The Sinless Saviour

BY

J. B. WATSON

PICKERING & INGLIS
14 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON, E.C.4
229 BOTHWELL STREET, GLASGOW, C.2

Made and Printed in Great Britain

Preface

AS the aim of this little book is to set forth the teachings of the Holy Scriptures on some vital subjects connected with the Person and Work of our Lord Jesus Christ, it is unlikely that it will make any appeal to those who either disregard or disbelieve the Bible. The point of view of the writer is that God has not left us to drift upon the sunless sea of human speculation in those high, grave matters that affect the destiny of the soul, but has spoken to us in definite, understandable terms in Christ His Son, and has caused the record of this Divine Revelation to be embodied for us in Sacred Writ. This record is Divinely inspired, having Christ as its centre, salvation as its subject, and the glory of God as its end.

"Look at Christ; listen to Christ; follow Christ" was the simple message of the Poor Men of Lyons as they went forth to preach in the twelfth century. These chapters call us specially to "look at Christ," to contemplate what the Bible says of Him, so that our thoughts of Him may be true thoughts and our faith in Him a true faith. These are days in which many are being moved away from ancient moorings, when the things most surely believed by our fathers are being doubted and not infrequently derided. The Christian must therefore seek that his grasp of Divine Essentials is sure, and enlightened concerning his

Lord and the Gospel, seek grace to bear his own witness to both.

It is the sincere aim of this book to help some along such lines to the establishment of their faith, the deepening of their convictions, and the strengthening of their testimony.

It will be noticed that some of the papers limit the range of Scripture testimony to which they appeal to the writings of the Apostle Paul. These chapters were originally part of a series of addresses on "Paul's Testimony to Christ." To them other chapters have been added in which a wider use of the general testimony of Scripture is made. J.B.W.

Contents

	PAGE
CHRIST AND THE AGES PAST	9
CHRIST AND GOD	15
CHRIST AND MAN	24
CHRIST AND THE SCRIPTURES	33
CHRIST'S SINLESSNESS	46
CHRIST'S MIRACLES	57
CHRIST'S CROSS	67
CHRIST'S RESURRECTION	75
CHRIST AND THE CHURCH	92
CHRIST AND THE FUTURE AGES	101

The Sinless Saviour

CHAPTER I.

Christ and the Ages Past.

NATURAL birth is the real beginning of the history of every member of the Adamic race. God, who is named "the God of the spirits of all flesh" (Num. 16. 22), endows each person at birth with that mysterious something which makes personality—the human spirit. This is the beginning-point of all human experience; the past is a blank, and any claim to prior existence (as, for example, in the Hindu doctrine of re-incarnations) is a folly and a figment. The spirit of man is the creature of God, as it is written, "the Lord stretcheth forth the Heavens, and layeth the foundations of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him" (Zech. 12. 1).

Our Lord Jesus Christ, True Man, verily born into the world, yet differs from all men in that His birth was not His beginning, but rather a stage in a history timeless and eternal. Of the Messiah of Bethlehem it is written in the prophetic oracle, "whose goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity" (Micah 5. 2). This difference was also revealed in His clear consciousness of His far-back past and of its conditions, as when He spoke of resuming the station of glory which He had with the Father before the creation of the world (John 17. 2).

Scripture bears full testimony to this great truth of the pre-existence of Christ. Of the writers of Holy Writ

John bears the fullest testimony to it; but the Apostle Paul also bears a striking witness, as will be evident from the following considerations:

I. The birth of Christ is spoken of as a

"Sending Forth."

John makes frequent use of the verb "to send" in connection with our Lord's mission in the world. "The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world" (1 John 4. 14). "He that sent Me is with Me" (John 8. 29), etc. Paul's uses of the term in this connection are fewer, but the passages in which it occurs are full of significance. "God *sent forth* (lit., out-commissioned) His Son, born of a woman" (Gal. 4. 4). "God *sending* His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh," etc. (Rom. 8. 3). The word indicates a sending out as representative or ambassador, and these two important passages indicate that the appearance in the world of our Lord Jesus as Man took place in pursuance of a commission already received from God. Personal existence prior to incarnation is thus directly implied.

II. His mission among men is spoken of as a

"Coming into the World."

The verb "to come" is also frequently used by the Apostle John in connection with our Lord's manifestation, and this corresponds to his large use of the verb "to send," for the truths they indicate are complementary. God sends; Christ, obedient, comes.

There is an instance in which Paul also uses the term in this connection, in 1 Timothy 1. 15, "Christ Jesus

came into the world to save sinners," an illustration of Apostolic unity of doctrine. The context here supports the conclusion, fully borne out by many other Scriptures, that the Lord's coming into the world was His response to a Divine decree promulgated in Heaven at a period far back in time; or it may be, before time began: the decree of Redemption, to which (an ancient word informs us) He answered with this tremendous word, "Lo! I come; in the volume of the Book it is written of Me, to do Thy will, O God" (Psa. 40).

The conditions of His pre-existence therefore included power of moral choice, and cannot be limited to any idealistic or impersonal sense, for He existed as "a Moral Personality capable of forming a conscious purpose."

III. His coming into the world is spoken of as

An Exchange of Conditions.

A familiar passage which contains a clear implication of our Lord's pre-existence is 2 Corinthians 8. 7, "Who, though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich." He was rich, that is, in a prior Heavenly condition, which condition He exchanged for one of poverty in His earthly life. The word "became" contains the thought of the giving up of one mode of existence and the acceptance of another, and thus clearly implies pre-existence.

C. A. Tydeman has expressed the teaching of the passage thus:

"He held the highest place above,
Adored by all the sons of flame,
Yet such His self-denying love,
He laid aside His crown and came

To seek the lost;
And at the cost
Of Heavenly rank and earthly fame,
He sought me; blessed be His Name!"

IV. His coming into the world is spoken of as

A Descent from Above.

Our Lord's entry into this world in Ephesians 4. 9 is described as a descent. "He that ascended, what is it but that He descended first into the lower parts of the earth."

Dr. Hayman's paraphrase gives the sense of this accurately: "What else can this ascension of His imply than that He first came down to earth beneath," and His Heavenly life prior to this descent must necessarily be understood.

V. Christ is referred to as having been

With Israel in the Days of Moses.

In 1 Corinthians 10. 4 Paul teaches by the Holy Spirit that our Lord was present with His covenant people in the days of the elder dispensation. "They drank of that spiritual (or supernatural) rock which followed them, and that Rock was Christ."

It is not, we judge, necessary to understand this in strict literalness; the apostle's intention surely, is to attribute to Christ what is attributed by Isaiah (Isa. 63. 9) to the Angel of the Presence; namely, that by His unceasing providence Israel was maintained. "In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the Angel of His Presence saved them." Supply met all the inexorable demands of the waterless desert: never a halt on the

thirstiest march but the Rock yielded its refreshment, and He who was the Supplier of His people's needs was Christ!

