but within its covers. To rely on anything outside His Word is to rest on the wisdom of men instead of the power of God. Our teaching should be based on the consensus of Scripture rather than the consensus of opinion.

That "foundation" is not the fixed meaning of *katabolee*, the "authorities" themselves testify.

The parent verb *katabaloo* is used in the Septuagint to represent Hebrew words, none of which means to *found*, and is not so translated.

Both versions render it "cast down" in 2 Cor. 4. 9 and Rev. 12. 10. Its metamorphosis into "laying again" in Heb. 6. 1 is not explained.

*Katabolee* is rendered "foundation," but in Heb. 11. 11 the noun has been transformed into the verb "conceive."

It may be well to add that the term *catabolism* as used in biology refers to the *breaking down* of living matter; it is the destructive metabolism, the opposite of anabolism. Its derivation is thus given in the Standard Dictionary: [Gr. *katabolee*, casting down, from *katabaloo*, cast down, from *kata*, down, and *balloo*, throw.]

The Apocrypha also furnishes an example of the meaning which inheres the term.

(23) "All these things, I say, being declared by Jason of Cyrene in five books, we will essay to abridge in one volume. (25) For considering the infinite number, and the difficulty which they find that desire to look into the narrations of the story, for the variety of the matter, (25) We have been careful, that they that will read may have delight, and that they that are desirous to commit to memory might have ease, and that all into whose hands it comes might have profit. (26) Therefore to us, that have taken upon us this painful labor of abridging, it was not easy, but a matter of sweat and watching; (27) Even as it is no ease unto him that prepareth a banquet, and seeketh the benefit of others: yet for the pleasing of many we will undertake gladly this great pains; (28) Leaving to the author the exact handling of every particular, and laboring to follow the rules of an abridgment. (29) For as the master builder of a new house must care for the whole *building* (*katabolees*); but he that undertaketh to set it out, and paint it, must seek out fit things for the adorning thereof: even so I think it is with us. (30) To stand upon every point, and go over things at large, and to be curious in particulars, belongeth to the first author of the story: (31) But to use brevity, and avoid much laboring of the work, is to be granted to him that will make an abridgment" (2 Maccab. 2.23-31).

It is self-evident that the rendering "building" is unsuitable. The trend of thought is clear. The writer contrasts the five books of Jason of Cyrene with his one abridged volume on the same subject. Jason "stands upon every point, and goes over things at large" (*ver.* 30): our writer "uses brevity and avoids much laboring of the work" (*ver.* 31). To illustrate this difference between the two works he draws a parallel between the work of an architect and that of a decorator. The great variety of unclassified data massed by Jason is likened to unsorted building materi-

al under an architect's care: our writer's *resume* is like the material which the decorator selects from this chaotic mass for ornamentation. *Katabolee*, then, designates disorganized material.

Such glaring inconsistencies prompt the question, How may we determine the true intent and meaning of the word? The answer is, The true rendering is the one which fits into the context without forcing it.

In Luke 11. 50 we read: "That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation." Did His hand create a brood of murderers? The thought is too horrid to be entertained. "Overthrow," or any of its synonyms, removes the incongruity and links murder with the entrance of sin.

Again we read: "For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once at the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb. 9. 26). What necessity was there for His sacrifice in the sinless bliss of that primal day? The reading "overthrow" points to sin's entrance and gives a suitable explanation for His expiatory death, which is the dominant theme in this section of the Hebrew letter.

Heb. 4. 3, "Although the works were finished from the foundation of the world," presents no special difficulty. Do not we read elsewhere of "the lamb slain from the foundation of the world?" (Rev. 13. 8). Was Christ slain then? In His sight He was slain from the overthrow: actually He was slain at the conclusion of the ages, centuries, and perhaps millenniums later. Just so with His works. In His determination they were "decreed" from the overthrow—then He "prepared" the Kingdom (Matt. 25. 34), then He wrote the names

of its heirs in the book of life (Rev. 13. 8, 17. 8)—but they will be consummated in time when all things in heaven and on earth will be headed up in His Son (Eph. 1. 9, 10).

“Foundation” does not suit the passage. If His works were finished when the world was founded, why His continued work (Jno. 5. 17)? Why define another day of rest? “Overthrow” connects sin’s entrance with God’s subsequent activity and accounts for the unbelief and the appointing of a future rest. It tells us that, when sin marred the beauty of His creation and disturbed its tranquillity, its rehabilitation and peace were forthwith determined. Therein lies creation’s pledge of a coming Sabbath-keeping (*sabbatismos*). Hence creation, though subject to vanity, is subject in hope (Rom. 8. 20)—the hope of being delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of God’s sons (Rom. 8. 21).

And now, in introducing Mr. Knoch’s article, we can do no better than quote from his letter to us.

“I hardly knew what the Lord intended when I found we had both, though quite unknown to each other, come to the same conclusion as to *katabolee* and had both written upon it. But I think I see now. The testimony of *two* is what the Lord desires. And all the circumstances are such as, it seems to me, put the seal of His approval upon it, whatever the scholars and other opponents may have to say.

“Would it not be well to give a slight apology for publishing a second article on *katabolee*, rehearsing the Lord’s dealings with us in connexion with it, emphasizing our utter lack of concerted action or even knowledge of what the other had discovered, our different method of procedure, etc. This to be followed



by my article which I trust you will revise most carefully. Perhaps we should add the plain statement that our whole teaching is based upon the same infallible Word alone, in contrast with accepted, but unproved, theology."

\* \* \*

A commendable reverence for the word of God is one of the characteristics of God's sons. And it is not surprising that this feeling is transferred to the channel through which His thoughts have been conveyed to us. Many there are who consider the so-called "Authorized" version (the revision of 1611) as, in a sense, sacred.

In various parts of our magazine will be found versions of the inspired original which differ somewhat from the "Authorized" and other translations. For these we wish to offer a word of explanation.

Let it be understood that our opinion or judgment as to the meaning of any word, either Hebrew, Chaldee, or Greek, which God has been pleased to use in His Word, is not a whit better than any other man's. Why then do we differ from the august bodies which have given us the current translations?

The answer to this question is found in an article in this issue entitled "God's Word Regained." Like everything human, this, too, is fraught with infirmity. Besides this, the plan is only in its inception, and what has been done, only a fragment. But enough gold has been exposed to show the richness of the mine and to determine the method of working it.

May we entreat our readers, therefore, to bear with a rendering to which they are unaccustomed, which may differ from their understanding of a passage,

which may contradict their views. Departures from current translations may be the result, not only of prolonged and severe application, but may be determined by its place in the system upon which the version is based.

This is especially true of the version of Ephesians which appears in connection with the "Secret Economy."—A. E. K.

## GOD'S WORD REGAINED.

A PLAN TO RECOVER THE TRUE INTENT AND MEANING  
OF THE WORDS EMPLOYED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT,  
ILLUSTRATED BY AN INQUIRY INTO THE SIG-  
NIFICANCE OF ONE OF THE TERMS COM-  
MONLY TRANSLATED "FOUNDATION."

God's Word written is the greatest treasure in all the world. But, alas, like the gold and silver and like the precious stones which He has hid in the bosom of the hills, so His holy word has become covered by human tradition and embalmed in human learning. We must *dig* to get this treasure trove.

God has revealed Himself by means of *words*. *He* is an author. Men who aspire to literary excellence are very choice in the selection of words with which they clothe their thoughts. But their work is very coarse indeed when compared with the Divine Author's handiwork. His words have been refined with a seven-fold flame. They are pure. They are perfect.

Before examining one of these Divine specimens let us acknowledge some of the excellencies which give them the impress of heaven.

First of all, *every word of God has a use and meaning*, not one is superfluous. If it were not so He would be guilty of redundance, which every good writer shuns.

Secondly, *each word differs from all others either in*

*meaning or emphasis.* Even though it may not convey to our minds a different thought than another word there is a distinction and the very fact that He has used different terms to set it forth should stir us up to find out what it is.

Thirdly, *like gems fitly set, each word fits snugly into its place.* We have not apprehended its true value unless it supplies us with a vigorous, satisfactory image, blending beautifully with the context.

The word which we have chosen to examine is *katabolee*, commonly translated "foundation."

But we are confronted with a difficulty at the very outset. Another word is also translated "foundation." It is *themelios*. This word has a much better right to be thus translated.

Most Greek words are members of a large family. The nearest relative, the father of this word for "foundation," means "to place" (*titheemi*). That it really includes the thought of founding is witnessed by the context of each occurrence. It is "upon a rock" (Matt. 7:25; Lu. 6:48), it keeps company with "rooted" (Eph. 3:17), "settled" (Col. 1:23), "establish," "strengthen" (1 Pet. 5:10).

Finally, every occurrence of the word itself, without exception, bears out and begs for the meaning of "foundation." It is "built" (Lu. 6:49; Rom. 15:20; 1 Cor. 3:12; Eph. 2:20). It is "laid" (Lu. 6:48, 14:29; 1 Cor. 3:10, 11). It is part of a prison (Acts 16:26), a temple (Eph. 2:20), a city wall (Rev. 21:14-19).

We are forced to conclude that *themelios* means "foundation."

But *katabolee*, the word we are studying, has no

such evidence to support its claim to this meaning. Its nearest relative, *katabaloo*, is generally translated "cast down" (2 Cor. 4:9; Rev. 12:10). The context shows that it cannot mean "built up." "Built up, but not destroyed" is nonsense. Neither would heaven rejoice of Satan's being "founded" when he is defeated (Rev. 12:10).

This word, *katabaloo*, occurs quite often in the Septuagint, the Greek version of the Hebrew Scriptures. By examining these occurrences, and noting the Hebrew words which suggested its use, we can easily fix the meaning which it had when the Greek Scriptures were written. These are the Hebrew words:

1. *Dimgah*, tears, Isa. 16:9.
2. *Hippil*, cast down, frequently, 2 Sam. 20:15, 2 Ki. 3:19.
3. *Hahras*, pull down, Job 12:14, Ezek. 26:4.
4. *Hishpeel*, humble, lay low, Isa. 26:5.
5. *Nahtash*, desert, Ezek. 29:5, 31:12.
6. *Nahthatz*, tear down, Ezek. 26:9.
7. *Palnatz*, break, Job 16:14, Prov. 25:28.
8. *Shahghath*, corrupt, destroy, Ezek. 26:4.
9. *Saham*, hate, Job 16:9.

Not a single Hebrew word which might suggest the thought of upbuilding is ever associated with it. Surely we are justified in concluding that *katabaloo* never presents the thought of building or laying a foundation.

But what of Heb. 6:1; "not *laying again* (the) foundation. \* \* \*"?

Did the apostle ever lay such a foundation as is here spoken of? There is not the slightest evidence that

he did. These six courses were laid before Christ died. They are the beginnings ("principles") which the Hebrews are exhorted to *leave* or *desert*.

*Christ* was the only foundation laid by the apostle (1 Cor. 3:11). (1) His cross is my judgment; (2) His resurrection a pledge of my resurrection *out from among* (*ek.*) the dead, which is far beyond what is here referred to; (3) my identification with Him is much closer than the Israelite who imposed his hands upon his sacrificial substitute; (4) my cleansing in Christ is not to be compared with the washings or baptisms they observed; (5) my faith in Christ is a vital link, not so their faith "upon" God, in which the whole nation shared; (6) while their repentance from dead works is gloriously eclipsed by the one deed which led to His death, upon which I trust.

These are six; Christ is the seventh. These are man's week of work; Christ is the Sabbath. The apostle has not been *laying* this foundation; he has been *casting it down*.

So the meaning of *kataballoo* is sustained here also; it always means *cast down*.

Now we may use the light we have gained to illuminate the word with which we started, *katabolee*. We know that it cannot mean foundation, for another word is used to denote that. From the meaning of its nearest relative we are induced to connect it with a *casting down*, rather than a building up.

The Greek version of the Hebrew Scriptures does not contain this word in the form we are investigating. In the Apocrypha, however, there is an instructive instance, showing what use men of those days made of the word.

In his introduction to the second book of the Mac-

cabees, the writer describes the nature of his labors (2 Mac. 2. 23-29). Jason of Cyrene had written five books upon the subject in hand going into all the details of the story, working up all the available material. Such a mass of material made his volumes difficult and tedious to read. The author of the Mac-cabees wished to put the story in more popular form. He describes the difference between his labors and that of Jason as follows: "For just as the master builder of a new house considers the whole *unorganized material* (katabolees), yet one who attempts a renewal and life like portrayal must investigate the necessary (material) for embellishment, even thus I deem it is with us."

The scattered historical facts were brought together by Jason. He had to ponder them in compiling his works. This disjointed, unorganized material is compared to the various materials which are brought together when a new house is about to be built. Thus we find that the thought of *disorganization* is attached to it in the only instance of its use which will help us before we find it in the inspired Greek Scriptures.

With one exception this word, *katabolee*, is always used in connexion with the "world" or organized system of things we see around us ("the foundation of the world." A. V.). But this "world" must be kept widely distinct in our minds from the "earth," which is material substance, and to which we may appropriately assign foundations. A *kosmos*, a system or order of things has no agreeable entertainment for such a companion word as "foundation."

We are thus driven to choose some new word to represent *katabolee*. Let us try *disorganization*, or its shorter, pleasanter synonym, *disruption*. These agree

with the thought of *casting down* which *katabaloo* carries.

In Heb. 9. 26 we read: "For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world, but now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." But it is manifest that He did not appear "in the end of the world." It was at the conclusion or convergence of the ages. And likewise it is manifest that there was no necessity for His suffering consequent upon the "foundation" of the world. What was there in that which demanded His sacrifice?

But if we read, "For then He must have suffered often since the *disruption* of this world's system," i. e., since sin's entrance, we can trace the connexion which the word "for" leads us to expect.

It borders on blasphemy to argue that God's work in founding this world was of such a nature as to demand the suffering and sacrifice of Christ. But it is a most solemn and wholesome truth that *sin* wrought such disaster that it not only brought suffering, but called for the suffering of Christ to heal its mortal wound. In closest accord with this we read that the Lamb was foreordained *before* and was slain *from*, this disruption (1 Pet. 1. 20, Rev. 13. 8). Now the Lamb speaks of Christ as a sacrifice. Again we ask, what sacrifice was needed to atone for God's perfect work? But how grand it is to know that even *before* this disruption God had appointed a Lamb to suffer, and that, in His sight the Lamb was slain the moment sin appeared. May we not see this pictured in the lamb He slew in Eden's garden to clothe our guilty parents?



Hebrews 4.3 furnishes us with another notable occurrence. We read "\* \* though the works have been taking place\* from the disruption of the world system." What works are here spoken of? The very next verse tells us: "For he spake in a certain place concerning the seventh day on this wise: 'And God did rest in the seventh day from all his works.'" This undoubted reference to Gen. 2.2 tells us that the works referred to are those of the seven days of the first chapter of Genesis. But if this be true, how can it be that they were finished "from the foundation of the world"? The foundation of the world occurs in Gen. 1.1, and the works were not undertaken until after

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\* The word (*ginomai*) which the A. V. here translates "finished" is another tempting example of inconsistency. It occurs about 624 times and is translated with 48 variations. Its primary force is perhaps best expressed by our "become," "come to pass," etc. It often indicates the *inception* of something but *never* its close or finish. The few passages where it has been so mistranslated have been the source of much difficulty. In Matt. 24, 34 and Luke 21, 32 we are told that that generation should not pass till all these things be "fulfilled." But the generation *has* passed and most of the things of which He spoke are still future! They only *began to take place*, which is all the Lord meant to teach. In Jno. 13:2 we are told that the supper "ended" when, in fact, it was just being served. It was after this that Judas received the sop. In Luke 9:36 we are told that he was found alone when the voice was "past." But it is evident that Moses and Elias were not there when the voice was saying "This is my beloved Son; hear him." Surely it was while this was being said that He was alone. These instances should suffice to show that we are fully justified in refusing to render our text "the works were *finished*" for it is the only instance where the A. V. has so rendered this word. This change also gives force and meaning to the word "though" which introduces the clause.

the disruption of the original creation as recorded in the second verse, where we are told that it *became* (not "*was*") waste and void.