VI. Christ is spoken of as

The Direct Agent in Creation.

The amplest teaching on this subject is found in the magnificent Christological passage in Colossians 1. There we are taken back to the earliest verge of time and given to see Him whom the apostle has just designated the Son of God's love (v. 12), the self-same Person whom he had aforetime preached to the Colossians, as the Creator, "For by Him were all things created visible and invisible...all things were created through Him and for (*eis*) Him" (v. 16).

Moreover, He is said to exist prior to any created thing: "He is (*i.e.*, exists) before all things" (v. 17). Here we arrive at the truth of His being in eternity past, ere any material thing had stood forth out of vacancy. A statement this, full of majesty and awe—HE IS!

It leads us back to another profound expression found in Paul's writings, to the Word of Philippians 2. 6: "Who *being* in the form of God," a statement which unfolds not only the fact of His pre-existence, but also its mode.

VII. In view of what we have shown, look at

The Conclusion to be Drawn.

The passages cited teach far, far more than the pre-existence of Christ, but they include this truth in the range of their meaning, taking it for granted rather than

didactically urging it. It is, however, of deep interest that, moving backward from Bethlehem along a highway of simple, deep, meaningful terms of "coming," "sending," "becoming," "descending," "following," "creating," and finally of "being," we arrive at the sure conclusion that *the Christ whom Paul preached is Lord of all the Ages Past*; and, further, though not one direct reference to Deity has been made, we are led to the conviction that He who came, was sent, descended into the earth, became poor, followed pilgrim Israel, created all that is, and who *is* before all the things which He created, possesses eternal, self-sufficient, self-existent being, and is over all God, blessed for ever.

CHAPTER II.

Christ and God.

PAUL'S testimony concerning the relation of Christ to God is full and conclusive. It may be set forth simply under three heads by considering—

1. Those passages in which certain TITLES are accorded to Christ.

2. Those in which certain POWERS or attributes are said to be exercised by Christ.

3. Those which make direct STATEMENTS concerning Christ.

I. TITLES ACCORDED TO CHRIST.

Under the first of these heads it is only possible in this brief article to select a few of the titles worn by the Saviour in Paul's writings. One used with great frequency, and whose full significance is apt for that very reason to be overlooked, is

The Title "Lord."

(*kurios*). This word is one of very elastic significance. Its content must be interpreted according to the scope of the passage in which it occurs. Sometimes it is simply a term of courteous address, similar to our word "Sir." Indeed more than once it is so translated (John 4. 11-15; 20. 15; Acts 16. 30, etc.). Sometimes it is applied to an owner of property or slaves (Luke 19. 33; Acts 16. 16). Sometimes it is used of a master (Matt. 15. 27).

The title was assumed by rulers and by the Roman Emperors in a higher sense, namely, as a claim to deification. Moreover, the word appeared frequently on the pages of Paul's Bible (the Septuagint) as the name of Israel's God. Used thus, without the article, it was a title of Divinity, and as such focused the issue between the civil power and the new faith, viz., which Lord—Caesar or Christ? (see Acts 25. 26).

To accord this Name to Jesus, the Man who died upon a Cross, is the expression of saving faith. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord" (Rom. 10. 9). To proclaim Jesus in this Name is the test of evangelical preaching. "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus as LORD" (2 Cor. 9. 6). To confess Jesus in this Name is the soul of Christian worship. "No man can say that Jesus is LORD but by the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor. 12. 3). The sure mark of a Christian Church is that it unitedly calls upon Jesus Christ in this Name—"All that in every place call upon the Name of Jesus Christ our LORD, theirs and ours" (1 Cor. 1. 2). This latter phrase is strongly reminiscent of that found in Genesis 4. 26: "Then began men to call upon the Name of the LORD."

It is submitted that in such applications of this Name to Christ there is claimed that to Him are due the absolute love, obedience, and worship of the human soul; and as this complete homage may rightly be rendered only to God, the title involves that Christ is God.

Another significant title is found in 1 Cor. 2. 8—

"The Lord of Glory."

The genitive of possession here makes the name convey

that Christ is He to whom the glory pertains as His native right. It is the more wonderful that it is applied to Him as the Crucified One. "Had they known they would not have *crucified the Lord of Glory.*" Glory is the peculiar attribute of Jehovah. He is the God of Glory. Thus with Christ; His earthly course was His strange experience: glory was His native sphere and condition: His exaltation was a resumption of the original vestments of glory. "I am the Lord, and My glory will I not give to another" (Isa. 42. 8). It follows that Christ, being the Lord of Glory, is Himself God.

Another title of profound meaning is

"Son of God."

Thus in Romans 1. 3, 4 it is written, "The Gospel of God concerning His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of Holiness by the resurrection of the dead." Here is a parallelism in which the two sides of our Lord's blessed Person are shown. On the human side, according to flesh, He is the son of David; on the other and Divine side He is, "according to Spirit of holiness" (His own Spirit in its unique quality of holiness, and as such inherently different from the spirit manifested in any other man) marked out as being, in a sense which can be predicated of none other, Son of God. "The resurrection of the dead" (plural) His own first, but of all ultimately, is the manner of the manifestation in power of this Divine Sonship.

Later, in chapter 8 of the same epistle,

The Title of "Son"

appears twice, with an emphasis thus, "His *own* Son" (vv. 3, 32). This emphasises the solitary and unique quality of the Sonship of which the inspired apostle is thinking. Christ is Son of God in a near, intimate, sense, such as indicates an altogether unique relation to God. In Colossians 1. 13 the title appears with another striking qualification. Here Christ is "the Son of His love," the One upon whom the eternal love of the Father has ever rested, who has sustained this blessed relationship from the timeless past when the nature of God, who is Love, found its delight in the reciprocal love of the Father and the Son of His love. Eternally the Father is the Father; eternally the Son is the Son; eternally God is love. "Had the Father no bosom until Bethlehem?" is a question asked of those who speak of the Sonship of Christ as being a mere time relationship.

II. POWERS EXERCISED BY CHRIST.

The relation of Christ to God is also disclosed by the attributes He is said to exercise in certain great Christological passages in Paul.

Creative Energy is Vested in Him

(Col. 1. 16). All things, terrestrial and celestial, visible and invisible, and all those unseen hierarchies and orders of intelligence of which we know nothing beyond what the scanty intimations of Holy Scripture convey, all are the creatures of His hand, the results of His working, the products of His energy.

To think of but one of these items: *The invisible earthly things*—how amazing these are! Motion, Sound, Space, Electrical, and all other Energy, and the mysterious whispering-gallery of the Ether. Long, long before man was aware of the vast powers and possibilities of these invisible things—Paul's Christ made them, fashioned, ordained them, and hid them in the world for man's discovery and use.

The great Kepler wrote: "Whether my discoveries will be read by posterity, or by my contemporaries, is a matter that concerns them more than me. I may well be contented to wait a century for a reader *when God Himself during so many thousand years has waited for an observer.*"

The Miracle of Universal Providence

is unceasingly being performed by Christ. "By Him all things consist" (Col. 1. 17). In Him the Cosmos has its continuance and order. The orbits of sun, moon, and stars, the succession of the seasons, the blood-circulation of the tiniest insect, the breath in man's nostrils. Apart from the exercise of His upholding power the ordered universe would instantly lapse back into its primal chaos.

The Prerogative of Grace is God's.

Grace to the creature comes from the Creator. Yet everywhere in Paul's writings this undeserved largesse of God is said equally to be bestowed by Christ. "Grace ...from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 1. 2, etc.). He is the source of all good, all blessing, all enrichment: the Divine prerogative of mercy is fully His.

From these considerations, that Christ wields the attributes and prerogatives of God, it is apparent that His relationship to God is that of sharing His nature and His powers; in a word the relationship of equality, that is *Deity*.

III. STATEMENTS CONCERNING CHRIST.

Does Paul ever claim in so many words that Christ is God? Yes. The passages which we now briefly notice are, and have been, the storm-centres of controversy. That is but to be expected. The enemy is sufficient of a strategist to attack key-positions, rather than skirmish aimlessly about unimportant outposts. Yet these light-giving texts continue to shine undimmed in their witness to the glory of the Christ of God.

"Over All, God Blessed For Ever."

ROMANS 9. 5: "Of whom (Israel) as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever." Objections have been made that the punctuation of the sentence gives an erroneous meaning, and that the latter phrase is not an ascription of Deity to Christ, but simply an ejaculatory doxology in the manner of Paul elsewhere in this very epistle. These objections have been fully considered and set aside as invalid, for reasons which it is not possible in the space of the present article to set forth. Suffice it to say that the Revisers, after giving alternative readings full consideration, have left the Authorised rendering in their main text unchanged. The two sides of the Person of Christ are in view here as in Romans 1. 3, 4: "as concerning the flesh," He is

of Israel: but that is only part of the truth. The other side is that He "is over all, God," and therefore "blessed for ever." Hallelujah!

One Real Lord.

1 CORINTHIANS 8. 6: "To us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things and we in Him: and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things and we by Him." Here the apostle sets over one real GOD against the so-called gods of Paganism, and one real LORD against its "lords many." The title Father attached to the Name of God suggests that he finds room for Christ within the Divine, God Himself, under the title Son. Not two Gods, but one God and Lord he is here setting forth, in opposition to the polytheism of the pagan world of that day.

The Form of God.

PHILIPPIANS 2. 6: "Who, being in the form of God." This much-discussed phrase does not mean the habiliment or external semblance of God. It means rather to have and hold in possession all those essential attributes which make God God, and having which He could not be other than equal with God.

The Fulness of the Godhead.

COLOSSIANS 2. 9: "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Whatever questions may remain in the mind after discussion of the previous Scriptures, here is one which is explicit, clear, conclusive. "In Him is homed the completeness of Deity," or as a close paraphrase might run, "In His Person dwells all the fullest depths of Deity."

The witness of these Scriptures is clearly that Christ is over all things, God eternally blessed, that He is the true God as opposed to the futile idols of the heathen; that He has in inalienable possession all the attributes which are proper to Deity, and that in Him the fullest depths of Deity have their eternal home.

IV. SUBORDINATION OF CHRIST.

In conclusion, there is another class of Scriptures in Paul's writings whose testimony may appear to conflict with these. Instances are: "The head of Christ is God" (1 Cor. 11. 3); "Christ is God's" (1 Cor. 3. 23); "Then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him that God may be All in All" (1 Cor. 15. 28); "The God...of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph. 1. 3).

These Scriptures set forth what is known as the Subordination of the Son. Let a deep distinction be drawn between *inferiority* and *subordination*.

Devout scholars who have carefully weighed and studied the whole testimony of Scripture have endeavoured to express their conclusions under the term,

Covenant of Redemption,

according to which the Persons of the Godhead carry through each His part of the great redemptive plan. The FATHER counsels, plans, wills, elects, calls, gives persons to the Son; the SON undertakes to become Man, suffer, redeem by blood, and righteously deal with the tremendous problem of sin. The SPIRIT convicts, converts, enlightens, quickens, unites to Christ, sustains.

In these economic relations of the Persons of the Blessed Trinity place is found for the doctrine of the Subordination of the Son.

A careful and devout Christian scholar has expressed the truth thus: "The Father is not more Divine than the Son or the Spirit, but He is the Father. Godhead is in Him as the Eternal Fountain, in the Son and in the Spirit as the Eternal Streams. Such is the primacy of the Father that He is spoken of by the side of mentions of the Son and the Spirit as simply God (*e.g.*, 2 Cor. 13. 14), yet other evidence forbids us to explain this of a difference of nature. It indicates rather a primacy of Relation, of Order."

The student who will not recognise these conceptions will find in Paul much that seems confused and contradictory. Acknowledging them, it becomes clearer that there is only that paradox in which the highest truth must needs be expressed when the apostle witnesses on the one hand that Christ is equal with God, in the form of God, possessing all the fulness of Deity; and on the other hand speaks of God as the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, of Christ as being of God, of God as Head of Christ. In the one series the question of essence or nature is in prominence, in the other the economic relations of the Persons of the Blessed Trinity.

CHAPTER III.

Christ and Man.

THE testimony of the Apostle Paul to the fact of the humanity of Christ is both comprehensive and satisfying. It may be summarised simply in seven paragraphs.

I.—The Witness to HIS BIRTH.

Those who oppose the doctrine of the Virgin Birth of Christ make a point of Paul's silence on the subject. The obvious answer is that Paul nowhere controverts the doctrine, and that as two New Testament writers, Matthew and Luke, bear definite and sufficient testimony to it, there is no especial need for Paul to add further witness. The doctrine is worthy of all acceptation because—

1. The evangelists, Matthew and Luke, are in every respect trustworthy witnesses. A thing does not become more true by being said a great number of times.

2. The Divine promise of a Redeemer was couched in language that required Him to be (mysterious phrase) "the seed of the woman."

3. The doctrine is congruous with those of His sinless life, Divine mission, atoning death, victorious resurrection, and ascension to Heaven.

4. The alternative involves issues intolerable and, indeed, blasphemous.

We judge that Paul makes at least one allusion to the Virgin Birth, not indeed direct, but sufficing to show him

aware of, and in agreement with it. "God sent forth His Son, *made of a woman,* made under the law," etc. (Gal. 4. 4). "The expression 'born of a woman,' fits into, while it does not prove birth from a virgin" (Bruce). The phrase strongly suggests that the apostle glances approvingly in passing at the doctrine to which Luke, his companion and fellow-soldier, bears witness in his first treatise.

II.—The Witness to HIS DESCENT.