It is strange English (and just as strange Greek) to speak of works being "finished *from*." If it were said that they were finished *at* that date we could grasp the sense. "Finished from" is not intelligible. But if we say that they were taking place from the disruption of this world's system, we are not only assigning each term a definite meaning, but we are strictly in harmony with the facts of the case.

It is clear that the works from which God rested were not the works of creation, in the beginning, but those of restoration, after this perfect creation had been overthrown. The foundation of the world was not laid in any of the seven days. It is, therefore, impossible that these works took place or were finished previous to this time.

On the other hand it is just as clear that they began to take place dating *from* the disruption which destroyed the original creation. In fact there was no occasion for these works until the disruption had marred all.

But the grandest occurrence of our word is in Eph. 1:4. We were selected in Christ before the disruption of this world's system *when we were* holy and without a blemish in His very presence. The A. V. rendering "that we should be" is without any warrant whatever. Literally it reads "to be," but with no thought of contingency whatever. So then, before sin came on the scene to play its horrid part, God selected us, that is, chose us *for Himself*. And this selection was entirely uninfluenced by sin, and ever since, in Christ, He sees us thus.

How marvellous is this thought! His plans and

counsels for the earth seem all to date *from* the disruption which sin wrought (Matt. 13:35; 25:34; Rev. 17:8). But two things find their place *before* that catastrophe: the love God bears His Son (John 17:24) and the selection of the members of the body of His Christ. These members are indeed last and lowest as to time and rank on earth, but they were first of all mankind in His purposes and will be first again when He begins to reveal His glory; yea, and will be highest in the final consummation.

## THE PENTECOSTAL CHURCH AND THE BODY.

"And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16. 18).

It is a tenet of Protestant theology—a tenet reiterated with insistence and vehemence—that this utterance contemplates the "church which is His body" and had its fulfilment at Pentecost, when the body is supposed to have been formed. No doubt that tenet would be impregnable were the term "church" applied exclusively to "the church which is His body." But this is not the case.

The Greek word *ecclesia* is represented in our translations by "assembly" and "church." In three instances the Authorized Version inserts the term where it is wanting in the inspired original.

The first is Acts 2. 47: "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." The Revised Version leaves "church" out and reads: "And the Lord added to them day by day those that were being saved."

The second is Acts 19. 37, "for ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess." The phrase "robbers of churches" stands for the Greek *hierosulos*, a robber of sacred property. The Revised Version translates it "robbers of temples." In the Septuagint,

in the New Testament, or in classical Greek *ecclesia* invariably means a representative company. It is only some time between the time of Polycarp and Cyprian that the word "church" came to denote buildings set apart for worship.

The third is 1 Pet. 5:13, "The church that is in Babylon, elect together with you, saluteth you." In the place of "church" the original has the relative feminine pronoun "she." There is nothing in the context enabling us to decide to whom it applies. Probably it refers to Peter's wife, who joined her husband in saluting the elect of the Dispersion.

Acts 19, 32, 39, 41, where *ecclesia* is translated "assembly," claim special notice. Twice (*vv.* 32 and 41) it designates the *guild of silversmiths* gathered in the theatre, at Ephesus, for a demonstration against Paul. When the town-clerk mentions the "regular assembly" (*v.* 39) he means the *town-meeting*, convened to deliberate on questions of city administration.

Acts 7:38, where we read of "the church in the wilderness," is another typical example of the biblical use of the term.

But the most notable instance is furnished by James. Writing to "the twelve tribes which are of the Dispersion," he says: "My brethren, hold not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. For if there come into *your synagogue* a man with a gold ring \* \* \* " (*Jas.* 2. 1, 2). And in ch. 5. 14 he writes: "Is any among you sick? let him call for the elders of the church and let them pray over him. \* \*" The Israelites who held the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ are called "church" and "synagogue." It is this "church" that Saul persecuted (*Phil.* 3. 6). This fact throws light on the Apocalypse. There was

a "church" in Israel in the past and there will be in the future. In the day of the Lord the "synagogues" of Jews holding the faith of Jesus, like the believing Israelites to whom James wrote, are called "churches" (Rev. ch. 2 and 3).

It is thus apparent that the term "church" (on which the accepted system of theology is founded) affords no basis whatever for the doctrine.

The teaching respecting the Pentecostal church is very explicit. In the second of Acts, after the preaching of Peter's sermon and the record that three thousand were added to the apostles and continued in their teaching; after the statement that those believers had all things in common and continued with one accord in the temple—after these things is added "And the Lord added to them day by day those that were being saved" (Act. 2. 47).

Not "such as should be saved," nor "those that were being saved," but "saved ones" (*hoi sozomenoi*) according to the rules of participles divested of all reference to time (*Vide* Luke 13. 23).

The prophets tell us that, before the Lord's return to earth, there will be in mount Zion and in Jerusalem believing Israelites that will survive the judgments, and escape the doom awaiting the apostate nation. These are generally designated "those that escape" (Isa. 10. 20-23; 37. 31; Obad. 17, Joel 2. 32). "Saved ones" is the equivalent of that designation.

On the day of Pentecost, at the commencement of his sermon, Peter said, "this is that which hath been spoken through Joel" (Act. 2. 16), and proceeded to expound the prophecy which ends with the declaration "in mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those that escape, and among the remnant those whom the Lord

doth call" (Joel 2. 32). Joel, looking onward to Jehovah's day, says that in Jerusalem there shall be "those that escape": Peter, calling Israel to repentance in view of that day, holds forth Joel's promise "whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved," and urges the multitudes to "save themselves from the crooked generation" (Act. 2. 40). There is nothing in Joel about the Body of Christ, and there is nothing about it in Peter's sermon, which is an exposition of Joel's prophecy. The church formed at Pentecost was the congregation of "saved ones," or Israelites united together by faith in Jesus of Nazareth as their Messiah and bound together by the hope of His Kingdom, which they expected to enter after passing through the purging judgments of Jehovah's day.

But—still further—even in his epistles, written at a later date, and in which he mentions Paul's letters and alludes to their contents, there is not the remotest hint to the Body.

The Israelitish character of his two epistles is manifest. Both are written to "the elect of the Dispersion" (1 Pet. 1. 1, 2 Pet. 3. 1), believing Jews that dwelt "among the nations" (1 Pet. 2. 11).

The "false prophets," the "adulteress" and Balaam (2 Pet. 2. 1, 14, 15) bring before us scenes of the wilderness apostacy.

The type elaborated is "the days of Noah" (1 Pet. 3. 19-21, 2 Pet. 2. 4, 5).

The "elect" are seen redeemed by the sprinkling of the blood of the Lamb (1 Pet. 1. 2, 19), as when led out of Egypt. They are called a "peculiar people," as in Deut. 14. 2; 26. 18; an "elect race," as in Deut. 10. 15; a "royal priesthood," as in Ex. 19. 6; a "people of God's own possession," as in Deut. 32. 8; the "house of

God," as in Num. 12. 7; the "people of God," as in Num. 11. 29; 16. 41 and Hos. 1. 10 and 2. 23.

To them he writes:

"\* \* \* If ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious: unto whom coming, a living stone, rejected indeed of men, but with God elect, precious, ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Because it is contained in scripture,

Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious:

And he that believeth on Him shall not be put to shame.

For you therefore that believe is the preciousness. but for such as disbelieve,

The stone which the builders rejected,

The same was made the head of the corner; and,

A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence; for they stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: who in time past were no people, but now are the people of God: who had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy" (1 Pet. 2:3-10).

"The church which is his body" is not the subject of the Old Testament quotations supporting his assertions; they declare the Lord's dealings with the Hebrew nation. The Lord is Israel's stone laid in Zion (*vv.* 3, 4, 6, 7). The "builders," Israel's rulers—so it appears from the remote context of Matt. 21. 42-45 where the same Psalm is used by the Master—have stumbled at the word; to them the gracious Lord is "a stone of stumbling, a rock of offence (*ver.* 8): to those who be-



lieve, he is "preciousness" (*ver.* 7), and they are "built up for a spiritual house, a holy priesthood" (*vv.* 9, 10). The last clause of *ver.* 10 is from Hosea 1. 6 and 2. 23, which treat of Israel's repudiation and reception. Israel, like a faithless wife, has deserted Jehovah her husband for other lovers. The recreant nation and her children are in consequence disowned. "She is not my wife," "they are not my people" (Hos. 1. 9; 2. 1). Then, turning suddenly to the happy era of Israel's restoration, the seer pictures the prodigal wife in the day of her calamity. Alone in a solitary desert, famished and parched with thirst, destitute and naked, forsaken by her heartless lovers, she returns to the husband of her youth and is reinstated into His favor. Again she calls Jehovah "My husband," and to her children is said "Thou art my people" (Hos. 2. 23). Peter weaves this prophecy into his letter and interprets Hosea's words of the elect of the Dispersion.

The most impressive passage is 1 Pet. 3. 18-22, which we quote in full because of its importance.

"\*\* Because Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God; being put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the spirit; in which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison, that aforetime were disobedient, when the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water: which also in the antitype doth now save you, even baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation of a good conscience toward God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ; who is on the right hand of God, having gone into heaven; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him."

The salvation of Noah's household and the salvation of those to whom the apostle writes are placed in the relation of type and anti-type. The points of analogy and contrast between the two may be shown thus:

TYPE (ver. 20)		ANTITYPE (ver. 21)
"The days of Noah"	TIME	"Now"—the time then present
"The Ark"	MANNER	"Baptism"
"Water"	MEANS	"The Resurrection of Jesus Christ"
"Eight souls"—Noah and his household	PEOPLE	"You"—the elect Israelites

The "days of Noah" are a figure of "the coming of the Son of Man" (Matt. 24. 37), and we know that those days lay beyond the church's removal (2 Thess. 1 and 2). Thus we are told in the plainest manner possible that the judgment and salvation of "the house of God" in Peter (1 Pet. 4. 17) answers to the judgment and salvation of Noah's house.

Those insisting that the Body began at Pentecost regard Noah's family as a type of the Jewish remnant in the day of Jacob's trouble. But how can these "elect" be the Body, which is translated before the tribulation, and the anti-type of the Israelitish remnant passing through it?

Now we ask, are any of the characteristic features of the Body present in Peter's writings?

The distinctive feature of this dispensation is the absolute equality, in spirit of Jew and Gentile, equality of *possession, position, participation*: the nations are fellow-heirs, fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus." (Eph. 3. 6).

There is no trace of such equality in Peter. The distinction between Jew and Gentile is not only sharply maintained (1 Pet. 2. 12; 4. 3), but, as a fact, the nations are never in view; they await the "day of visitation" (1 Pet. 2. 12.)

The peculiar hope of the Body is to be received up into glory, before the commencement of the judgments ushering Jehovah's day (1 Cor. 15. 51, 52; 1 Thess. 4. 13-17; 2 Thess. 2. 1; Eph. 1. 12).

The outlook in our epistles is wholly different. The "elect" await the salvation spoken by the prophets, which was then ready to be revealed (1 Pet. 1. 10-12, Ac. 3. 19). The righteous are "scarcely saved" ("with difficulty"), viz. passing through the judgments which will purge the house of God (1 Pet. 4. 17); the "fiery trial" of which he had spoken in his pentecostal sermon was upon them (1 Pet. 4. 12); they look forward to the day of the Lord (2 Pet. 3. 10), and beyond it (in accord with the promise to Israel in Isa. 65. 17-19 and 66. 22) to the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness (2 Pet. 3. 13); their goal is a "triumphant admission into the kingdom" (2 Pet. 1. 11).

Christ's spiritual Body is the hope of heaven as well as heavenly in its hope. Heaven, not earth, is its future abode. It is the means of its administration (Eph. 1. 3; 2. 6; Col. 1. 5).

Peter's writings never hint at a celestial vocation or inheritance. True, he tells his readers their inheritance is "reserved" in heaven for them (1 Pet. 1. 4), pending the salvation to be revealed at the last time; yet there is no suggestion that it will be enjoyed in heaven. Israel's King has gone into heaven (1 Pet. 3. 22), where he remains until the times of restitution

(Act. 3. 21). When He returns He brings the promised blessings and dispenses them to his people.

The great Pauline doctrines of Justification and Reconciliation (on which the doctrine of the Body is founded) are totally absent. A standing in grace, altogether apart from merit, is also wanting: works are conspicuous (2 Pet. I. 1-10).

The distinctive truths of the Body are outside the range of Peter's letters. His teaching is diametrically opposed to Paul's. To say that the Body began at Pentecost, when there is nothing about it in the sermons and writings of the apostle who is said to have been instrumental in founding it, is the culmination, acme and climax of absurdity.

Though silent as regards the Body, Peter says much respecting the church formed at Pentecost, and what he says about it, in the Acts and his epistles, proves that it was the congregation of saved Israelites spoken by the prophets. The notion that the Body began at Pentecost is wholly gratuitous: it is unproven and unprovable.

The Body of Christ, that spiritual corporation figured by the human body, had not existed prior to Paul's ministry. After his separation from the twelve (Act. 13. 2, 4), as a result of his ministry outside the land, a peculiar assemblage was formed, composed of Jews and Gentiles, on the ground of faith and grace. The epistles written during his itineracy perfect the fragment of the new departure which began at Pisidian Antioch. Romans develops justification, first broached in his sermon at Antioch (Acts 13. 39). Galatians is a defence of the "door of faith" which God opened unto the nations (Acts 14. 27). Corinthians elabor-

ates the Body. The two Thessalonian letters unfold its hope ahead of the Circumcision.

During Paul's personal ministry, as attested by the letters then written, the nations and the Israelites composing the Body were not on equal footing. The nations were *aliens* in Israel's commonwealth. Jews and Greeks were all baptised into one body (1 Cor. 12. 13); yet in that body some were "less honorable" and some "uncomely" (1 Cor. 12. 23, 24), in plain words, the members of the body were not of equal rank. The nations were partakers of Israel's spiritual (not material) blessings, guests at her board, hence her "debtors" (Rom. 15. 27). It is plain, without argument, that an alien and a citizen, a comely and an uncomely person, a debtor and a creditor do not enjoy the same status.

Israel's repudiation furnished the occasion for adding the topstone to the fabric of grace reared through Paul—equal blessing for Israel and the Nations.

The earthly Kingdom is indefinitely postponed. Meanwhile the portion of those who had received Paul's ministry is transferred to supernal regions. This made the nations independent of Israel. They are no longer foreigners depending on Israel's inheritance; no longer are they subordinate in the Body; no longer are they guests at Israel's table: they are heirs to the heavenly realms; they rank equally in the joint-body; they partake of spiritual blessings in Christ, in the sphere of His present exaltation—in other words, they are "fellow-citizens" with Israel in a celestial inheritance (Eph. 2. 19).

From this we see that Paul's earlier ministry is incorporated in the dispensation of the Mystery. The prison epistles unfold the secret of equal blessing for

Jew and Gentile, but that secret is founded on the great doctrines unfolded in his earlier epistles. Those doctrines remain intact and continue in force, requiring only slight modifications in their bearing on the two parties whom they reached—Jews and Gentiles. Ephesians proclaims the equality of the nations in every particular with an election out of Israel: Philip-pians shows the consequent withdrawal of the physical distinctions on which Israel's superiority is founded: Colossians defines the attitude of those complete in Christ towards the elementary things of antecedent ministries.

With reference to the Body the distinction between the pre-prison and prison epistles is this: In the former the Body is in infancy, in the latter it attains to maturity; or, to state it differently, the Body in the two groups of epistles is organically the same, but constitutionally different. Organically it is the same, just as the body of an infant and the mature man is the same organism. Constitutionally it is different, just as the human body in the process of transition from infancy to manhood undergoes constitutional changes. A comparison between Corinthians and Ephesians shows this. The figure of the body is common to both, but whereas in the former it serves to illustrate the relations between the members, in the latter it sets forth the relationship of the members to the Head.

The headship of Christ embraces three distinct constituencies: mankind (1 Cor. 11. 3), the Body (Eph. 1. 22), all principality and power (Col. 2. 10). The Corinthian letter dwells on the first of these; but His headship of the Body is foreign to it—so foreign, that three parts of the head—the organ of sight and hearing and smell—are rated as separate members (1 Cor.