In a number of passages Paul emphasises the fact of the human *lineage and descent* of Christ. Paul's Gospel was ever "to the Jew first." No Gospel could hope to win acceptance with the Jews which did not present to them a Messiah in whom the expectations warranted by Old Testament prediction were fulfilled. Paul's Gospel, therefore, claims Jewish and Davidic lineage for Christ.

The apostle, speaking of his own nation, says: "Of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came" (Rom. 9. 5). Instructing Timothy concerning the truth he was to commit in his turn to faithful men, who should teach yet others, he says: "Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my Gospel" (2 Tim. 2. 8). An accurate paraphrase of this might read: Dwell on the thought of Jesus Christ, *of David's line,* raised from the dead, as the Gospel I preach declares.

The genealogical data of this descent of David's line are supplied by the same two witnesses to whom were committed the facts of the Birth. Paul, accepting these facts, incorporates in his message to his nation the doctrine

of which they are the basis, saying that, "Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers" (Rom. 15. 8). He came, that is, to serve the Jewish race, confirming to them the faithfulness of God, and verifying His patriarchal promises.

In the superscript of the letter to the Romans, therefore, Paul defines his Gospel in these terms: "The Gospel of God (which He had promised afore by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures) concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of *the seed of David* according to the flesh and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of Holiness by the resurrection of the dead" (Rom. 1. 1-3). In this very comprehensive statement the human lineage of Christ, as linking up the new message with the old promises, is seen to occupy a prominent place.

III.—The Witness to HIS MANHOOD.

The true manhood of our Lord is set forth in Scriptures of profound moment. These passages have been in the past the centres of fierce doctrinal battles. Around them may rage many another fight, and it therefore behoves all who desire to be valiant for Truth to grasp their import, ever remembering that "it is written again" elsewhere concerning the companion truth of our Lord's Full Deity.

In Philippians 2. 7, 8 Paul says that, consequent upon the Lord's stoop from the public Glory associated with His station in the Heaven of heavens, and upon His self-emptying assumption of the form of a bondslave, Christ

Jesus "became *in the likeness* (similitude) *of man.*" That is, His accepted state of servitude brought Him into human conditions, it involved His assumption of manhood. Therefore, continues the apostle, He was "found *in fashion* (*schema,* outward guise or habit) *as a man.*" The hymn expresses well the thought when it says He was—

"pleased as man with man to dwell."

In another deep Scripture, Romans 8. 3, the apostle teaches that "God sent His Son, His own, *in the likeness* (similitude) *of sinful flesh*" to expiate sin, so dooming sin in that flesh to extinction. Sin is an intruder, a spoiler in human nature: the work of the Cross was undertaken in order that man should be delivered from sin's intrusion and all its dread consequences. For this it was needful that the Deliverer should Himself bear as man man's judgment.

The truth to be gathered from these vital Scriptures is that our Lord's manhood was a tremendous reality: He became man, in outward semblance not different from other men, yet differing in this, as we shall now see, that Sin, the Intruder, had no foothold in His unspotted nature.

IV.—The Witness to HIS PERFECTION.

In a few passages Paul speaks of the *moral perfections* and true human experiences of Christ.

Of brevity only surpassed by its inclusive fulness, is the apostle's witness to the entire sinlessness of Christ. It consists, in English, of five brief monosyllables: "HIM WHO KNEW NO SIN" (2 Cor. 5. 21). Thus does the reconciled Pharisee speak of his Saviour and Lord, who, from the hour of His birth until the dread hour in which

(mystery of mysteries) HE WAS MADE SIN FOR US, came to no acquaintance with sin, had no experience of sin, was an utter stranger to sin. God be praised for this peace-giving fact! Without it there were no Gospel for us men who have had life-long and bitter experience of sin. Our Lord's qualification to be the Reconciler lay in His own more-than-snow-white moral purity.

Another Scripture in which attention is drawn to the moral loveliness of Christ is that in which the apostle bases an appeal to some very unsatisfactory Christians upon "the *meekness and gentleness* of Christ" (2 Cor. 10. 1), a phrase which tends to show that Paul's preaching contained references to our Lord's moral graces as well as His atoning sacrifice, and that He was well-versed in all that was then orally taught concerning the life and moral excellences of Jesus Christ our Lord.

This is also seen from Acts 20. 35, where Paul quotes a saying of Jesus not elsewhere recorded in Scripture: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." And there is also a further Scripture which, like those to which reference has just been made, compresses volumes into the compass of a single phrase, and tells us that "even Christ *pleased not Himself*" (Rom. 15. 2), bearing reproach willingly in His unwavering zeal for God's glory.

It may be noticed here that, in quantity at any rate, Paul's references to the life of Christ, are meagre compared with all the passages that set forth the meaning of His death.

It has been pointed out that the letter to the Hebrews largely supplies this seeming lack in Paul's epistles, and it is not unworthy of remark that this may point in the

direction of Paul's authorship of that letter, on the ground that full witness on such an important theme as the Saviour's human experiences would scarcely be lacking in that deposit of truth committed specially to Paul.

V.—The Witness to HIS MEDIATORSHIP.

Manhood and Mediatorship are linked together in one of the great texts of Paul. "There is one God, and *one Mediator between God and men,* Christ Jesus, Himself Man" (1 Tim. 2. 5). The chief purpose of the passage is to encourage us to embrace all men in our intercessions, because God's good-will and Christ's ransom embrace all men in their intent; but the apostle is led to drop in the word concerning the humanity of the Mediator. The need of men in their fallen estate is One who can, of personal right, deal with God on their behalf on equal terms. The fact that Christ is Himself God ensures this. But it is also necessary that He who stands for them shall represent them, stand in their stead and render on their behalf that very satisfaction imperative to meet the holy necessities of the nature of God. Such a Mediator we have (His Name be praised!) in Christ Jesus, Himself Man.

Our Daysman is able to stand in the breach. He can lay a hand on the very Throne whose ultimate authority our sins have questioned: He is so near to us that no son of Adam is too low for Him to touch. The wide arms of His Cross stretch completely across the gulf that sin has made. He is God: in Him God stoops to us men and for our salvation.

He is Man, in Him we are lifted up, brought nigh, reconciled to God.

VI.—The Witness to HIS JUDGESHIP.

Paul's witness concurs in that of John in linking together *Manhood and Judgeship* in connection with our Lord. "God hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by *that Man* whom He hath ordained" (Acts 17. 31). And again, "God will judge *the secrets of men* by Jesus Christ" (Rom. 2. 16).

The destiny of the human race is to be decided by One who is Himself Man. The Judgeship of the world is His appointment. "God hath given Him authority to execute judgment also because He is the Son of Man." One who has passed through this treacherous world, who has felt the force of its temptations, knows the inequalities of life, the handicaps of circumstance, and fully appreciates every proper human experience, will sit to judge the whole human family.

Sometimes we are more than a little burdened in contemplating the problem of the destiny of the unevangelised, both the great army of the dead who have lived and died in the dark, and the millions yet living unreached by the Word of the Gospel. The soul can easily become burdened in thinking of the eternal state of these. What a task to do right by each soul! The mind reels before it.

"THE SECRETS OF MEN," what a work to uncover them all! He must have the omniscience of God who undertakes to judge, and His omnipotence, too, to give effect to His own verdicts. He must have entered completely and experimentally into all that human personality

means, so that none can complain of a Judge endowed with knowledge and power, but lacking in sympathy. All these qualifications are found in One alone, Jesus Christ, Son of God, Son of Man, Redeemer and Judge. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Gen. 18. 25). He is the saints' Judge as well as Judge of the whole race. "We must all appear before His judgment seat... who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and make manifest the counsels of the hearts" (2 Cor. 5. 10; 1 Cor. 4. 5). Content thyself, believer! He who of old died for thee, He, and not another, is to review thy life and appraise its works.

VII.—The Witness to HIS HEADSHIP.

Manhood and the Headship of redeemed humanity are also ideas linked up in Paul's witness to Christ. The first man Adam was made a living soul: the last Adam a quickening spirit...The first man is of the earth earthy; the Second Man is the Lord from Heaven" (1 Cor. 15. 45. 47).

A new and redeemed humanity, a race of sons of God, destined to be before Him in the blessedness of Divine love, each wearing the image of the Heavenly, each girded to serve throughout the eternal day in the joy of filial devotion, each radiant with the glory of Christ, each maintained in uninterrupted fellowship with God—no less than this is God's purpose for those whom His Son has redeemed.

"And is it so? *I* shall be like Thy Son?
Is this the grace that Thou for me hast won?
Father of Glory! thought beyond all thought,
In glory to His own blest likeness brought."

This surely is a purpose of such magnificence as to answer fully the often-asked question, "Why did God create man?"

The Risen Lord Jesus, still very Man, is Head of this new humanity. The old headship of the first man, Adam the failure, involved the race which derived its being from him in ruin appalling and complete. The new headship of the Second Man, Christ the Conqueror, has secured for the race that shares His life unimaginable and abiding glory. He, a quickening spirit, bestowing His own deathless, victorious life upon His own is called by two names; the Second Man, second because in God's thought and counsel He has superseded the first; the Last Adam, last because He shall never be superseded by another.

Happy they within whose breast, through everlasting mercy, already beats and pulses the Christ-life; of whom it is true that "Christ liveth in them," and who are in the joyful secret which is "Christ in you the hope of glory" (Col. 1. 27). Happy they, for Christ hath claimed them here, and hereafter they shall see His face.

CHAPTER IV.

Christ and the Scriptures.

THE record in the Gospels concerning the life of our Lord divides itself into three well-defined epochs: one of thirty years, another of about three years, and a third of 40 days' duration. That is, thirty years of privacy and seclusion in His life at Nazareth, three years in the blaze of publicity that attended His ministry, and forty days of His wonderful risen appearings. By far the greatest part of the record is devoted to the central section—the ministry of our Lord. Dr. STALKER has divided those three years for us into a year of obscurity, a year of public favour, and a year of opposition.

Let us consider our subject along these lines.

1. The attitude of our Lord to the Scriptures in that long period of thirty years of privacy.

2. His attitude in the Temptation that preceded His ministry.

3. His attitude to the Scriptures in His public ministry.

4. His attitude in that supreme sorrow which closed His ministry.

5. His attitude to the same Scriptures in His risen life.

I.—In the Years of Preparation.

Apart from the three years of the public ministry of Christ, there are no years that have ever rolled over this old world of ours which so attract one as the thirty years which prepared Him for that ministry. Yet the Spirit of God

has kept those sacred years wrapped in secrecy. "Only one flower has come to us over the wall of that enclosed garden" (Stalker), and it is so exquisite that it makes us long to see all that was enclosed therein.

"And when He was about twelve years of age they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. And when they had fulfilled the days...the Child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem" (Luke 2, 42, 43). You remember the story too well for it to be necessary to repeat it in detail, how that His parents found Him, after three days of search, in the colonnades of the temple amongst the groups of learners that clustered about Israel's teachers, hearing those learned men who spent their lives in seeking to expound the ancient Scriptures to their fellow countrymen; and how those teachers were amazed at His understanding and His answers. "His combinative insight and His discerning replies" (Edersheim) showed that already the 119th Psalm was having its perfect fulfilment in Himself. They bore evidence that here was One who was bringing to Holy Scripture a mind so purely spiritual and an inward eye so clear and so strong that the Scriptures conveyed profounder meanings to Him than to any son of Adam's race who had ever pored over the Word of God.

Almighty God chose for His own dear Son a pious, lower middle-class home, a village environment, a station of lowly toil, in order that during those years of silence, with that clearest of all spiritual visions,

He Should Read Three Books:

The Book of the Scriptures, the Book of Nature, and the

Book of Man. With that library for ever before Him, slowly and silently the Son of Man, according to Luke's own word, grew "in wisdom"—intellectually; grew "in stature"—physically; grew in the "good pleasure of God"—a perfect spiritual Man.

When the thirty years were at an end, and on a certain Sabbath, He stood up in the synagogue at Nazareth to read, it became plain how well-spent all those quiet and unrecorded years had been, for He knew where to open the Scriptures and read—He knew *how* to read them, too, for in those days that had passed He had been every day finding Himself in the Scriptures—and having read, and given the Book back again to the attendant, could say, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears."

The attitude of our Lord Jesus Christ to the Scriptures during that first great preparatory period of His life was that of a delighting and reverent student. Those words in the 119th Psalm were never so true of any man as they were of Himself. He had more understanding than all His teachers because God's testimonies were His meditation.

II.—In the Temptation.

Even if one had the ability one cannot now attempt to peer into the mystery of the temptation in the wilderness, but will simply quote Scripture words concerning Him, that He was in all points—with one deeply emphasised and underscored exception, *i.e.*, apart from the temptation that comes from sin—tempted as we are; and again this word: "He Himself hath suffered being tempted." Remember that the Evil One chose his time,

watched his opportunity, and brought all his powers to bear and all his subtlety into play in the temptation that our Lord endured in the wilderness. Scripture having told us so much also makes us aware how it was that He emerged triumphant. He was the Man who knew how to wield Holy Scripture.

It has been noted that all the three replies He gave to Satan's suggestions lie upon one open page of our Bible (Deut. 6-8), as though from a single day's reading of Scripture He found all that was needful to give Satan his rebuff and to overcome him. There, girt about with truth, stood our Lord, wearing the breastplate of righteousness, His feet shod with alacrity to do the will of God, helmeted with salvation's mighty purpose, upholding faith's shield, grasping the saying of God and with it putting to flight His foe.

Our Lord's attitude to the Holy Scriptures in the hour of His temptation was that of complete confidence therein and complete dependence thereupon. He used the Scripture as the warrior uses his sword. He trusted it as the soldier trusts his weapon.