12. 17). Why so? Just because the Body was in infancy. A child has these organs: his vision is keener, his hearing sharper, his smell more sensitive than a man's; but he is not allowed to see everything, listen to all that is said, or breathe the unwholesome air of workshops. He is not allowed to exercise independent judgment. His actions are under the control of parents, guardians or tutors. Just so with the Body. In its infancy it was under the tutelage of "apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers; for the perfecting (readjustment) of the saints unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ: *till* we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4. 11-13). Not but that some of these gifts still continue, but they are shorn of the authority once vested in them, just as guardians and instructors cease from exercising control over their pupils once they are of age, though they may continue to hold a place of affection and esteem.

In Corinthians the apostle stands at the parting of the roads: childhood is behind, maturity is ahead (1 Cor. 13. 9-13). Ephesians brings the anticipated maturity. Its object is "that we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error; but speaking truth in love, may grow up in all things into him, who is the head, even Christ" (Eph. 4. 14, 15). Maturity has come. When a youth attains to manhood he controls his own actions; so, too, when maturity arrives the Head assumes personal control of the Body, and as the supreme concern of manhood is to keep the head well balanced, so now the supreme con-

cern of the apostle is that the members should become so adjusted as to feel and respond spontaneously to the slightest volition of the Head. He labors and strives to present "every man perfect in Christ" (Col. 1. 28, 29).

This theme is supremely vital and intensely fascinating. We would fain enlarge thereon. But space forbids, and we desist, hoping, if He wills, to take it up in a more detailed way on some future occasion.



## REPENTANCE.

While leaving a jail meeting, some years ago, a brother in Christ handed me a slip of paper. On looking at it later, I found that it contained a list of passages containing the word "repentance." It was a gentle hint that I had omitted preaching repentance to the prisoners, as indeed, I had.

Let us examine the passages he brought before me and determine, if we can, the Lord's mind on this subject.

It goes without saying that repentance *was* proclaimed. But the mere fact is not sufficient to guide our steps. Christ Himself ceased to proclaim it *after He was rejected*. He confines Himself to the announcement of His sufferings (Matt. 16:20; Mark 8:31; Lu. 9:31). But when Luke takes up the thread concerning the things which He began to do and teach (Acts 1:1) he reverts to this early ministry and engages our attention with the Kingdom (Acts 2:30) and repentance and baptism (Acts 2:38)—the very same subjects which the Lord had proclaimed *before He was rejected*.

Now we know that the Kingdom as proclaimed by the apostles was rejected once again (Acts 28:26-27). Stephen is stoned (Acts 7:59). James is killed by Herod (Acts 12:1). Peter is imprisoned (Acts 12:4) and is finally found in Babylon (1 Pet. 5:13).

Paul's life is imperilled and he, too, becomes a prisoner (Acts 28:17).

If the Lord Himself stopped the proclamation of pardon and repentance when His message was rejected, it is certainly worth the enquiry: *Has it been again withdrawn, now that the same message, proclaimed by His apostles, has once more been rejected?*

But first, let us inquire, What is repentance? When we define our terms many difficulties disappear. To repent is, literally, to *observe—afterward, to reconsider.*

Such reconsideration may lead one to *turn about* or be "converted" (Acts 3:19), but it is quite distinct from conversion.

Likewise repentance may *lead* to work (Rev. 2:5), but it is not itself work, as might be supposed from some translations which render it "penance."

Those truly repentant evidenced it by suitable fruits (Matt. 3:8; Lu. 3:8; Acts 26:26).

Repentance may accompany faith (Mar. 1:15), but for that very reason must be distinguished from faith. It may lead to deliverance, in a sense (2 Cor. 7:10), and to life (Acts 11:18), but in itself means none of these things, but only such a reconsideration as these may demand.

The divine picture of repentance is found in the case of Nineveh (Matt. 12:41; Luke 11:32). Jonah's message to that great wicked city was "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" This was no "gospel"; no glad or joyful message. Such a message would not have caused *repentance*, for if God had a message of joy for them what could they possibly repent of? Repentance is not produced by any gospel. That is why we read (Mar. 1:15) "repent ye *and* believe the gospel." The proclamation of judgment is

generally the moving cause of repentance. The word "preach" when connected with repentance is always a *proclamation* as in Jonah's case. It is never evangelize, the word generally translated "preach" (Matt. 12: 41; Mar. 6: 12; Lu. 11: 32; Mar. 1: 4).

Tyre and Sidon and awful Sodom never were exhorted to repent though they were more susceptible to the proclamation of judgment than religious Chorazin and Bethsaida and high Capernaum (Matt. 11: 21). If there was any virtue in repentance and Sodom had had the opportunity presented to Capernaum it would still be a flourishing city as of old.

There are a remarkable pair of repentance parables recorded by Luke (Lu. 13. 1-9 and 17. 3-6). These will lead us to see the close connexion of repentance with the Kingdom of God.

Some there were in that day, as there are now, who believe that God deals men's deserts to them in this present life. They told the Lord how Pilate had mingled the blood of certain Galileans with their sacrifices. He replies: "Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." And so, too, in the case of those upon whom the tower of Siloan fell.

And then, without further explanation, He spoke the parable of The Fruitless Fig Tree. Three years had He been dressing the fig tree and still there was no fruit. Three years had He been calling upon the nation to repent and bring forth the fruits of repentance, but He found none. One more chance would He give it. This is recorded in the book of Acts. But even this effort failed. The fig tree has been cut down.

The call to repentance failed to bring about the Kingdom.

The second parable of The Wild Fig Tree (or "sycamine" Luke 17: 3-6) is like the first, but views the subject from a different standpoint.

After considering the conduct which He would have them show a repentant brother, they request their Lord, "Increase our faith." And their Lord replies, "If you had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this wild fig tree, 'Be thou plucked up by the roots, and be thou planted in the sea;' and it should obey you."

Israel, politically, is figured by a fig tree; Rome is the wild fig tree. The fruit of this wild fig or mulberry tree is an insipid imitation of the good fig tree, eaten only by the poorest classes (Amos 7: 14).

So Roman world-wide dominion had the *appearance* of that Kingdom which will bear the sweet fruits of righteousness. Its soft, brittle timber was a poor substitute for the princely cedars, though it did ape the semblance of the cedar's imperial majesty (Isa. 9: 10).

How differently the Master would have them treat these two trees! All His labor was directed to save one of them from destruction. A grain of faith on their part would have transplanted the other to the midst of the sea, far from Israel's land. In plain words, if they really repented and believed, they would have dwelt beneath the shade of their own fig tree, the Kingdom Jehovah had promised them and the Roman yoke would soon be broken. Only their unrepentant, unbelieving attitude bound them with the chains of Rome.

Thus we see how vitally repentance is linked with

the Kingdom as proclaimed by our Master in His early ministry, before His rejection. And this was in strict accord with Moses and the prophets. The thirtieth chapter of Deuteronomy lays down the conditions upon which the Kingdom will come. The very first is *repentance*. "And it shall come to pass when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, *and thou shalt call them to mind.* \* \* \*" This was the foundation of John the Baptist's preaching, "Repent ye." Why? "For the Kingdom of the heavens has drawn nigh" (Matt. 3:2). This Kingdom, which will break in pieces and consume the Babylonian, the Medo Persian, the Grecian and the Roman world powers, which shall never be left to any other people but the Chosen Nation (Dan. 2:44)—this Kingdom will never be theirs until they enter it through the portals of repentance. Those who do not repent and bring forth its proper fruits will be baptized with fire, they will be burned up as chaff.

Once we have grasped the thought that repentance is the key to the earthly Kingdom, we will understand why it is that it is hardly mentioned except when that Kingdom is proclaimed. The Kingdom is in view in the early part of the Gospels, it is again presented in the book of Acts, and it is finally attained in the Revelation. So we find that the verb occurs twelve times (the number of government) in the Revelation; four times (the number of the earth) referring to the Kingdom in the Acts, and sixteen times (four squared) in the Gospels. It occurs only once in a private way in the epistles of Paul (2 Cor. 12:21).

As a noun it occurs only four times in Paul's epistles proper and none refer to the Kingdom.

John had preached the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel (Acts 13:24). The Lord continued this proclamation, and even after His exaltation, He is proclaimed by Peter as "a *Prince* and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel. \* \* \*

It is not until Peter visits Cornelius that we have any hint that the nations have any part in this. When the events attending Peter's visit are rehearsed, they were amazed and exclaimed, "Then, indeed, to the Nations, too, God has granted repentance unto life!" (Acts 11:18). But the very next statement shows that they did not follow up its proclamation.

It was not until Paul went to the nations that repentance was proclaimed to them. At Athens he could say, "now chargeth He *all men everywhere* to repent." Why? Not on account of God's grace as made known in His glad message, but "Because He has appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man Whom He hath ordained. \* \* \*" These are the judgments which will usher in and sustain the Kingdom. It was while this Kingdom was still in view, before Israel was set aside, that Paul testified both to Jews and Greeks, "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21).

But while Paul preached thus in his itinerant ministry, his epistles, written in view of or after Israel's final rejection of their King, contain nothing of repentance in connection with the gospel. His epistle to the Romans is a grand, complete, exhaustive treatise on the gospel, yet repentance is altogether omitted, except where he notes how the *goodness* (not grace) of God ought to lead men to repentance, but fails to do so (Rom. 2:4).

The gospel of God and the gospel of the mystery (Rom. 1:1 and 16:25) immeasurably transcend the proclamation of repentance and pardon, the portals to the Kingdom. Pardon might be withdrawn (Matt. 18:21-35). Many of those who repented during the proclamation of the Kingdom, afterwards fell away (Heb. 6:6). These, the apostle tells us, it is impossible to renew again unto repentance, seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame. The unrepentant nation had crucified their Christ and now these apostates repeat their rejection of the Kingdom, and crucify the King again.

But no such dire apostacy is possible to those who believe God's glad message and the proclamation of the reconciliation as set forth in the Roman letter. For such there is no condemnation: nothing can separate them from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus.

And here is where the greatest mischief has been wrought. Not only has the gospel been dragged down from its heavenly height, but those who have believed it are being harassed by doubts which are engendered by failing to recognize God's distinct message for the earthly Kingdom. There is a grand harmony in all God's works which is plain enough in nature, but which seems almost unknown to spiritual eyes.

The bird has its home in the air, the fish in the sea and other animals upon the ground. Each knows its place; but God's people seem continually inclined to swim with their wings or grovel in the ground when their right place is to be pinioned in the heights of heaven.

Let us remember, the *Kingdom has been rejected*. And all that which was intended to bring it about must

not be pressed into service for which it is not fit, but should await the time when finally God sends His Christ again and He falls like a stone upon man's grand monarchies and grinds them to powder. In view of that time, repentance will again be urged as is clearly seen in the oft-repeated charge in the seven letters to the churches in Rev. 2 and 3 and in the charges against apostate Israel (Rev. 16:9-11) and the remainder of mankind (Rev. 9:20-21).

Then it will be in point to proclaim repentance once again.

Meanwhile, we should proclaim peace. We should point men, not to their feelings or misdeeds or coming judgment, but to *Christ*. Not even to the judgment due their sins, but His judgment on the cross which fends all thought of wrath.

For the present God is not counting men's offenses against them. He is beseeching men to receive the reconciliation effected by the death of His Son. Nor penance, nor penitence, nor repentance may intrude or obscure that marvelous mystery of the gospel, the reconciliation. God asks nothing now from man. Yea, more than that, God Himself is entreating men to accept the reconciliation He has wrought (2 Cor. 5:17-20). In the past our Lord could tell them, "If thy brother repent, forgive him" (Luke 17:3-4) for God was acting so at that time. Now, however, as beloved children we are to imitate God in forgiving one another quite apart from any repentance on the part of our brethren. The reason for this is found in the fact that God Himself acts thus. He points to Himself and His gift—His Son—and asks alone for faith in Him. He does not ask the sinner to look back or within, but only up. One glimpse of Him will entail



far deeper loathing not only of our past, but of ourselves, than any repentance could ever bring about. Indeed our past is in the sepulchre, buried from our sight. Our life is Christ and this looks back to no repentance.

"But," some will say, "I never saw a real case of conversion yet, but it was accompanied by repentance." This may be quite true, but, shall we mold God's word to suit our experience or the experience of others when that experience is itself the result of defective teaching? No! rather let us mold our experience to suit His word, and let us value it only in as much as it agrees with what He has said.

Repentance is not necessary to faith in the gospel. Take the pattern case which God has given us for a standard. Abraham believed God's good news concerning the seed. This faith God reckoned to him for righteousness. Did he repent? What call was there for repentance? Good news may be believed without a previous repentance.

In the case of the Kingdom matters are different. It cannot come until God has first emptied the hoarded bowls of wrath upon His apostate people and broken the seals of judgment that right a rebellious world. The Kingdom must be entered through much tribulation. Its nearness means judgment. Therefore we read "Repent, for the Kingdom of the heavens, *has drawn nigh.*" Therefore John the Baptist goes on to warn them of "the wrath to come."

But nowadays there is no mixture of judgment in the gospel, except that which Christ Himself bore and which is past long since. This is the plain teaching of the fifth chapter to the Romans, "We shall be saved from wrath through Him" (Rom. 5:9).

This is one of our especial blessings, that, in that judgment era, whether we are wakeful or drowsy, we shall live together with Him. For this He is coming to the air to receive us to Himself (1 Thess. 4: 15, 17; 5: 10).

O, that we knew the sufficiency of Christ for everything! We are so anxious to pry men into the "Kingdom" that we invent various crowbars to get them in, all the while ignoring the great truth that *the gospel is God's power for salvation* (Rom. 1: 16). We preach on all sorts of topics from sanitation to sanctification (ever tinkering with man himself) when the gospel is *concerning His Son* (Rom. 1: 3). In a word we are trying to "bring men to Christ," when *He would have us bring Christ to men!*

How grand it is to fall back upon God Himself! He will see to it that everyone whom He has selected will be invited and justified and sanctified. And He does it in spite of all the stumbling blocks we put in the sinner's way. Some preach law outright, some regeneration, some the spirit's work, some baptism, some repentance—but none of these are *good news*; indeed, *there is no good news apart from Christ.*

Let it be our precious privilege to preach Christ crucified to those who know Him not; and to those who know Him, Christ glorified. Let Christ be first and Christ be last and Christ fill all between. Let us not look back and vaunt ourselves with, "*I prayed, I repented, I was baptized, and I—*," but let us rather shout with the Apostle "*no longer I, but CHRIST!*" If I had a hand in my salvation it must needs contain a flaw, for I find failure fills everything I do. But if Christ *alone* deserves the crown, then all like Him is perfect and immutable. Some who repented fell away

(Heb. 6:6) and it was impossible to renew them again to repentance. Therefore the apostle exhorts them to *leave* repentance from dead works (Heb. 6:1).

It is God's purpose that in all things Christ should have the pre-eminence and that *all* fullness should dwell in Him. He is God's fullness. He is our fullness. Both God and His saints are mutually and completely furnished in Christ (Col. 1:19, 20; 2:9, 10).

## THE DIVINE MYSTERIES.

### THE SECRET ECONOMY.

#### ITEM II. JOINT MEMBERS OF THE BODY OF CHRIST.

##### THE EXALTATION OF THE BODY'S HEAD.

"And what the transcendent greatness of His ability as applied to us, who believe,

Corresponding with the operation of His strength most mighty, which He has exercised in Christ, having roused Him, out from among the dead, and having seated Him at His right hand in the celestial regions far above every sovereignty and dependency and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not in this age only, but also in the future;

And has subordinated everything under His feet, and has awarded to Him headship over everything pertaining to the assembly which is His body, the complement which rounds out the universe to the last detail."

##### FROM GOD, TO GOD.

Blessed it is to trace the steps of Christ's descent to the death of the cross. Every move He makes has a meaning. Every step He takes has a tongue. Much more delightful and just as significant is His return to glory.

His earthly pilgrimage was the perfection of weakness. It ended in the tomb.

His heavenly march is omnipotence perfected. It attains its royal rest at God's right hand.

There are, we may say, three stages to His glorious exaltation. These are His resurrection, His ascension, His rest.

Resurrection brought Him back to life among His loved disciples.

Ascension sees Him in the Divine presence, whence He had been sent to do God's will.

Rest seats Him at God's right hand when His work has been accomplished.

On that wonderful resurrection morning He meets Mary in the garden. "\* \* \* I have not yet ascended \* \* \*" (John 20. 17) He tells her. It seems as though He did ascend later on upon that very day, and yet He reappears and for forty days He lingers with His own (Acts 1. 3).

Then, from Olivet, He rises from their very midst, borne upward by the cloud into the presence of His God (Acts 1. 9). There Stephen saw Him, still standing at God's right hand (Acts 7. 56). In the years that follow, one of Stephen's slayers, Saul, gets glimpses of Him as He revisits the earth on several occasions, once on the far off Damascus road (Acts 9. 3) and once in the temple in Jerusalem, (Acts 22. 17, 18) once in the city of Corinth (Acts 18. 9) and again in the prison at Jerusalem (Acts 23. 11).

It is evident from all this that His activity had not yet ceased; His work was not yet done.

But now Paul tells us another truth of great significance. He is *seated* on the throne at God's right hand (Eph. 1. 20). His work is done—or else He would not sit. Nothing tells us of the perfection of His work,

its finished completeness, as this attitude He takes, this seating of Himself for lack of any further task.

In coming days we shall see Him, as the Son of Man, *walking* among the assemblies in Jehovah's day, executing the judgment of God's house (Rev. 2. 1). In that day we shall see Him also as the little Lamb *standing* in the midst of the throne (Rev. 5. 6) and on Mount Zion. Later His feet *stand* upon Mount Olivet once again, as when He ascended. But when all His enemies are subdued, He takes His *seat* upon His glorious terrestrial throne. His active career on earth's behalf gives place to tranquil rule.

When earth is finally dissolved and heaven flees, once more He *sits*, this time upon the Great White Throne. He is not actively engaged on behalf of those who stand before Him. He only deals the justice due.

Some day we shall be "forever with the Lord." Meanwhile we cannot do better, than, by the spirt's enablement, to anticipate that overflowing joy. But before we find Him where He now is, let us trace the steps that led Him there more leisurely.

#### THE CONDEMNATION OF THE POWERS OF EVIL.

The combined forces of Satan, who towers above the archangel in his dignity and power, who exercises jurisdiction over the demons and evil spirits of the aerial Provinces, with His allies, and of Rome, the sovereign of the world, and of the nation of Israel, were joined to accomplish Messiah's death.

Satan knows Messiah and knows that God had empowered Him to destroy him. So he strains every nerve to bring about His death.

He obsesses Judas that he might betray Him into their clutches. And not Judas only, but every actor in that dreadful drama was but a puppet in his hands. He was the moving cause of all. He was the spirit that impelled the ignorant clods of earth to fulfill his dark behests.

The Lord knew that they were not aware of what they were about. Satan alone, of all His enemies, had some conception of what was involved.

Rome, too, had everything at stake. Messiah is the rightful ruler of this earth. In their stupid dullness they know it not and yet acknowledge it in the superscription Pilate wrote. Satan, their spiritual overlord, their true Caesar, makes sure that the Roman world power is pitted against Him.

Rome crucifies Messiah.

The high priests, who should have worshipped Him, seem most malignant of them all. Though representatives of Jehovah upon earth they mock Him with a trial and loudly demand His death.

The great power of God which once shielded Him seems now to stand aside.

Prompted by Satan they do his bidding faithfully.

"Away with Him!"

Satan's horrid hosts, the Roman legions and Israel's religious zeal comprised a full array of all the enemies of God. All the powers at their command were brought to bear to accomplish His death and thus defeat His God. And there was every indication that they had succeeded. Yet, if *they* had bound Him with the chains of Death, they could not keep Him bound? Would they exert less force to keep their prey than they had used to make Him theirs?

All God's enemies confederated could not overcome

His Christ! Excepting the great power of God alone; their combined strength is invincible. Let us acknowledge this freely, for it only shows how great a God we have, and how strong is the arm of his Messiah.

Though not precisely in our line of thought, let us linger here and ask: why did not God shield Him from them as He had previously done?

For those who crucify Him He cries, "Father forgive them, they know not what they do." God's ear is open to this prayer. But not for long. He is on the accursed tree. He becomes the sin offering. Soon a dense and dreadful darkness hides the sun's face, feebly picturing the hiding of the face of His Sun, His God. He bears not only the fierce brunt of the forces of evil, but God himself, true to His word, sends fire from above to consume the sacrifice. The arrows from his quiver find lodgment in Messiah's heart. Himself so sinless, He becomes the Sinbearer. He is not only denied access into God's presence, but is the object of the fierceness of His furious wrath. God Himself becomes his enemy.

Has God cast Him off forever?

Even as the darkness of nature passed away and the sun once more gazed upon that sight, so does His spirit once more enjoy the radiance of God's face. "My God, My God, why didst *thou* forsake Me?" could never have been spoken in those three hours of dismal darkness. God would not have lent His ear to any cry He might have made. Now, as Christ turns back to their awfulness, what does He remember? Not Satan's presence and roar, but the silence and desertion of His God.

But now God's fire has consumed the sin he bore.



God's smile beams upon Him once again. In His very death He can commend His spirit to His Father's care.

#### CHRIST'S RESURRECTION

But Satan must not seem to triumph thus for long. He sees that Caesar's seal secures the dead and Caesar's soldiers guard the lifeless form. But his greatest triumph is his worst defeat.

Christ arose!

The high priest's guards, affrighted, flee!

He breaks the seal of Caesar!

He escapes from Satan's dominion, Death!

With victorious and majestic calmness He carefully strips off His cerements—the badge of His enemies' triumph—He folds them up, He lays them in their appropriate place, He walks forth a Victor over the vast confederacy of the forces of evil.

#### HIS ASCENSION

In Matthew's account we are told that all power in heaven and on earth is given Him (Matt. 28: 18). But so far is it from the purpose of that treatise to enter upon His heavenly glories that His ascension is not as much as mentioned. His earthly exaltation is anticipated by His ascent into a high mountain. But the Son of David's time had not yet come.

Mark, speaking to us of His *service* as the Son of God, puts before us a complete course, a finished work. His part of this work was finished while still on earth and its proclamation, too, is fulfilled according to the commission that He gave, before the gospel was put on record (Mark 16. 20). True and faithful servant that he was, He did not stop until his work was done,

till every bit of His task had been accepted, and till resurrection had set its seal upon it. Since the service which engages Him in this gospel is fulfilled, no wonder that we read that when He ascended, He *sat down* at God's right hand (Mark 16. 19). This rest, however, is that of a servant, not a Sovereign.

There are two notable points of contact between Mark's account of our Lord's attitude and the present truth. In both He is spoken of as the *Son of God* in relation to *creation*. In Mark, however, it is the old material creation and its deliverances; now it is a new, a spiritual creation. His work in both is finished and He *sits*.

Luke presents us with a picture of Adam's greater Son. The very fact that Acts takes up the unfinished thread of Luke shows that the work is incomplete. In his former treatise Luke speaks of what the Master began both to do and to teach. He now continues the narrative of that ministry. In view of this we need not be surprised that Stephen saw Him *standing*. There is no seating of the *Son of Man* until he comes in His glory with all the holy angels and judges, or rules, the Nations of the earth (Matt. 25. 31).

#### HIS REST

Let us be clear about the various attitudes of Christ. Let us not miss their true spiritual import by a strict insistence on their literality. A king may be aspiring to a throne, or he may be warring for its defense. In either case, he is not *seated*. When the authority which the throne represents is truly his, when all opposition has been broken down, when the regal and judicial functions which pertain to it are in undisputed exercise, *then* he is *seated*.

This does not mean, I repeat, that in person he continually occupies the piece of furniture called the throne. He may be far from it, visiting in distant parts of his empire, and yet, while thus absent, find a continual acknowledgement that he is indeed upon it.

The kings of earth feebly figure the Messiah. But Messiah has many glories. As to the earth we may say that He is rejected and is not yet seated on His throne. But even here, if we leave out man, considered as the descendant of Adam, or as the subjects of the Davidic Kingdom, and consider *the creation* of which man is but a part, then we may say that His work is accomplished, that he is *seated* as the *Son of God* upon His throne. The apostle Paul, writing to the Colossians about the proclamation of this good news confirms Mark's closing words. It was preached in all the creation under heaven. In this realm He alone is sovereign. The creation, unlike man, does not dispute His sway.

Again and again the Son of God, the Spirit, flies far ahead of the Son of Man, the Human. *Every aspect of His work as Son of God is finished; every aspect on the human side still bides its proper season.* This is the key to the seemingly contradictory attitudes in which he is presented to us.

Mark says the *Son of God sat down* at God's right hand.

Luke tells us that Stephen saw the *Son of Man still standing*, waiting, as it were for the repentance of His people, that He might return to bless them.

As the *Priest* His work was finished when He had offered himself. Since then He has occupied His seat at God's right hand (Heb. 10. 11, 12).

But John's gospel presents still a different aspect.

Even as He anticipated pentecost by breathing the spirit into them beforehand, it would seem from what He said to Mary that on that very morning He was about to ascend to His God and Father. She was *forbidden* to touch Him because He had not yet ascended. Thomas was *asked* to do so on a later occasion. It is not so very strange, then, that the ascension as mentioned by Luke is not recorded in John's gospel at all. The spiritual tendency of the narrative forbids it. As we shall see, the ascension of which He spoke to Mary, *before any human contact*, is the clue for us.

Interesting and important as these various aspects of His ascension are, it is needful for us to note the omission in Ephesians, of the slightest reference to the forty days sojourn upon the earth after His resurrection, and to the ascension as recorded in the book of Acts.

Let us then dismiss from our thoughts the various aspects of Matthew and Mark and Luke and follow the Spirit's guidance into the great truth that, *in relation to us and the spiritual blessings He has wrought and brought to us, His work was completely finished when He rose, and as He said to Mary, He ascended untouched into God's presence and sat down at God's right hand.*

All opposition is futile. His authority is fully sustained. His work is finished. *The Son of God is seated.*

#### THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE UNIVERSE—EARTHLY DOMINION

He descended into the depths at the mercy of Satan and Caesar, of Pilate and the priests, of the centurion

and the soldiers, of the people and the rabble, and was the scorn even of the crucified criminal at His side. None so lacking in power, in influence, in authority, none so far from God, so helpless and weak, so poor and vagrant, none so guilty, as He!

But when He arose, not only was every shadow of sin forever gone, but God had now exalted Him above His every enemy.

When on earth He had no inheritance at all in the land. But now, as the Son of Abraham every inch of the land is His.

Once, though foxes had holes and the birds of the air their nests, the Son of Man; their rightful Head, had not where to lay His head. But now, Adam's greater Son has retrieved all that Adam lost, and dominion over all the Creation, ownership of all the earth is His. The title deeds of the whole earth, the headship of the whole creation are vested in the erstwhile homeless Nazarene!

All the place and power which riches bring are His. In these last days the very courts of kings cringe at the fact of wealth. Its power seems paramount. Israel in her apostacy will yet make full use of this power to establish a suzerainty over earth's kings, and thus bring about a false millenium.

The One Who is our Master, our Owner, our Proprietor (since we are his slaves) is Owner of the Universe and enjoys all the prestige that such ownership involves.

The weakness that suffered them to take Him in the garden has given place to a personal power and presence of such intensity and force that it fells even His beloved apostle at His feet (Rev. 1:17). The sword

that proceeds out of His mouth will slay the greatest army that ever joined against an enemy (Rev. 19: 21).

The Man Who stood before Pilate's tribunal and was made a sacrifice to Pilate's delegated power, whose tomb's seal was backed by that great Roman world power itself, this Man has acquired all that power and far more.

Once Satan offered him the sovereignty of the earth if He would but worship him (Matt. 4: 1-10). But now Messiah shall receive it from the hand of God (Rev. 11: 15).

## EDITORIAL.

As this last number of the first volume of *Unsearchable Riches* goes to press, we wish to publicly express our gratitude to the Father for His tender care and grace which has enabled us to carry on this ministry. He has given us work to do: He has provided the means to carry it on: and He has opened hearts for His word. His blessing has been upon our venture, which has been successful beyond our most sanguine expectations.

We also wish to thank those whose prayers, sympathy and means have, under God, enabled us to proceed with this undertaking for the glory of His name and the good of His people, and we are sure that their kindly interest and help will continue to be in the future a constant source of encouragement and inspiration.

Our readers know by this time that we stand for a literal interpretation of the Bible, where it may be given without forcing the text. We take everything literally, except where express warning is given in the Bible itself that it is *not* to be so taken.

We submit that the Bible unfolds itself in a very remarkable manner on the lines of this plan of literal interpretation, when every statement is allowed to have full force.

God could have withheld His Word, and have left us in the dark about everything; but having given it, we are sure it is not intended to be a puzzle with a meaning quite different to that which is expressed. It cannot bring honor to God to invent meanings for those parts of

Scripture whose *literal* interpretation appears impossible or foolish to men, because "the things which are impossible with men, are possible with God," and "the foolishness of God is wiser than men."

The utmost confusion has been introduced into men's minds by the unworthy process of "spiritualizing" the plain and clear declarations of the Bible. For instance, where David is mentioned, as in Jer. 30. 9, Ezek. 34. 24 and Hos. 3. 5, there are found those who will say that not David, but Christ, is meant. But we ought not to allow our ignorance of His ways to lead us to seek for an interpretation of His Word which will bring it to the level of our own poor comprehension. If we cannot understand Scripture as it stands, let us at least keep a graceful silence when the Lord speaks, and bow submissively while confessing our incapacity. Ill-digested interpretations, however wise they may seem to our own minds, may do much damage in the minds of others. We may weigh well these words of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians: "For we are not as the many, corrupting the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God, speak we in Christ" (2. 17).

In the words of another, "This remarkable verse draws an illustration from the commercial world as follows: As small dealers in provisions, 'hucksters,' go to wholesale markets, and take thence from the vast supplies of the produce of God's earth, for a low price, such provisions as they can find room for in their stalls and shops, which provisions are by-and-by fouled with the dust and dirt of these narrow storehouses, or by their mismanagement, wilful or otherwise, not to speak of wanton adulteration, so that they become more or less unwholesome and distasteful, but yet are sold for a high price with a view to gain, so (argues the apostle) do



the many deal with the word of God. They can obtain it in its purity for so little trouble that it is practically theirs without money and without price, but, having got it, they retail it to others, so mixed with their own inventions and glosses that it not only fails to attract and nourish, but it comes forth from them as a positively distasteful and unwholesome compound."

If we have taken this warning to heart, we will interpret the Bible according to its own statements. So that where it mentions David, we will know that *David* is meant, unless it is expressly stated that he is not meant in person, but as a type, and where it speaks of a city, we will know that a *city*, and not the church, is meant. Where, also, Scripture speaks of gold and silver and precious stones, as in the description of the New Jerusalem, we will agree that it means gold and silver and precious stones, and nothing else. Where mountains, and hills, and trees, and valleys, and wine and oil, and other such things, are enumerated, we will bow to these statements, and *especially* in that Book—the Revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave unto Him—will we be most careful to give every statement its fullest, broadest, and most literal interpretation, because this Book is hedged in with unique declarations, as in chapter 1, verses 1-3, and chapter 22, verses 13, 19.

These words are so solemn that we do not see how anyone can have the hardihood to explain away the marvellous statements of the Book, as those persons do who turn it into a mere tissue of allegorical teaching. Such a spirit as we advocate will not interfere with our reasonable sense of congruity, for the Bible fully explains its own apparent incongruities, as, for instance, in the visions of Zachariah, the four horns which appear are expressly interpreted to be the nations which have scat-

tered Judah. The same is done for us in the Book of Revelation, when it is necessary; for example, chapter 17, verse 18, explains that the woman is a city, and verse 15 declares that the waters where the harlot sitteth are nations. Likewise, chapter 14, verses 15-20, tells us that the harvest of the earth, and the grapes of the vine of the earth, are fully identified with men, because their destruction brings forth blood.

We strive to show how the Bible guides us when it is left to speak for itself. We accept every statement in the Bible as it is written, and let it guide us whithersoever it will. And we think our readers will admit that the Bible speaks plainly, distinctly and with no uncertain sound, and that it is in itself a beautiful whole, though it requires, in those who wish to understand it, much thought, much labor, and much prayer, as well as the Divine guidance of the Holy Spirit. In fact, it requires that all the parts of that man who seeks to know its hidden mysteries shall be freely surrendered to God, and that he will lay aside the study of the world and of the flesh, in order to give himself entirely to this one most glorious subject, namely, the Word of the living God.