Thus in His private life He was the reverent student of the Scriptures, and in His wilderness temptation He was the One who was characterised by a wholehearted and simple dependence upon, and confidence in, the written Word.

III.—**In His Public Ministry.**

Next come and see that fruitful period of His life, the period of His public teaching. What place and what part had the Scriptures therein? How did He use them

when He began to utter the Divine Oracles in the ears of men?

It is sometimes claimed that in the Sermon on the Mount He relegated Moses altogether to a back place, and superseded all that Moses had ever written. The truth is that He spoke in that wonderful discourse in no sense as Moses' critic, but as the first worthy interpreter that Moses ever had; as the One who looked into the law that God had given and saw it in all the breadth of its spirituality; saw its holiness and justice and goodness, and regarding it could say, again out of the 119th Psalm, "I have seen an end of all perfection; but Thy commandment is exceeding broad."

Have you met that man who, rejecting the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ—salvation through simple faith in a Crucified and Risen Saviour—tells you that his religion is

The Sermon on the Mount.

If ever a man is to be pitied, that is the man, for in that discourse our Lord, a greater and higher than Moses, reveals how hopeless it is for the natural man to rise to all the spiritual requirements of the Law of God.

Our Lord Jesus Christ then, by means of the place He gave the Old Testament Scriptures in His teaching, showed the height and breadth of the requirements of God. Remember this word: "He that heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them not, is like unto a man that built his house upon the sand" (Matt. 7. 24).

The Sermon on the Mount is fuller of all that drives the sin-awakened soul close up to the Cross of Christ than almost any other part of the Scripture. Its lofty standard

fills the heart more with the sense of its own sinfulness than do all the thunders of Sinai, and makes it flee to the riven Rock of Ages as the only place where a poor sinner may find peace of heart indeed.

In His public ministry Christ made it plain that He believed the histories of the Old Testament to be entirely true. He spoke of some of the Psalms, and some of the very Psalms that the critics relegate to later dates, as being indeed the Psalms of David. He insisted in the clearest words upon the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, saying, "Moses wrote of Me." He quoted from nearly all the historical books. He, as it were, looking down the ages as though seeing that certain of the prophets would be called more into question than others, gave His confirming word to those very books, notably Isaiah, Jonah, and Daniel. He set His seal thus to the dependableness of the Old Testament and to

The Veracity of its History.

He accepted its miracles as facts. It may not be exactly and technically correct to describe such events as Jonah's experience and the Flood of Noah's day as miracles, but ordinary folks who look upon such unprecedented events as being miraculous perhaps will agree to put them in that category. Our Lord Jesus Christ confirmed His belief in both. That manna was given from Heaven for forty years was a fact for His simple acceptance. That Naaman was cured of his leprosy He never calls in question.

He relied upon the verbal accuracy of the Old Testament, and by His use sometimes of a single word put to

flight His opponents in controversy. In the 22nd Matthew He depends upon the tense of a verb in order to demonstrate the great truth of resurrection. In the same chapter, dealing with the 110th Psalm, He uses the phrase, "David's Lord," as the crux of the problem He set the Pharisees: "How is it that Messiah is not only David's son, as you believe, but David's Lord also?" In John 10. 35 He based His argument against His opponents upon a brief phrase in one of the Psalms. Thus, everywhere, our Lord Jesus Christ in His teaching accepted the histories of the Old Testament, believed the records of its miracles, assumed the dependableness of its very words and phrases, and showed Himself to be the One who used and honoured at every turn the Sacred Writings. He used them constantly to end and to overcome in the controversies that were thrust upon Him by His foes. His word of rebuke to His critics was this: "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures" (Matt. 22. 29).

IV.—In His Supreme Sorrow.

What shall we say as we approach that closing hour, that greatest of all hours in the world's history, the hour of His supreme sorrow? His foreknowledge of the Cross made its horror for Him none the less; His soul was troubled as it approached. But when the hour itself was upon Him those same Scriptures which in earliest days He had been taught, of which He had been a student in all those secret years, which had been His strength and stay before the subtle attacks of His great enemy, which He had used in such a wondrous way in His teaching and ministry, were now His support and stay.

"The Psalms in Human Life" is the title of a well-known book. The Psalms never had a place in any human life such as they had in His; they never had a place in any death such as they had in His death. We hear Him speaking from Psalm 69 upon the Cross. In order that the Scripture might be fulfilled "they gave Him vinegar to drink." John says He uttered those words, "I thirst," for He had so found Himself in the Scriptures that He had not failed to find also His Cross there, and had foreseen all the horrors that were wrapped about that Cross. He saw all those prophecies that had been written aforetime pointing to His atoning and vicarious death, marching forward in that darkest of all dark hours to their sure fulfilment.

When His grief was deeper than words can tell, when His loneliness was such as our hearts shall never understand, when the world reeled and rocked and hid itself in the kindly dark, unequal to the task of looking upon the dying agonies of its Creator and Upholder, then it was that the Scriptures gave Him words in which to utter His sorrow and trouble, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

The Psalms Came to Him Then,

and those same old words that had been His strength and stay in many another hour came to His support in that hour of His heaviest grief. All through that 22nd Psalm He lived until at last its closing words filled His lips, and triumphantly He cried, "IT IS FINISHED!" It was also a Psalm (Psa. 31) that gave Him His last words as death's Conqueror. Ere He descended into death's

domain to wrest from it its keys and to take away its sting, He said, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit."

He leant upon the Scriptures when He was enveloped in unimaginable sorrow, and they failed Him not. We who stand at a far-off distance to look upon those unique sorrows of His know this full well, that those self-same Scriptures will never fail us in our far lighter sorrows.

V.—In His Risen Life.

What was our Lord's attitude to the Scriptures in resurrection? *He reaffirmed in resurrection all He had ever said of them in the days of His ministry.*

It is painful even to think of the things that are said about our Lord by many who would admit all that we have so far said as to His endorsement of the Old Testament Scriptures. In speaking about our Lord's holy humanity, they so misuse and misapply the word "limitations." It is distressing to read the things that are said in many quarters to-day about His "accepting the current mistaken notions of His day." Even though we conceded all that—which we have no intention of doing—to those who say and write such things, there is still this question to be faced: Remembering that He is now in the glory and power of risen life, and that all authority is His.

What does He say about the Scriptures Now?

Does He begin to put right all those "mistaken notions?" Does He say that it was not Moses who wrote the Pentateuch? Nay; but this is what He said at one memorable risen appearing: "Oh, fools, and slow of heart to believe

all that the prophets have spoken" (Luke 24. 25). You can make what you like of that word "fools;" you can water it down and make it gentle, if you like; but it is idle to attempt to get rid of the idea of rebuke out of it, and it is a solemn thing to be rebuked by the risen Son of God. His rebuke was this, not that they believed so much, but that they did not believe enough: "Oh, fools, and slow of heart to believe *all.*"

So that from Genesis to Malachi the risen Christ reaffirms the absolute dependableness of all that is written, and He calls men fools who dare to blue-pencil Scripture, and who presumptuously undertake to sub-edit and abridge the Living Oracles of God.