Let us by all means use all other kinds of knowledge, for they will help us; but let us not use them as though they were final objects of our researches, but rather as steps towards the more perfect attainment of the true comprehension of God's word. To glorify God by surrendering all one's powers to Him, and by receiving into one's being from God Himself those treasures of wisdom and knowledge which are hidden in Jesus Christ, is the worthiest object of life. It leads us onward on the way which ends in the knowledge of all things, because in Christ are hid *all* treasures of wisdom and knowledge,

and He holds the truth of God as it appears to God Himself.

\* \* \*

This issue contains the first of a series of two papers on the question of Apocalyptic interpretation. These studies have for their object a general presentation of the explanatory clues furnished in the book itself, for the purpose of demonstrating that the Scriptures are self-explanatory, and that exegesis should be founded upon a natural, solid basis—the evidence adduced from the sacred page.

A thorough and exhaustive treatment of the subject is, of course, beyond the scope of these papers, which are limited solely to an elucidation of verses 1 and 19 of the first chapter which are confessedly the steps that form the ascent to the portals of this august Book. No attempt has, therefore, been made to treat any of the particular or more complex phases of the subject, nor to discuss the historic aspect, which, although of great interest, has no weight in matters of exegesis, and could not appropriately be treated within the limits of the available space.

In writing the articles our chief aim has been to lift the subject from the fog of academic discussion to the plane practical. Hence, we have avoided lengthy and elaborate arguments, discarded scholastic terms and refrained from burdening the pages with Hebrew and Greek type—all of which, we feel, would only mistify the vast majority of readers and hinder rather than stimulate interest in biblical problems.

It is hoped, therefore, that these papers may prove of interest and help to truth-seekers, for whom they are designed, and that they will be received and appreciated in the spirit that their importance and significance deserves.

## THE SECRET ECONOMY.

### HEAVENLY DOMINION.

These were but earthy dignities. Earth's rulers, however, were but the unconscious tools of heavenly spiritual powers. Prince Satan, himself, with other princes and those who receive from them a delegate authority, not only rule in the heavenly spiritual domains, but meddle with the affairs of earth. So much is this the case that Satan claimed (and our Master did not deny his claim) that the kingdoms of this world, with all their pomp, belonged to him, and to whomsoever he might give them.

At times the veil is lifted which hides these spiritual powers from our gaze. A parallel is seen between earth's sovereignties and the spiritual dominions. The messenger sent to Daniel is hindered twenty-one days by "the Prince of the Kingdom of Persia." He is aided in his spiritual warfare by Michael, "one of the chief princes," called in another place "the great prince who stands up for the sons of thy (Daniel's) people." (Dan. 10:13).

Like those of earth, the heavenly rule and influence is apportioned to various grades. The highest are called "princes" or "sovereigns." Their dominions are first-rate powers or empires. They are called "principalities" in the A. V. But in common parlance a "principality" is a second or third rate power, below the rank even of a kingdom. This is not the thought. "Sovereign" is the highest title of the heavenly realms.

Their domains, however, are, like those of earth, di-

vided into lesser jurisdictions. The authorities at the head of these dependencies possess delegated power similar to the Governor of a British Province. In our Master's days on earth, Pilate was an apt example of such power exercised in behalf of another. They told him if he let Messiah go he would not be Cæsar's friend, and thus would lose his office. Pilate thought he derived all his authority from Rome, and could do just as he wished with the Master. But Messiah points out his error when He says: "Thou couldst have no authority against Me at all, except it be given thee from *above*." (John 19:11).

The celestial realm nearest the earth would seem to be the aerial jurisdiction which acknowledges Satan as its overlord or sovereign.

Since, then, the earth is but the vassal of celestial realms, the sovereignty of the earth must be settled in the heavenly spheres. Satan must be ejected from his domains before his messiah can be hurled into the lake of fire. But all this is future and material. It is ours to know that even now, all heavenly rank and rule is placed subordinate to the Son of God.

Peter, viewing this from the standpoint of the earth, sets Him above the messengers, and those of ability and those exercising a delegate authority in the heavenly realms. Peter cannot, in his earthly light, yet speak of "sovereigns" being under Him, for as yet Satan holds fast to his heavenly place, and his earthly power. (1 Pet. 3:22). But we know his power is broken and his last stand will be but the reckless hopelessness of a desperado.

Messiah alone is Master. He is higher than the highest. The head that dares to lift itself above Him must be bruised (Gen. 3:15).

Messiah's headship over all the earth was a mystery

long known and the delight of many a holy one in Israel. And now it is our place to enjoy His heavenly exaltation as revealed in this further portion of the secret, which was not made known until His earthly headship seemed hopelessly deferred. The Kingdom of God upon this earth waits the repentance of His earthly people, but His spiritual kingdom waits for nothing. We, His people, already know by the spirit He has given us what it means to be transferred from Satan's dark domain into the luminous Kingdom of God's Son. (Col. 1:13).

These thoughts, these kingdoms, do not clash. The Kingdom to be set up on earth replaces earthly kingdoms. He rules it as the Son of David and the Son of Man. (Dan. 2:44). The Kingdom now in force is opposed, not to any earthly kingdom (for we are in subjection to them), but to the spiritual kingdom of which Satan is the sovereign. It does not lead us to acknowledge Christ as David's Son or Adam's Son (though we gladly hail Him these as well) but as the Son of God, the true Suzerain of the Spirit Realm.

All hail to the Son of God, the Sovereign of the Universe!

All hail to His God most puissant, and to His power, invincible, victorious!

#### THE HEADSHIP OF THE ASSEMBLY, WHICH IS HIS BODY.

As we have seen, not only on earth has sin wrought ruin and destroyed God's perfect creation, but the heavens, too, are burdened with its horrid presence. Indeed, heaven is its birthplace; and the anointed cherub is its father. That proud and peerless creature could not brook God's purpose to make His Son, Christ Jesus, the Head of all the Universe. All his efforts since have been to draw

away God's creatures to allegiance with himself. A third of the heavenly host become his followers.

Adam falls before his wiles. And ever since his success in Eden the great adversary of Messiah has received divine honors at human shrines. He has usurped the sway of earth. Men are his willing dupes. Soon he will mock the Mighty God and bring forth his own messiah, a man to fulfill all his horrid behests. Then shall Messiah Jesus come and hurl His counterfeit into gehenna, and bind fast his arch enemy with chains. Thus shall earth be purged of his presence and power.

But before earth becomes the refuge of the Accuser he must be dislodged from his heavenly domain, which he now holds fast. Michael and his angelic hosts will accomplish this.

And then, when he is gone, the heavens will need a safeguard against further defection. The breach occasioned by the ejection of the wicked host must be repaired and filled. Can God have created these mighty angels, lawless though they afterward became, for naught? They must have had some part to play in the vast celestial economy. They surely played a very important, though destructive, part in this earth's history, though mankind did not dream of the power that impelled them.

These spiritual realms must not remain empty. Their part in the divine harmony must not remain unsung. God has purposed by His Messiah that the whole universe shall be rounded out to the very last detail. No lack, no imperfection may mar His finished work.

To create anew such angelic beings as had fallen would leave the possibility of another fall. This cannot be.

His plan on earth is to secure all by His Messiah—even Jesus—and the blood He shed. All will be founded

on His death, and all restored to greater splendor far than it originally had. God's name and fame will be proclaimed from pole to pole. His heart will be satiated with the responses to His love.

Here is the key to high heaven's restoration. In heaven, as well as on earth, Christ's blood not only fends all fear of failure, but it fills the throne of the universe with the dregs of earth. They became the wonder and amazement of the heavenly throng, for they display the unfathomable depths of God's wisdom, the rare plentitude of His power, the overwhelming redundancy of His grace and love. His name, His fame, will form the theme of praise from the Pole Star to the Southern Cross.

Christ's spiritual body is the hope of heaven, as well as heavenly in its hope.

Here, then, we have the final arrangement necessary to a complete and finished universe. Earth is under Messiah's feet; His twelve apostles rule His people Israel. Heaven, too, is gladly subject to His sway. The assembly which is His body is the means of its administration.

This, "the fullness that filleth all in all," leaves nothing in all the universe still unattended to. It is the finishing touch which rounds it out to its consummation.

The figure of "the body" is not new. Paul had used it before in writing of the Corinthian and the Roman saints, to illustrate their relation to *one another*. Now, however, he presses their relation to the *Head*. (Rom. 12:4, 5; 1 Cor. 12:12). The mutual sympathy of the members of the human body had been used as an apt picture of the sympathy which ought to exist between saints sharing the spiritual resurrection life of Christ. The spirit's gifts, too, had been explained by means of this figure. Their exercise on earth during the period of the body's develop-



ment, prior to its maturity, for the mutual upbuilding of the saints, was aptly shown by the care one member of the human body has for every other member, and the fact that each has its own particular and peculiar function, performing for the common good what none of the other members could do for themselves. Christ is not mentioned as the Head of the body in this aspect.

With the passing of these gifts by the coming of perfection, our thoughts are raised to a higher level. (1 Cor. 13).

It is no great feat for a man to be able to attend to the development of his own body. This is well, and in keeping with his youthful years, before he has attained his majority. But if he were to spend his life in simply feeding and caring for himself, with no thought for other's weal, his functions will have failed to fill their purpose.

So, too, with the body of Christ. It still needs sustenance, and it gets through its head. It depends for sight, it hears God's words, and it smells the savor of His excellencies through Christ, its Head. But Christ has work besides the care of His spiritual body. His members share in this.

Let us ask then, what has *He* to do, and we will find out our employment. A man plans and directs the work before him with his intellect, his head. To perform it he needs the various members of his body. So, too, with Christ. He alone can superintend the mighty work of renewing the earth, of ruling its millennial bliss, of creating it anew. He alone is capable of cleansing the heavens, of ruling its imperial domains, and of creating them anew.

He will accomplish these mighty achievements through the members of His body.

Not all God's holy ones of every economy will have their place in this assembly. The statement is not to the effect that the general assembly, including all His own, are members of His body, but that the assembly which is characterized by the fact that God has placed it in that close relationship to Him—of *that* assembly—He is HEAD.

#### THE ORGANIZATION OF THIS ASSEMBLY.

God has granted Him the Headship over every detail which concerns the assembly which is His body.

The apostles are appointed the rulers of Israel. There will not only be one throne for the Great King, but twelve thrones subordinate. This is necessary in the physical sphere. The limitations of time and space forbid that He should attend to every detail of that earthly rule in person. Moses found the rule of Israel by his single self impracticable. There was not time nor strength for him to attend to every case. He appointed deputies, who heard all minor matters. Christ has not Moses' weakness, but still it will be necessary that rule be delegated to those under Him in His earthly rule.

*But it is not so with His spiritual body.*

We are quite willing to admit that in millennial days it will be quite impracticable for every saint in far-off lands to go direct to the Messiah for every detail and instruction as to his work. This would cause great embarrassment. It could not be done.

But the wonderful mechanism of the human body is such that the various members cannot move by themselves and *must* have the *head's* directions. Such is its nervous organization that it cannot even go to a fellow member, even in the direst danger, except *through* the head.

Two heads would be insanity. The many headed mon-

ster that parades itself as the church of Christ is blind to all this. And the shame of it is that many of His own are snared by that great system which will have any head but that unseen, all-wise, all-mighty Head, Who alone is able to control the members of His own body.

All other heads are not of His appointing. All other heads rob him of this brilliant spiritual gem that blazes on His diadem—the combined authority and ability to rule the whole assembly which is His body in the minutest details, without subordinate or intervention of any kind whatever.\*

Yea, it is worse than this, for God has granted Him this great favor as a transcendent compliment to His spiritual capacity and wisdom. But His saints deny God's estimate of Him and rob Him of His Father's gift. Away with every other head that raises itself in opposition to His power and reward! O, you that love Him, listen to my complaint. For if it pains a shallow mortal, such

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\*Much confusion has resulted from treating the word "church" as though it were a proper noun, and applying it exclusively to the "church which is His body." We have tried to avoid this by rendering it "assembly." There was a "church" in Israel in the past and there will be in the future. The Greek version of the Hebrew Scriptures often speaks of the *ekklesia*, or church, in connection with Israel's assemblies. Indeed, "the ecclesia in the Wilderness" is mentioned in Acts. During our Master's lifetime there was a church. Taxgatherers and non-Jews were excluded from it. This was true of the assembly in Jerusalem during the pentecostal era until Cornelius was reluctantly acknowledged. That Paul persecuted "the church of God" is no more a proof that the present economy was in force than that it was established in Israel because Moses wrote that neither Ammonite nor Moabite should enter into "the church of Jehovah." That was not "the church," neither is the present "the church." God's spirit calls one "the church in the wilderness," the other "the church which is His body."

as I, to have his Master so despised and robbed, how must He feel Himself? Were not Calvary's wounds enough?

He is head, and He alone!

"But," they say, "it is absolutely necessary to have *some* organization. And organization without a head is impossible." Granted! *Organization* is *absolutely necessary*. Without it the various fractions which make up the whole work against and not for the common good. Without it unity is gone, and sympathy. Utter failure comes from lack of organization.

BUT, THE ASSEMBLY WHICH IS HIS BODY IS ORGANIZED.

Search this globe from pole to pole and see if you can find in all His works an organization to compare with the human body. The relation of its parts are perfect in their place; each member though helpless by itself, when joined to the head is powerful and practical and perfect.†

Men have made automatons out of wood and wheels. But can they be mentioned alongside a corpse? And men have counterfeited the living body of Christ with its powerful spiritual vigor, but their efforts have been nothing but a confused mass of wheels and wood. Though they are dead they do not make a decent corpse. When a man "loses his head" he either goes daft or dies. What a loss, then, to the assembly when the members refuse to hold fast to their glorious Head!

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†Its unique and distinguishing feature is the importance and preponderance of the head. The lowest forms of life seem to have no head. They may be cut into bits and each part shifts for itself. As we ascend the scale of animal life, the head plays a more and more important part in its economy. In man the head only is associated with those spiritual functions which separate him from the lower creation.

## THE EXALTATION OF THE BODY'S MEMBERS.

The exaltation of Christ is God's most notable exhibition of power. But we must not forget that He reminds us of it here in order to give us a clew and an example of His power on behalf of those who believe Him—those whose relationship to Him is based solely and simply on *faith*. If the Head of the body is exalted, then the members must perforce be likewise. The power that raised the One has raised the other, too.

To this aspect of God's power we now address ourselves. After showing how Christ has been raised and glorified, he goes on to say:

"You, too, being dead as to your offenses and sins, which once marked your behavior, in accord with the order of this age, in accord with the sovereign of the aerial dependencies, the spirit that now is operating among Obstinacy's sons,

(Among whom *we*, too, all were once swerved in our conduct by the influence of our physical appetites, carrying out the resolutions formed by our physical apprehension, and were Wrath's offspring, too, by natural instinct, as the rest.

But God, being rich in mercy, for His vast love with which He has loved us, we, too, being dead as to the offenses.

Has made us alive together Christward (safety is a matter of favor), and has awakened us together and has seated us together in the celestial regions in Christ Jesus,

In order that He may display Himself in future ages by the transcendent wealth of favor seen in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus."

## JEW AND GENTILE MEET IN MESSIAH'S DEATH.

Surely we have already seen enough of Messiah's love

to enable us to fall in with a previous judgment of the apostle, that, since One died for all, then all died (2 Cor. 5:14). It is impossible to view the accursed death aright without coming to the conclusion that the One who bore its bitterness was not receiving His own deserts, but bore it on behalf of others. Not that they could have borne it for themselves and He merely acted as their "substitute." They were fatally unfit. After their own death they were appointed for judgment. Not so with those who died with Him. That death leaves Judgment in its rear. The offenses and the sins once theirs, instead of staring in their faces, are left far behind, never to be remembered against them again.

And since we judge that that death was not His due, and yet God meted it to Him, then we are constrained to acknowledge, that we, according to God's reckoning, died then and there.

Even as Christ's spiritual death-the separation from His God, His Life-was the reality of which the physical was the tardy symbol, so now the members of His body reckon their death, not at the cessation of their own physical functions, but at the time when He suffered severance from the smile of God. God reckons it so whether we do or not. He accounts physical death but sleep, for then our spirits, like Christ's, are consigned to His care. The reality was when Christ drank the dregs of death for us.

What joy, what release, what liberty, flows from this thought! Free are we from Sin's dominion: our offenses are all gone! Our death to these makes possible the further favor.

But once we, too, like the Ephesians, were in line with the spirit of the age. Literally, this reads "according to the age of this cosmos." That is, in harmony with the

present age, which is characterized by a "cosmos" or *order of things* which is opposed to God. It began after the deluge and will end with the change in the constitution of earthly affairs brought about by the advent of the Son of Man.

Perhaps some of the Ephesians were alive at the very time of the crucifixion. Some of them, doubtless, like ourselves, had not yet been born. But all of them had sided in their time with the great spiritual Sovereign of the Aerial Provinces who had made their city the religious center of his cult throughout the world. He was the chief instigator of Christ's sufferings and death. All were once identified with the dark system of things which he inaugurated and still guides, which began in the garden when the serpent insinuated himself into Eve's good graces and destroyed her confidence in God; and which culminated in the murder of Messiah and will have its climax in the worship of Satan during the great apostacy. All were sons of Obstinacy, siding with Satan in his campaign against Messiah and Messiah's God.

The apostle warned the Corinthians that "the things which the Nations sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God." "And," says he, "I would not that you should have communion with demons. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; ye cannot partake of the table of the Lord and of the table of demons. Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?" (1 Cor. 10:20-23). With this agrees the Psalmist. "Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto demons. And shed innocent blood, the blood of their sons and their daughters whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan" (Ps. 106:37).

Our Master, when accused of being in league with the prince of the demons, speaks of them as belonging

to Satan's dominion (Mat. 12:26). We have no hint that they are heavenly beings, though they are spirits. They seem always connected with the earth. Their ascendancy and possession of mankind is to cease when the Kingdom of God is set up on the earth. When the sixth bowl of wrath is emptied, the Euphrates is dried up that the way of the kings of the orient might be prepared; and to gather them and the rest of earth's kings together to battle for the great day of God Almighty, demon spirits go forth issuing from the mouths of the Dragon and the Beast and the False Prophet (Rev. 16:12-14). Indeed, the last bowl of wrath to be poured out is emptied upon the *air*, and as a result Great Babylon is overthrown, henceforth to be the dwelling place of demons and the prison house of every unclean and hateful bird. When the air is thus judged, the scene is cleared of this dark cloud of spirits which had kept men in darkness for ages. During the thousand years they are all relegated to the ruins of Babylon. (Rev. 16:17; 18:2).

The facts drawn from these various passages seem to warrant us in describing them as the denizens of the air, under the jurisdiction of Satan and, of course, opposed to God.

The various gods of Assyria, Egypt, Greece and Rome, are too often dismissed as but the figments of their vivid imaginations. Not so Paul could say to the Corinthians, "For though there be that are called gods \* \* \* as there are gods many." And our Master also bears witness that God called them gods to whom the word of God came, as we read in the eighty-second Psalm. "He judgeth among the gods," and "I said 'Ye are Gods.'" And in this psalm we find that God judges the gods for their unjust judgment upon the earth. He charges them to



uphold the humble, but turns from them in disgust to commune with His own heart. "They know not, neither will they understand: They walk in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are shaken." Once more He turns to them: "I said 'Ye are gods, and all of you the sons of the Most High,' but ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes." God himself will arise and judge the earth since they have so signally failed.

These spirits of the air are real beings, into whose charge Satan has put the details of human affairs. The angel who showed John the Revelation would not accept Divine worship, but bade him worship God (Rev. 22:8-9), but these demons not only accept but crave the worship of their dupes. That they can perform miracles is clear from the power of Jannes and Jambres, who withstood Moses. We are distinctly told that they will do so in order to induce earth's kings to gather their armies together at Armageddon (Rev. 16:14). To the bulk of mankind the superhuman is a synonym for the Divine. Thus these spirits have easily received the worship of the greater part of the race.

"They walk in darkness" is God's estimate of them. No wonder then, that they are called "the rulers of the darkness of this world" (Eph. 6:12). But they are not sovereign. They are dependents, acknowledging Satan, by them called Beelzebub, or "Lord of Unrest," as their overlord. Thus he becomes the Prince of the Aerial Provinces. And thus the Nations, by serving their various divinities, serve him who is their prince.

Such were the nations. What of the Jews? Were they in a better case?

Alas! they, too, were actuated, not by Jehovah's Spirit, but by this same spirit of the aerial provinces, Messiah's worst enemy. Satan's methods and tactics

to snare Jehovah's people vary from those employed to win the other nations over to his side. He cannot palm off his dark wisdom for light, for they have the oracles of God. But he succeeds in so covering God's words and so hardening their hearts, that in effect, while most straight-laced and religious, while occupied with the finer points of the law, they still had room to gratify their physical propensities and followed traditions, the fruit of their own native intelligence, in place of the sacred writings entrusted to their care. The adversary fires them with an excessive zeal for Jehovah (as they think): yet it burns against God's messengers and crucifies His Christ. They were guilty, not only of sin, but of transgression and, in its worst sense, just as truly as the other nations, they were offending the God they gloried in.

In the fearful judgments of the Revelation the fear-fullest are those which overtake apostate Israel. Their religion, Divine though its framework is, is useless apart from the vivifying spirit of Messiah. But this in no way alters their responsibility. They fail to measure up to its requirements—and their name is Wrath.

We have often referred to the case of Paul himself. We need not apologize, however, for God calls his a pattern case. Even as he was a concrete expression of Israel's hatred of Messiah, so, too, he is a sample of the mercy shown. The more we ponder his early course and call, the more we are constrained to wonder at the lavishness of the love that underlies the rich mercy shown to him and to traitors like him of Israel's sons, who, in spite of the sunlight of Jehovah's word, loved darkness and joined the forces of the Prince of Darkness in high handed rebellion against Messiah.

What was their true desert?

Death!

And they got it!

Just as the nations, by the constraint of Messiah's love, judged that they died with Him, so too, the Sons of Israel acknowledge their just sentence executed upon the Son of God. Here is the foundation, the beginning of their new career. Here all the old score is forever settled.

Thus, in death, we first find Jew and Gentile on a common level. But, though they both have died the death due the vilest criminal, they find themselves buried in the rich man's tomb—the tomb of "He-shall-add-the-heights." (Joseph of Arimathea).

Truly, the heights shall be added!

BOTH ARE RESURECTED, RAISED AND AT REST TOGETHER,  
IN HIM.

Messiah has brought God, as it were, under such heavy obligations, He has enriched Him with such a vast store of glorious wealth, that it is God's turn to recompense Him for it all. His deserts are high, but not higher than the rich reward.

He is brought from among the dead and raised and seated at God's right hand in the heavens. And, glorious to relate, the Jew and Gentile whose faith laid them low with Him in death, were also raised from among the dead, and have ascended and sit with Him at God's right hand.

The mother of Zebedee's children could frame no greater wish than that her two sons might sit, one on His right, and the other on His left, in His Kingdom. But he could not promise that to her. Suppose that this, the highest earthly honor, were given to a Gentile dog! How excessive were such grace!

Even as the heavens are higher than the earth, so also, is His heavenly throne exalted above His earthly sover-

eignty. And this, the loftiest place in all the universe, is reserved—nay, it is the present portion—of Israel's apostates and of Gentile curs!

Such grace surpassing is greater than our shallow hearts can hold.

But are not Israel's sons given preference in this celestial glory? Will they sit on His right hand and the nations on His left? No. They are peers, and both receive the honor of His right.

## THE ACTS.

### THE SEPARATION OF SAUL (XIII. XIV).

Before taking up this portion of The Acts, it may be well to give an analysis and note the methodic arrangement of the contents.

13. 1-3. AT SYRIAN ANTIOCH. Saul and Barnabas depart, being separated and sent forth by the Spirit to a special work.

13. 4-12. At Cyprus.

1. 13. 13. Perga and Pamphylia.

2. 13. 14-52. Pisidian Antioch.

3. 14. 1-6. Iconium.

4. 14. 7-20. Lystra.

} Gospel  
preached.  
Disciples  
made.

DEPARTURE

4. 14. 21. Lystra.

3. 14. 22. Iconium.

2. 14. 23. Pisidian Antioch.

1. 14. 24. Perga and Pamphylia.

14. 25. At Attalia.

} Disciples  
confirmed  
Elders  
appointed

RETURN

14. 26-28. AT SYRIAN ANTIOCH: Paul and Barnabas return, having fulfilled the work.

In this section we have the inception of a movement of surpassing interest to the nations. The preceding section dealt with the admission of the proselytes in the land to Israel's board. Now we shall see the Jews outside the land and their heathen neighbors reached by the glad tidings and formed into a distinct assemblage on the ground of grace and faith.

On leaving Damascus Saul repaired to Jerusalem. Barnabas introduced him to the apostles, and he continued with them, until the brethren, fearing the irate Hellenists, brought down to Cæsarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus, where he remained until developments pushed him to the front (Acts 9. 26-29).

The persecution that arose about Stephen dispersed those who had continued in the Apostles' teaching, and they went as far as Antioch, carrying their doctrine with them (Acts 8. 1; 11. 19, 20). Some of them ventured to speak to the Hellenists: and a great number turned unto the Lord. When the news concerning them reached Jerusalem, the church there sent Barnabas, who went to Tarsus to seek for Saul, and brought him to Antioch, where they taught together a whole year (Acts 11. 25, 26). Afterward they went to Jerusalem to carry the contribution for the saints in Judea, and having discharged their mission there, returned to Antioch (Acts 11. 29, 30; 12. 25).

As the opposition to the Spirit's ministry in the land intensifies, Saul and Barnabas are separated by the Spirit, and sent to a special work among the nations. Henceforth the land of Israel slowly recedes toward the background and heathendom comes to the fore. At Syrian Antioch, while certain prophets and teachers ministered unto the Lord, the Holy Spirit said:

"Separate me, Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them." (Acts, 13, 2).

The importance of this dispensation-making event is enhanced in various ways.

(1) *Here we have the first direct act of the Spirit in separating men for service.* The twelve had been commissioned by the Lord before His ascension (Matt. 28. 16-20; Mark 16. 9-20; Luk. 24. 44-49; John 20. 21-23;

Acts 1. 6-8). Paul was commissioned and sent forth by the Spirit (Acts 13. 2. 4).

(2) *Paul's apostleship dates from this separation.* (1 Rom. 1. 1). Prior thereto he is mentioned as a teacher (Acts 9. 28; 11. 26; 13. 1). Now he is called an apostle (Acts 14. 4, 14). His appointment to the apostleship is further marked by the change of his Hebrew name into the Greek Paul (Acts 13. 9), a fact which denotes that henceforth he becomes "the apostle to the Gentiles" (Rom. 11. 13). He who had testified "that Jesus is the Son of God" (Acts 9. 20) is now officially set apart for "the gospel of God" (Rom. 1. 1).

(3) *The separation from the twelve.* Hitherto, Paul had continued with the twelve: now he is formally separated from them. Thenceforward they pursue diametric courses. This fact is impressively emphasized in the Roman letter, where Paul speaks of his ministry (Rom. 15. 14-21).

"For I say that Christ hath been made a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, that he might confirm the promises given unto the fathers \* \* \* \*  
because of the grace that was given me of God, that I should be a minister of Christ Jesus unto the nations, ministering the gospel of God." (Rom. 15. 8, 16).

Two ministries are here placed in juxtaposition—Christ, a minister to the *Circumcision*, Paul, a minister to the *Nations*. The ministry of the twelve is not named, being a *continuance* of the Master's ministry to Israel.

"What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder" (Matt. 19. 6). This true maxim is not restricted in its application to the marriage bond.

But its antipode is equally true: *What God hath put asunder, let no man put together.*

This principle cannot be violated without serious conse-

quences. The Spirit has separated Paul's ministry from that of the twelve. He has fixed between them a great gulf, and the attempts of reconcilers to bridge it by theological stratagems have involved the whole body of New Testament revelation into confusion and discord.

(4) *The heathen hear the glad tidings for the first time.* Following the record of Paul's preaching in the synagogue comes the extraordinary statement, "*And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath*" (Acts 13. 42). This is something novel under the sun. Never before do we read of such an event in apostolic ministry.

That the antecedent ministry of Paul and Barnabas was of a different style, and limited to the Hellenists, is apparent, for returning to the very city and church from which they started out, they related God's gracious workings among the nations as a piece of news.

Moreover, the Jerusalem church had already recognized that "to the nations also had God granted repentance unto life (Acts 11. 18), and that the Spirit's gift made them one with the baptized company at Jerusalem. On the strength of that recognition Paul addressed the proselytes or "fearers of God," together with the "men of Israel" (Acts 13. 16, 26). The fact that the rehearsal of God's workings among the nations comes as a surprise after the admission of proselytes had been acknowledged and acted upon, proves that the opening of the "door of faith" was a recent departure.

Last, but not least, is the radical difference between Peter's sermon at Pentecost, and Paul's sermon at Antioch.

Peter proclaimed repentance and baptism: neither has any place in Paul's sermon.



Peter proclaimed pardon in connection with repentance and baptism: Paul preaches it in connection with faith (Acts 2. 38; 13. 38, 39).

Justification and freedom from law, not even mooted in Peter's sermons and letters, are preached for the first time and stand out prominent (Acts 13. 39).

The sign-gifts which accompanied Peter's preaching at Jerusalem and Cæsarea, are conspicuous by their absence.

What is the significance of these facts?

A reference to the analysis will show that this section is bounded by two statements:

13. 2: "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them."

14. 26: "And thence they sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been committed to the grace of God for the work which they had fulfilled."

"This tells us that the work is *potentially complete*, while the added fact that Paul detaches his preaching at Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, from his subsequent career and points to it as a pattern of the gospel of God, marks its *typical* character (2 Tim. 3. 11).

Here, then, we have the fragment of a new departure which is perfected in the epistles. The remainder of Paul's ministry in the Acts is colored by the special purpose of the book, which is the Kingdom to Israel.

The sermon itself (Acts 13. 16-41), is founded on a series of Old Testament passages. The first quotation deals with the Davidic covenant, and its fulfillment in Christ (v. 22); three support the resurrection (vv. 33-35); one warns the Jews of the judgment for resisting the gospel (v. 41); the last deals with the preaching to the nations (v. 47).

The references to the Davidic covenant and the resurrection need not detain us. They prove that the rehabili-

tation of the Davidic monarchy was in the warp and woof of the glad tidings. The other citations are of special interest.

Throughout these chapters Israel and the Nations present a vivid contrast. The results of the first preaching are not reassuring. The Jews are everywhere inimical. Like Bar-Jesus, they blaspheme and oppose the Spirit's gracious work (Acts 13. 8, 45, 50; 14. 2, 4, 5, 19). Judgment looms up, and the apostle sounds a note of alarm in the language of the prophets:

"Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish;  
For I work a work in your days,  
A work which ye shall in no wise believe, if one declare it  
unto you." (Acts 13. 41. Hab. 1. 5).

The Nations, on the contrary, everywhere display surprising willingness and receptiveness (13. 7, 42, 48; 14. 1). When the whole city of Antioch came to hear the word of God, while the blasphemies of irascible Jews, and the joyous exultations of the Gentiles mingled in a confused volume of sound, the scene seemed to reach a finale—which, in wonder and magic, partook of the strangeness of the occasion—in the solemn avowal of the speakers to their wrought-up listeners:

"Lo, we turn to the nations. For so hath the Lord commanded us.  
I have set thee for a light of the Gentiles,  
That thou should be for salvation unto the uttermost parts  
of the earth." (Acts 13. 47, Isa. 49. 6).

We learn from this citation that the message to the nations is in accord with Isaiah's prophecy, though not exhausting it.