It was a wise Christian who gave this advice to a younger Christian about the Bible: "*Fear*—not to believe it; *fear not*—to believe it;" and when we recollect that our risen Lord puts His own stamp upon all that the Old Testament says, from first to last, and says:

"You Must Believe it All,"

then we feel that our wisdom and our profit is to take it *all* at His valuation.

What the disciples had done was this—there were a great number of prophecies that spoke of Christ in Glory and of the Coming Kingdom, and they grasped these eagerly; but there were some other very inconvenient ones that spoke of a suffering Christ, of a rejected Saviour, and these did not fit in at all with their expectations, so they set them aside or turned the pages over quickly when they came to them, and turned to the more congenial ones. Therefore Calvary found them at a loss.

Now, the Lord says, Your folly was in not believing *all*, for in God's good time the things that your poor minds could not reconcile, blend together, and fit and dovetail into each other, perfecting in His divine purposes.

Christianity in its practical aspect is simply

Loyalty to Christ;

if it is not that, what is it? Our personal fealty to a living Lord—that surely sums it up.

We have seen that in His private and secluded life our Lord's attitude to the Scripture was that of delighting and loving study; that in the hour of fierce trial and temptation His attitude was that of complete dependence; that in His life-work He was the great user of Scripture, He honoured it at every turn; that in the time of His sorrow it was His comfort and His stay; that in the hour of His triumph He took it and re-endorsed it all. How can we be loyal to Christ and take up any other attitude than that to Scripture?

He has given us a greater Bible than He Himself had, greater and richer and more wonderful. It does not hold only promise; it holds fulfilment; not prophecies of Him alone, but the glowing facts of His accomplishments in the fields of redemption. Himself walks before us in the Volume that is in our hands. Shall we not use Scripture as He used Scripture? In our private and secluded life—that life of ours that is hid from the eye of man—shall we not so live that we can say with Him, "Oh, how love I Thy law, it is my meditation all the day?"

In those hours that come upon us all, those hours when the assaults of the enemy are most felt, those hours when

Hell itself seems to be let loose upon us, shall we not also stand, girt about with the truth? Shall we not learn like that warrior of David's day to grasp the sword and to wield it till it cleaves to our very hand, and to conquer, crying, "It is written?" Whatever public service He has given us to do in His Name, shall we not fashion all our activities by the precepts that are written therein? Is it not our business to make known the great central message which this grand Book conveys? Surely so!

Then it will be that in our hours of sorrow, too, when lies heavy upon us the cross, that we will still find our solid comfort and our sure support in the same living oracles that have made a soft and downy pillow for the heads of many a generation of dying saints.

> "The last low whispers of our dead
> Are burdened with His Name."

Sad for us if we so neglect and so undervalue Scripture that there shall come a day when words that have been sweet to believers gone before are robbed of their reality and are idle to us, and we cannot feel our hearts lifted Heavenward amid the gloom when we sing:

> "Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale,
> Yet will I fear none ill;
> For Thou art with me, and Thy rod
> And staff me comfort still."

Last of all, dare we be heedless of His warning against piecemeal acceptance of these holy writings?

"ALL the Scriptures,"

let us remember that word of His, and let us guard against what is worse than folly, allowing ourselves to submit

to the sub-editing of the Divine library to meet the conceptions of an unspiritual and blind Modernism.

The whole matter seems to be aptly summed up in some well chosen words set down by the late Dr. HANDLEY MOULE. Every time I have read them I have felt constrained to add to them my humble but sincere "Amen." I invite you to add your Amen to them also. These are the words:

"When my Lord Christ first became a living and an unutterable reality to me, I remember that one of my first sensations of profound relief was this: *He absolutely trusted the Bible*; and though there are things in it inexplicable that have puzzled me so much, I am going, not in a blind sense, but reverently, to trust the Book because of Him."

That is it—*to trust the Book because of HIM.* How could we do less?

"To doubt would be disloyalty,
To falter would be sin."

CHAPTER V.

Christ's Sinlessness.

DURING the ages God has had many noble servants. Their names are household words and their deeds live after them. We mention them by name whenever some much-prized moral quality is under discussion. The meekness of MOSES, the courage of DAVID, the patience of JOB, and the wisdom of SOLOMON are our proverbial phrases for the highest attainment in these virtues.

Eminent as were these men, they did not achieve perfection even in their most characteristic qualities. There were blots on Moses' meekness, lapses in David's courage, failures in Job's patience, and wide gaps in Solomon's wisdom. They were, after all, of our common clay; moral perfection was beyond their ken and alien to their powers. None of them ever pretended to have reached it, nor has it been claimed for them by others. They were not without sin.

Sinlessness is a quality possessed by One alone: only of Him whom Scripture describes as God's "Holy Servant Jesus" (Acts 4. 27, R.V.), is it affirmed in the clearest terms that He was "without sin."

A Birth "Without Sin."

All other children were born innocent merely, but HE WAS BORN HOLY. Innocence is ignorance of sin and is not incompatible with inherent tendency to sin. *Holiness* is the manifestation of a nature which loves righteous-

ness and hates evil (Heb. 1. 9). Our blessed Lord was *holy* in His nature from birth. "The Holy Ghost," announced the Angel to Mary, "shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee, wherefore also *that Holy Thing* which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1. 35). His nature inherited no spot. The mysterious action of the Holy Spirit in the Incarnation was such as secured that no taint from the human channel through which the Divine Gift was given could be communicated to "*that Holy Thing*."

Ever as His life unfolded a steadfast love of right and an unwavering abhorrence of evil proclaimed that here was One different from all others who have grown from infancy through childhood and youth to full manhood. "In Him was *no sin*!" (I John 3. 5).

A Youth—"Without Sin."

HIS HIDDEN DAYS IN NAZARETH were sinless as the days of His public ministry. There is a significant reserve maintained by the evangelists upon many questions which arise in our minds concerning those hidden days. We are not able as yet to comprehend the manner in which Deity dwelt with One who "grew in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man" (Luke 2. 52). Yet faith receives this revelation, and understands that Deity so dwelt in Him as not to violate the reality of His Humanity, and that humanity in all its processes of growth to maturity in Him did not interfere with simultaneous fulness of Deity.

We will not pry nor theorise concerning the wonder of

the secluded years, but will believingly receive Heaven's estimate of them, when at length they were a finished chapter, and He stood on the threshold of His public life—"This is My beloved Son in whom *I have found My delight*" (J.N.D.). "Well pleased" with the days of simple childhood, of glad youth, and opening manhood; with the days at the carpenter's bench, the uneventful days, the days of small and routine duties, of home burdens, and of little cares!