The subject of Isa. 49 is "the Servant of the Lord," and that a *person* is meant, and not the nation as a whole or a remnant, is clear from *vv.* 5, 6, where the servant's

work is viewed in relation to both—"to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and restore the preserved of Israel." The servant was one "whom man despiseth, whom the nation abhorreth" (v. 7.) Yet events are impending which will command universal surprise—"kings shall see and arise to do homage, princes, also, shall render worship, because of the doings of the God of Israel" (v. 7). In view of these, "the isles" are called upon to "listen" (v. 1), because the Servant has been given "for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles" (v. 6). It is plain that this salvation, extending to the ends of the earth, is bound up with Israel's restoration, and flows therefrom. In closest harmony with this, the salvation which Paul declared was founded on "the sure mercies of David" and the fulfillment of the promises to the fathers (Acts 13. 22, 23, 26, 32, 33).

Our Lord Jesus Christ is "the son of David, the son of Abraham"—the heir to David's throne and the Abrahamic promise (Matt. 1. 1). His coronation as David's Son will bring the nations the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant, which, though founded on Israel's supremacy, embraces humankind. *"In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed"* (Gen. 12. 3). Israel is the medium through which those blessings will be dispensed.

When, therefore, the counsels of mercy for the nations seemed likely to fail in consequence of Israel's defection, Paul was raised to take the nation's place and carry to the foreigners the Abrahamic blessing.

The Gospel of God, as is evident from the Roman and Galatian letters, conferred on Gentile believers the Abrahamic blessing. As a fact, Abraham in uncircumcision pictures the position of those Gentiles who then believed

Paul's gospel. What was then reckoned to him, is now reckoned to them (Rom. 4. 23. 24).

He was justified by faith, through grace, apart from works of any kind, without ritual or ceremonial. So were they (Rom. 4. 10, 11).

He possessed spiritual blessings, but the land and its abundance he did not possess. So did they. The Gentiles had been admitted to Israel's table, and partook of her spiritual things (Rom. 15. 27).

Israel's covenant-blessings are material and spiritual. The Kingdom of God on earth will present a combination of the two. The material blessings consist of the products of the land; therefore their fruition is impossible until Jehovah turns in mercy to his people and removes the curse from their land. "And it shall come to pass in that day, I will answer, saith Jehovah, I will answer the heavens, and they shall answer the earth; and the earth shall answer the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall answer Jezreel" (Aos. 2. 21, 22, Joel 3. 14, Am. 9. 13-15). The spiritual blessings depend solely on God's grace, and may be dispensed apart from the material. So the apostle tells the Romans, the Kingdom of God does not consist in meat and drink alone, but also in righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom. 14. 17). These they enjoyed already; for the others they awaited Israel's fulness.

In the day of Jerusalem's consolation Jehovah's glory shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together (Isa. 40. 5). Glory will hang over Mount Zion as a canopy (Isa. 4. 5); the earth will be flooded with it, as the waters cover the deep (Hab. 2. 14); and the sons of Israel, reclaimed to their Messiah, will declare Jehovah's glory among the nations (Isa. 66. 19). Paul, like Israel in a future day, beheld the splendor of the God of glory who

appeared to Abraham (Acts 7. 1; 9. 3) and was sent to the nations with "the gospel of the glory of the blessed God" (1 Tim. 1. 11).

Paul's personal ministry among the nations was after the style of the one which Israel will perform in the day of her restoration, only without the same degree of material blessing. God will not be balked of His purposes, and while His long suffering lingered over Israel, the nations enjoyed, in spirit, the blessings which will attend Israel's reinstatement into Jehovah's favor.

If the grace shown to the nations had its root in Israel's apostasy, is it not logical to expect further grants of grace to be forthcoming from the widening extent and deepening intensity of that apostasy?

This, in fact, is Paul's "confidence" as regards his ministry. He compares himself with Moses. Moses veiled his face to hide from the sons of Israel the evanescent glory of the law. But Paul looks onward from infancy to maturity, from that which is in part to a full-orbed revelation (1 Cor. 13. 9-13). He contrasts Moses' ministry of the law with his own ministry of the Spirit. The law leans on the flesh, hence its glory was fading and transient; the ministry went from glory to gloom. Paul's ministry leans only on Messiah, the Spirit-Lord, and leads in the opposite direction. After the cloud concealed Him from the watching Galileans, He continued to ascend far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in that which is to come (Eph. 1. 21). His spiritual and celestial exaltation commenced on the other side of the boundary of the visible realm. In the invisible regions beyond He advanced from glory to glory, never pausing nor halting until He sat on the Father's throne. A ministry having its source in that spiritual exaltation must grow brighter

and brighter—it must experience a transfiguration from glory to glory after the image of the Spirit-Lord (2 Cor. ch. 3).

Paul's ministry passed, as it were, three stages, each based on a special revelation; each successive revelation coinciding with a new turn of Israel's apostasy.

The rejection of the Spirit in the land brought forth the gospel of God or Justification. The hostility of the Dispersion disclosed the mystery of the gospel, or the secret news—the Reconciliation. The last thing revealed is a spiritual economy of transcendent favor, where physical distinctions have no place. Key by key, his splendid melody leaped up into a vast eternity of favor, rising, it seemed, with sweep on sweep of soaring, beating wings. Every moment, one feels, the unfolding draws nearer the very presence of the throne magnificent; every note carries us higher into the ether of the purest celestial inspiration. Unclouded, uncomplicated, grand with a simplicity known only to things Divine, the spiritual tendency pulsed suddenly, sharply, supremely upwards unto Him.

As Israel declines, those Israelites and Gentiles who attended Paul's ministry were lifted higher and higher. They began in the grace of justification; they proceeded in the peace of reconciliation; they attained a culmination, acme and climax in the zenith glory of heavenly realms. In the process of disclosure their vision dilates, forward and backward, and sights on either side lofty peaks of truth beyond the range of other prophets and seers. The retrograde tendency of Paul's unfoldings is as remarkable as the proleptic. Justification goes back to Abraham in uncircumcision. Reconciliation reverts to Adam, the Secret Economy reaches even beyond sin's entrance. One after another the grim shadows of past ages are passed

and left behind, and still their flight continues, onward and upward, to the source and cause of all—God himself—and there undisturbed by physical distinctions, unaffrighted by a law inflexible, justified, reconciled, seated with Christ, complete in Him we are left in the presence of our Father in the unalloyed enjoyment of His love.

## APOCALIPTIC INTERPRETATION.

### 1. THE LORD'S DAY.

Adherents of accepted theological tenets are ever ready to stigmatize as "fanciful" any interpretation which differs from the one in vogue.

A "fanciful" interpretation, as the epithet implies, is one based on fancied or imaginary and hypothetical premises, and is thus the direct opposite of a sober and sound interpretation, which is based on positive facts and demonstrative proof, and rests not on argument, but on evidence; not on hypothesis, but on fact; not on probable, but on actual proof.

The communication of the Patmos visions to John has been associated with the first day of the week, and the visions themselves, wholly or in part, with the earthly course of the church, from the apostolic age to its reception into heaven, and the messages to the seven churches of Asia are looked upon as "the Divine History of the Church."

An intelligible interpretation of the book of Revelation depends upon the meaning attached to two verses in the first chapter, viz., 10 and 19. The first defines the *period* to which the visions relate. The second explains the *method* of unfolding. We will first consider verse 10. We will quote it in the Authorized Version: "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet."

The crux here is, What is the Lord's Day? Let it



first be noted that both English versions translate the same porportion (*en*) once *in*, and once *on*, though the dative case occurs after it both times, and the definite article is inserted where it does not occur in the original, namely, before "Spirit." We will therefore translate thus: "I WAS IN SPIRIT IN THE LORD'S DAY." Now, we maintain that the Lord's Day here is exactly the same as the Day of the Lord elsewhere, and that John's words *do not* refer to what we call Sunday, or the first day of the week, and erroneously the Lord's Day.

In Greek, as in some modern languages, the possessive can be expressed in two ways: by the use of two nouns, or by the use of one noun and a qualifying adjective; in either case the meaning is exactly the same, the change being only one of emphasis. David's son (Luke 20. 41) and the son of David (Luke 18. 38, 39, etc.) are identical in meaning, and are terms precisely equivalent. The way in which adjectives are employed and translated in the New Testament fully bears out our explanation. The adjective *anthropinos*, for example, is translated "man's" in 1 Cor. 2. 4, 13 and 4. 3. In Romans 6. 19 and 1 Peter 2. 13, however, it is rendered "of man," and nobody will deny that the words "ordinance of man" may with equal accuracy be translated, "man's ordinance," or that these two translations can only convey the same idea.

The Hebrew language has no adjective "Lord's." "The Lord's messenger" (Hag. 1. 13) and "the messenger of the Lord" (Mal. 2. 17) are two translations of the same Hebrew phrase. Likewise "the captain of the host of the Lord" (Josh. 5. 14) and "the captain of the Lord's host" (Josh. 5. 15) represent one and the same Hebrew expression. So that to translate the phrase "the Lord's Day" into Hebrew one is obliged to say "the day of the Lord." Salkinson's Hebrew New Testament

translates it "the Day of the Lord" (*Yom haadon*). Some modern languages are, in this respect, like the Hebrew. French and Italian, for instance, have no adjective "Lord's," and the Greek of Rev. 1. 10 should have been translated "the day of the Lord." The translators, however, have colored the text by the prevailing misconception, rendering the Lord's Day by "jour de Dimanche" and "giorno della Domenica." The Russian and Old Slavonic versions also have "Sunday," although both languages have the adjective "Lord's," and both translate the Hebrew *Yom Yehovah* "the Lord's Day" and "*the Day of the Lord*." And in spite of the fact that Sunday is always called in Scripture "the first day of the week," or, to be strictly accurate, "the beginning of Sabbaths," and is never referred to by any other designation (Matt. 28. 1, Mark 16. 2, Luk. 24. 1, Jno. 20. 1, 19, Acts 20. 7, 1 Cor. 16. 2).

It is alleged that the Lord's Day came to denote Sunday. Came to denote Sunday when and how? Scripture knows nothing of such metamorphosis. And there is no evidence whatever that "the first day of the week" was ever called "the Lord's Day" before the Book of Revelation was written.

From these considerations the conclusion is inevitable that the Day of the Lord and the Lord's Day mean, and refer to, the same thing—in fact, that they are interchangeable terms in the New Testament. The day of the Lord is the day belonging to (or, in an especial manner *owned by*) the Lord. And the Lord's Day is the same. Both refer to the period when His judgments will be executed in the earth.

With regard to "in spirit," it refers to a *state*, not to a person, and should not be printed with a capital (*there is no article*). Therefore, we interpret the verse thus:

John was rapt in spirit, and in this condition found himself in the Day of the Lord, which was in advance of his own time, and all he saw, and heard, and wrote down, took place within that day.

John saw passing before him in rotation, as God sees them, the tremendous events of the Day of the Lord because he was *in spirit in that day*. So it was with Daniel, when he saw his visions of the Times of the Gentiles; so it was with Ezekiel, when he beheld the structure of the millennial temple; so it was with Paul, when he was caught up into the third heaven, and did not know whether he was in the body or out of it.

This simple interpretation of Revelation 1. 10 gives us the key to the Book. From chapter 1. 1 onward it is a continuous prophecy, AS YET UNFULFILLED.

"The day of the Lord" (*Yom Yehovah*) occurs in the following passages:

Isaiah 13. 6, 9.

Ezekiel 13. 5.

Joel 1. 15, 2. 1, 11; 3. 14.

Amos 5. 18 (twice), 20.

Obadiah 15.

Zephaniah 1.7, 14 (twice).

In Joel 2. 31 and Mal. 4. 5 the term is followed by the epithet "the great"—"the day of Jehovah, the great one."

In Isa. 2. 12, Ezekiel, 30. 6, Zech. 14. 1, the proposition *for or to (lamed)* appears before "Jehovah."

In Isa. 13. 13, Ezek. 7. 19, Zeph. 2. 2, 3, and Isa. 34 the words "wrath" and "vengeance" intervene between "day" and "Jehovah."

In all these places, as the context abundantly proves, the Day of the Lord is the day of His *public* interference in the affairs of men and the display of His judgments

in the earth—the day when amidst an avalanche of ruin “the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of man shall be brought low: and Jehovah alone shall be exalted” (Isa. 2. 17). The Day of the Lord appears in the New Testament three times, 1 Thess. 5. 2, 2 Thess. 2. 2, and 2 Pet. 3. 10, in precisely the same way—in connection with apostasy, the manifestation of the man of sin, and the advent of Christ in judgment. And the Lord’s Day in Revelation is seen in the same relation as the Day of the Lord in both Testaments—the judgment of the host of the high ones on high, and the kings of the earth on the earth, accompanied by seismic convulsions and the shaking of the powers of heaven.

Exemption from the dreadful havoc and destruction of that Day is in the warp and woof of the glad tidings which Paul had preached among the nations since his separation from the twelve. Their deliverance from wrath is unweariedly reiterated (Rom. 5. 9, 1 Thess. 1. 10; 5. 9, 2 Thess. 2. 13, 14). It is this fact that necessitated their removal. They were to be saved from wrath. Saved where? Not on earth, for the hoarded vials of God’s unmixed fury are emptied on the dry land and on the sea (Rev. 16. 2, 3). They were to be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in air (1 Thess. 4. 17). This hope, which in point of fulfillment precedes the hope of Israel, furnished the occasion to divulge another notable secret. “Behold, I tell you a secret: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.” Since resurrection is not a secret, it must lie in the word *changed*. They were to be caught up to meet the Lord in the *air*, to be forever with Him. How could this be? The human body as at present constituted is unsuited to that sphere. The experiments in aviation today amply demonstrate this. Man struggles to conquer the air.

He has succeeded in keeping himself aloft for a few hours. Elated by his achievement he dreams of aerial expansion. But frightful accidents remind him that he intrudes into a sphere for which he lacks adaptation. But the bodies of the saints who will be caught up to meet the Lord will not only be raised; they will be *changed*—adjusted to fit the new surroundings. This change will be unnecessary for those who remain on earth. Their bodies will be emancipated from decay, disease and death, but will otherwise remain unchanged.

False teachers took away this hope from the Thessalonians and replaced it by teaching that "the Day of the Lord was present," to substantiate which they pointed to the afflictions which they endured on account of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Just as the Galatians were robbed of their *standing* in grace, the Thessalonians were cheated of their *hope* through grace. In either case it was a return to Jewish position. The apostle reminds them of the teaching he had imparted to them, and declares that before the day of the Lord can be present must take place their gathering together unto him" (2 Thess. 2. 1).

The church which is His body leaves this scene before that day. When the Day of the Lord breaks upon the inhabitants of the earth, the church, having ceased to exist on earth, shall have been withdrawn to heaven, there to assume her glorious position and enter upon the discharge of her celestial functions. We maintain that unless we interpret the Book of Revelation on these lines, we get no intelligible result.

## THE BOOK OF ESTHER.

The sacred penman closes his narrative of Israel's vicissitudes in the land in the following pathetic manner :

“ \* \* \* they mocked the messengers of God, and despised His word, and scoffed at His prophets; until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people till there was no remedy. Therefore he brought upon them the King of the Chaldeans, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man or ancient: he gave them all into his hand. And all the vessels of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the King, and of his princes; all these he brought to Babylon. And they burned the house of God, and broke down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof. And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; and they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia. (2 Chr. 36, 16-20.)

Such was the tragic end of Israel's career. Jehovah's dwelling-place on earth is in ruins; the city which He had chosen is laid on heaps; His people have become a by-word and an hissing among the heathen. The weeping prophet hung his harp, and gloating over the desolate, depopulated land and the smouldering ashes of the temple, took up his lamentation.

“How hath the Lord covered the daughter of Zion with  
a cloud in his anger!

He hath cast down from heaven unto earth the beauty  
of Israel.

And hath not remembered his foot stool in the day of  
his anger.

The Lord hath swallowed up all the inhabitants of Jacob,  
and hath not pitied;  
He hath thrown down in his wrath the stronghold of  
the daughter of Judah;  
He hath brought them down to the ground:  
He hath profaned the kingdom and the princes thereof."  
—Lam. 2, 1, 2.

The books of the restoration period resume these three threads at the very point where the Chronicles left them off. Ezra relates the Rebuilding of the *Temple*; Nehemiah narrates the Rehabilitation of the *City*; Esther tells the Deliverance of the *People* from threatened destruction.

In the Old Testament we have two attempts to annihilate Israel, combined with deliverances effected through divine intervention. One is told in Exodus, the other in Esther.

The two attempts present some striking points of divergence. Pharaoh and Haman, though prompted alike by anti-semitism, were actuated by different motives and employed diverse means to achieve their ends. Jewish antipathy was *political* in the one case, and *religious* in the other.

Pharaoh issued the following order to the Hebrew midwives: "When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see them upon the birth stool; if it be a son, then ye shall kill him; but if it be a daughter, then she shall live" (Ex. 1:16). This infamous decree testifies to Pharaoh's shrewdness and consummate skill. From the report of the Hebrew midwives we learn of the effeminacy of the Egyptians (Ex. 1:19). They were fast becoming a race of degenerates and physical weaklings. Pharaoh was well aware of this. He was keen enough to foresee that a clash with the Hebrews was inevitable and could be averted only temporarily.

He knew, too, how slender would be the chances of the Egyptians in a combat with their more virile and able-bodied sojourners. He accordingly conceived a subtle scheme to infuse new vigor into the veins of his decadent, moribund nation. By killing the males of Israel the Hebrew women would have to wed Egyptian husbands. By this bold stroke of policy—a policy which combined sagacity and brutality—Pharaoh aimed to wipe out Israel as a nation and yet assimilate for his people the moral fibre and physical endurance which he had observed in the Hebrews, and which were the cause of his anxiety and disquietude (Ex. 1:8-14).

Haman's decree was wholly different. "And letters were sent by posts unto all the king's provinces, to destroy, to slay, and to cause to perish, all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, even upon the thirteenth day of the month Adar, and to take the spoil of them for a prey" (Ch. 3:13). The crisis in the fortunes of Israel, which threatened to extirpate the race from the empire of Ahasuerus by the cruel vengeance of Haman, is altogether lacking in principle. It is simply an aimless, cold-blooded butchery inspired by personal aversion for Mordecai, whose refusal in accordance with the law of God to pay divine homage to a man wounded the vanity of the proud courtier. True, he assigns a political as well as a religious reason to justify his contemplated action against the Jews.

There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of thy kingdom; and their laws are diverse from those of every people; neither keep they the king's laws: therefore it is not for the king's profit to suffer them (3. 8).

Yet it is obvious that these reasons are a mere pretext to secure the king's sanction for his bold project. His



proposed campaign of extermination is the mad and wanton act of a *parvenu* drunk with power, elated by his elevation to viziership, seeking wholesale retaliation against the Jews for the trivial personal offence of one of their race.

The contrasts between the actions of the Deity are even more pronounced. In Exodus God acts *publicly*. His representative at the court of Egypt delivers an ultimatum, "Thus saith Jehovah, Let my people go," and supports his demand by a ponderous display of supernatural power. At every stage of the conflict Jehovah asserts His right to *rule* in the kingdom of men. Esther, on the other hand, depicts His *secret*, silent working behind the scenes and proves to demonstration that the King of Heaven *overrules* human actions and makes them subserve His counsels. Exodus exhibits His transcendent *power*, while Esther traces the operations of His multifarious *wisdom*. As the story progresses, His omnipresence is seen, His resources are shown to be exhaustless, His knowledge fathomless. In Exodus we see omnipotence displayed, in Esther we see omnipotence perfected through weakness.

Reading the book, we are struck with the frequent recurrence of the word "king." It occurs one hundred and ninety-six times. Besides this, Ahasuerus is mentioned by name twenty-nine times, and his "kingdom" referred to twenty-six times. This fact acquires deeper significance as we note that the royal feast in ch. 1:1-4 when Ahasuerus "shewed the riches of his glorious kingdom and the honor of his excellent majesty" for an hundred and fourscore days, sustains no essential relation to the narrative. This is clear from the fact that the feast on which the events transpired whereon the story of the book impinges is introduced with the phrase,

*"And when these things were fulfilled, the king made a feast unto all the people that were present in Shushan the palace"* (ch. 1:5). Its only object seems to enhance the greatness of the king and the glory of his kingdom. The Epilogue also serves the same purpose. It dwells on the acts of his power and of his might written in "the book of the chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia," and adds to the vast empire, extending from India to Ethiopia, "the isles of the sea" (ch. 10:1, 2).

But though the great royal feast is wanting in an essential relation to the narrative, yet it is indispensable to a right understanding thereof. Its obvious intention is to engage our thoughts, fasten our eyes, and rivet our attention on the king; not for his own sakes, surely, but because, like Pharaoh of old, he was raised up that God might shew His power, and that His name might be published abroad in all the earth (Ex. 9:16).

Throughout the book we see two forces at work: one hostile to the Jews, and one favorable to them. Both act through human agents, but it is evident all the while that they are mere instruments in the hands of higher powers. The two forces converge in Ahasuerus. Pressure is brought upon him from both sides.

At the start the conflict is hopelessly unequal. All chances of success are on the side of "the Jews' enemy." He is supported by the king; he wields the power of the empire; he has the sinews of war; he controls the network of government organization and employs it to carry out his plot against the Jews.

The Jews had nothing by which to counteract such formidable array of power—nothing but prayer and fasting. Their outlook was fearfully gloomy. Their case was hopeless. Haman had brought about an estrangement between the throne and the Jews. The "unaltera-

ble" law of the Medes and the Persians interposed between them an impassable chasm. A firman written in the king's name, and signed with the king's ring, "no man may reverse" (Esth. 2:19; 8:8). The book of Daniel illustrates the mischiefs engendered by that strange custom. There we see with what ease adroit courtiers took advantage of it to wreak vengeance on their victims and ward off interference from the crown (Dan. 6:8-15). This unalterable law had fixed a day for a general massacre of the Jews in the hundred and twenty-seven provinces of Ahasuerus.

Did God forsake His people? No! Though He is not *among* them, yet He is *for* them. Though His name is never mentioned and His presence is not visible, yet His hand is everywhere in evidence. He moves amidst the shadows, paving the way, directing the actions, and shaping events for a final reversal of the enemy's plot and his everlasting confusion.

It is written in the proverbs:

The king's heart is in the hand of Jehovah as the  
water courses;

He turneth it whithersoever he will.—Prov. 21. 1.

The book of Esther illustrates how, in what way, and by what means he turned the heart of Ahasuerus "whithersoever He willed." It traces the manner of His working in the world until the day arrives for open interference in the affairs of men.

It is written again:

The heaven for height, and the earth for depth,  
And the heart of kings is unsearchable.—Prov. 25. 3.

But here we are to see how the Lord searched the heart of the mighty Persian sovereign who, at the instigation of an unprincipled underling, threw the weight of his au-

thority in opposition to Him and forced him to carry out His counsels of mercy for the favored nation.

He defeated the enemies of the Jews with their own weapons. He used the very law which "no man may reverse" to tie the king's hands and make him a willing, though unconscious minister of his pleasure. After the promulgation of the royal commandment concerning Vashti, we read. "After these things, when the wrath of King Ahasuerus was pacified, he remembered Vashti, and what she had done, and what was decreed against her" (ch. 2. 1). No doubt, after the anger of Ahasuerus had subsided, upon calm reflection, he regretted the occurrence and would fain have reinstated Vashti. But at such times as he thought on "what she had done," he thought also of "what was decreed against her" and felt himself powerless to make amends. Later on, he acquiesced to the proposal of the very men who had framed the decree against Vashti, that "the king give her royal estate unto another that is better than she." Thus Jehovah utilized the Persian law, "which changeth not," to restrain the king's impulses and reserve the crown and royal estate for the woman of his choice.

"God has chosen the weak things of the world, that he might put to shame the things that are strong." (1 Cor. 1. 27). Our book furnishes a practical demonstration of this fact. He frustrates the device of the all powerful court favorite, through the youthful queen, who feels all the tremor of an ordinary woman when suddenly called upon to fill an heroic role.

"Fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night nor day: I also, and my maidens will fast in like manner; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish."

He counteracts and confounds Haman's arrogance and

power by Esther's beauty and her tears. Esther seemed to realize intuitively that against all the power of Haman and the king she must fight with the attraction of her beauty. Concordantly she does not invoke vengeance on the foe, but arranges for a *tête-à-tête* banquet and captures the royal sybarite by the charm and force of her domestic attractiveness.

The book of Esther covers a period of ten years, from the *third* to the *thirteenth* year of King Ahasuerus, as may be seen from the following table:

1. The great feast in the *third* year of Ahasuerus, 1, 3
2. The coronation of Esther in the seventh year, 2, 16
3. The lot cast from the first to the twelfth month in the *twelfth* year of Ahasuerus, 3, 7
4. Haman's decree issued in the *thirteenth* year of Ahasuerus, the thirteenth day of the first month, 3, 12
5. Esther's decree was issued two months and ten days later, in the third month, the twenty-third day of the month, in the *thirteenth* year of Ahasuerus, 8, 9
6. The slaughter of the Jews' enemies, the *thirteenth* year of Ahasuerus the twelfth month, the thirteenth and fourteenth days of the month, 9, 17

## THE HEAVENLY KINGDOMS.

### THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND THE KINGDOM OF THE HEAVENS.

There is a perennial interest in the question, What is the difference between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of the heavens? In many instances there seems to be no distinction at all. In Matt. 19. 23, 24 we read of both Kingdoms in connexion with the rich man who clung to his possessions. Their general identity is recognized again and again when the "kingdom" is spoken of without any word to tell us which one is referred to. Parallel passages abound in the gospels where Matthew uses the phrase "kingdom of the heavens" and the other evangelists use "kingdom of God."

The former phrase occurs only in Matthew's account. But Matthew also uses the phrase "kingdom of God." These instances are of special interest, therefore, in helping us to an understanding of the distinction between these two expressions.

"The kingdom of God" occurs in the first gospel in Matt. 6. 33: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God."

12. 28: "If I cast out demons \* \* \* then the kingdom of God is come upon you."

19. 24: "\* \* \* for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God."

21. 31: "the tax gatherers and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you."

21. 43: "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you."

If we can discover some element in these passages foreign to the rest, which makes it repugnant to our spiritual apprehension if we substitute "heavens" for "God," then we will be able to enjoy the light and blessing which He has intended by using two phrases rather than one only.

The basic thought of the "kingdom of the heavens" is found in Dan. 2. 44, where we read: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to another people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms \* \* \*."

This passage, combined with a close reading of all later references to this Kingdom, show us plainly that it is confined to the *earth*. Its limits do not extend beyond this planet. Besides this it belongs to a *people*, it is the sovereignty of one people or nation over other nations, such as was the case with Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome, whose kingdoms it will displace, and it is a *future* Kingdom which is not in exercise as yet.

In contrast to this, the Kingdom of God was already in exercise *in heaven*, though not on earth, as our Lord taught His disciples: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6. 10).

The Kingdom of God, while it will include the earth, is not confined to it, but is bounded by the universe, except such parts as are in rebellion against Him. The Kingdom of the heavens has no place outside the

earth. The former is a present reality in heaven, but neither are yet established on earth.

The Kingdom of God is the sovereignty of a Divine Person: the Kingdom of the heavens is a Kingdom which, indeed, finds all its authority in Him, yet is delegated to a people. "And the kingdom and the dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom *under the whole heaven*, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High" (Dan. 7. 27). The twelve apostles shall sit up twelve thrones judging (ruling) the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. 19. 28). Others shall have authority, some over five cities, some over ten. This authority is referred to when he tells them to teach or *disciple* all nations (Matt. 28. 19).

A present day example may help much to impress what we have been seeking to set forth. What, we will ask, is the difference between the Kingdom of King Edward and the Kingdom of Great Britain? The King's dominion extends over all England and all its dependencies. In England he is the King, in India he is the Emperor. But there is a sense in which every Englishman who votes in the home country has a hand in the government of India. He is a part of the Great Britain which rules India. So, too, a place in the Kingdom of the heavens, includes a place of authority over the other nations.

If this be so, we can easily see how He would hardly ask them to "seek first the kingdom of the *heavens*." They were eager enough for the authority which that would bestow, but they were not so anxious for the blessing, which a personal subjection to God on their own part would bring. So the prevalent phrase in Matthew in this case is changed to "kingdom of God."

So, too, with our second quotation (Matt. 12. 28).



The earthly Kingdom had no jurisdiction over demons. So the fact that He cast them out was a sign that the Kingdom of *God* had come upon them.

The case of the rich man (Matt. 19. 24) is true of both Kingdoms, but entrance is even more difficult in respect of God's personal rule.

The tax gatherers and harlots will have nothing but judgment in the Kingdom of the heavens. The tax gatherers were traitors to that Kingdom. But the self-righteous Pharisees, who had a great deal to *say* about their own fitness for the Divine presence—they had even less right than those whom they despised. And this shows another characteristic distinction, arising from the fact that one Kingdom involves subjection to God Himself where no deception is possible, while the other has to do with authority vested in human hands. The Kingdom of God will have no such history as the Kingdom of the heavens. In the latter there will be feigned subjection, which will break out into rebellion when Satan is loosed from his chains. Loyalty to God Himself has a personal element similar to loyalty to sovereign, which is much more than the subjection of a dependent realm.

Our last quotation deals with the fruits of the vineyard. There is no question here of the relation of Israel to the other nations. In subjection to God they would have furnished Him with the wine which cheers both God and man (Judg. 9. 13). So it is not the Kingdom of the heavens which is taken from them, but the Kingdom of God. This will be given to a nation which will bring forth its fruits. The two Kingdoms, then, contain much in common and are often equivalents. But they always keep their own coloring and

one phrase can never been used where God in His excellent wisdom has been pleased to place the other.

#### THE KINGDOM OF THE FATHER.

The "kingdom of the Father" is another phrase which contains a precious truth in advance of either of the ones we are considering. If the Kingdom of the heavens expresses the relation of dependencies to another people and the Kingdom of God the personal loyalty to a sovereign, then the Father's Kingdom expresses the position of the King's children. This filial relationship promises no political prestige, but speaks rather of *provision* and *character*, which His fatherhood implies. He is the Father of the righteous (Matt. 13. 43). He it is who is petitioned for bread and forgiveness (Matt. 6. 10), and He will provide the wine in the coming Kingdom (Matt. 26. 29).

The Kingdom of God is very seldom mentioned in the epistles, stress being laid upon its *character*. It is never, however, spoken of as a present reality upon the earth. It is spoken of as future (1 Cor. 6. 9, 10; 15. 50; Gal. 5. 21; Eph. 5. 5; 1 Thess. 2. 12; 2 Thess. 1. 5; 2 Ti. 4. 1, 18). It is associated with the Circumcision (Col. 4. 11). The phrase "the kingdom of God is *within* you," so often quoted to show a present mysterious immanence is a mistranslation. When the Greek "en," in, is used with a *plural*, it should be rendered "among." The Lord said "the kingdom of God is *among* you." It had drawn very nigh in those days.

#### THE KINGDOM OF THE SON.

There is one Kingdom, however, which is in power at the present time. We do not refer to the authorities

of darkness, who rule this sombre scene, but to the Kingdom of God's dear Son (Col. 1. 13). The authority of darkness is a strictly *spiritual* kingdom. It does not displace the sovereignties of this world at all. So also is the Son's Kingdom. It is a strictly spiritual sovereignty. We were once subjects of the domains of darkness. Now we are subjects of the Kingdom of the Son of His love. All the while, however, we are still subject to the human governments under which we live. We are not loosed from them. We are exhorted to be subject to rulers as God's ministers.

Some day the Kingdom of God's Son will find expression on earth. That will be after this old earth has been replaced by a new one. Then God will be reconciled with all mankind and all will be the willing, worshipping subjects of His beloved Son. So perfect will this reign be that the time will come when all rule and authority and power will have been put down, and the Son Himself will become subject to the Father (1 Cor. 15. 27).

So long as sin and insubordination held sway there could be no happiness apart from government. But when, at length, all is perfect, when sin is gone, and not the least breath stirs contrary to His wish, what need for government? The Kingdom will exist only in name, giving place to the Father's guiding hand.

Then, when government itself is gone, will we learn the real lesson it was meant to teach: that His will alone is good—good for His glory and for our welfare. And when this is acknowledged by every heart then will God indeed be All in All.

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