What a word for those myriads of His believing people whose days are necessarily lived in narrowing circumstances and in small and obscure spheres! It is not the scenery of life that matters, but the spirit in which life is lived. The Sinless One pleased His Father for full 10,000 days in the rural littleness of despised Nazareth.

A Leader—"Without Sin."

HIS ALONE-NESS IN PRAYER. "And it came to pass while He was alone praying His disciples were with Him" (Luke 9. 18). The evangelists afford no sign that our Lord ever prayed *with* His disciples. Their request that He should teach them to pray as John was wont to teach his disciples points rather in the opposite direction. "He was *alone* praying;" even when they were with Him He prayed apart.

A little reflection shows the necessity of this isolation in prayer. His relation to God was different from theirs; He lived on a different level; their needs were in many respects different from His. They must, whenever they approached God in prayer, confess sins and express desires for forgiveness. Repentance must needs be an

ingredient in their dealings with God. Therefore He taught them thus far, saying, "When *ye* pray say... forgive us our trespasses" (Matt. 6. 7, 12). Such a prayer never could have been offered by the Lord Jesus on His own behalf. No pang of repentance was ever felt by Him. He was never conscious of fault; no word did He ever need to recall; never was He aware at the day's end of anything He would fain undo, any deed that might have been better done, any minute that might have been better spent. His prayers therefore were such as He alone could pray.

The 17th of John is inconceivable on any lips save His. In the fact of the isolation of His prayer life is to be found one evidence that He was without any consciousness of sin.

A Life—"Without Sin."

HIS CONSCIOUSNESS OF PERFECT CONFORMITY TO GOD'S WILL must be taken into account. His statement, "I do always those things which please Him" (John 8. 29), reveals His inward sense of complete and unbroken accord with the Father.

The emphatic "*always*" is an arresting word. "*Always,*" without lapse, failure, or intermission, as fully through every busy minute of the crowded day as in His times of quiet retirement; so that no day differed from another in the measure of well-pleasingness with which the obedient Son filled its hours.

Everything written in the Gospels that affords any glimpse of His inner life accords with His consciousness of full harmony with the will of God. He never ex-

presses regret for any word or act, never admits mistake, never utters any syllable of confession, or suffers anyone to dictate His path or actions. He moves unhurried through each day, every hour finding its appointed work, fulfilled, so that in His life there were never any arrears; rather did each evening find Him holding unspotted and unsoiled that peace with which He began the day.

A Tested One—"Without Sin."

This consciousness toward God necessarily made Him unafraid of THE SCRUTINY OF MAN. His challenge to those who watched with hostile intent His every movement still stands without a serious answer, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" (John 8. 46). The vigilance of those who spied upon Him, sought to entangle Him in His speech, and endeavoured to find occasion to accuse Him, has only been equalled in our own times by the assiduous and microscopic dissection of the evangelists' records of His life by scholars and men of letters.

The result is the same: the unwilling witness of both His contemporaries and these "moderns" to His unapproachable moral excellence. From PILATE in those days was wrung, "I find no fault in this MAN" (Luke 23. 4); and from H. G. WELLS but lately this: "Jesus, whose lofty moral teaching and example we can neither bring ourselves to obey nor to ignore."

We have a pair of proverbs which run: "Distance lends enchantment," and "Familiarity breeds contempt." There is much truth in them. Who has not been compelled to revise his estimate of some person when that person was seen at closer range? At the distance of mere

repute, or of slight acquaintance that one seemed to bear an attractive and noble character, but when known more closely unsuspected faults, pettinesses and spoiling and ugly streaks of temper became apparent. So it is frequently in our human friendships.

Now, how did the Lord Jesus impress those who lived daily in His presence and therefore knew Him most intimately?

Perhaps JOHN of all the twelve knew Him best and enjoyed the closest fellowship. What is John's estimate? What did this privileged familiarity breed in him? Nothing but worship. The better Christ is known the greater He is seen to be. In old age, looking back to those three years in which he walked with Jesus, John expresses his calm and deliberate conviction concerning his Master in these words: "We know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and *in Him is no sin*" (1 John 3. 5). "Sin," says John, "was not in Him!"

PETER corroborates this witness of his colleague, testifying of his Lord thus: "Who did *no sin*, neither was guile found in His mouth" (1 Peter 2. 22).

PAUL'S testimony, though not that of a first-hand witness, is nevertheless weighty and significant when we remember how comparatively few are Paul's references to the Saviour's life on earth. Says Paul of his Divine Master: "*He knew no sin*" (2 Cor. 5. 21), that is, sin and He were utter strangers to each other.

The impression produced by a thoughtful perusal of the FOURFOLD RECORD given by the evangelists agrees with these apostolic testimonies. Reading these, we

are brought face to face not only with a Holy Man, but with a Holy Man who is *entirely without any consciousness of sin or fault,* a combination unique in all time and explicable only on one ground—that His Holiness was utterly pure and perfect—that He was *"without sin."*

A Sacrificial Death—"Without Sin."

HIS DEATH WAS THE DEATH OF THE SINLESS ONE FOR SIN. Nothing is plainer in the Gospel accounts of the events that culminated in His death, than the deep peace that then possessed Him, born of His certain knowledge that no fault could be found in Him by man or Devil. In immediate view of the supreme hour of the "power of darkness," when Satan's most desperate attack would be made upon Him, He is serenely unafraid of the outcome of the test.

Satan, though not omniscient, is immensely wise, thought not omnipotent, is of fearful power. He has thousands of years' experience of finding out the weaknesses of the strong, the follies of the wise, and the insincerities of the pious. No man has escaped his wiles. Into his first ambush Adam fell. Not even an Abraham, a Moses, a Noah, a Daniel, or a Job came unscathed through Satan's tests. But at length One, subjected to fiercer tests than all, tempted with all the malign cunning at Satan's command quietly awaits the last and hottest encounter with these calm words, "The prince of this world cometh and hath *nothing in Me"*—NOTHING! (John 14. 30).

Further, when in the very centre of the maelstrom of Calvary's woes, in the appalling darkness of spirit that

fell on Him in the hours of His abandonment by God, the language pressed from Him by that experience, revealing as it does the anguish that cannot be plumbed, also reveals His unshaken sense of personal righteousness. "Why hast Thou forsaken *Me*?" (Matt. 27. 46). WHY... ME? Embedded in the very form of "Emmanuel's orphan cry" is implied that whatever the reason for the forsaking—*it was not in the Sufferer Himself.*

The Psalms in several places tell of dark experiences of men of faith, in which they lost all sense of the Divine presence, and uttered strong and moving complaints out of the horror of soul into which they were brought thereby —but always in the context there is the voice of confession, telling that the cause is in the saint himself, that God has sufficient reason for this withdrawal of His countenance in the believer's own want of obedience to Him.

Not so Christ—there is a world of amazement in that exceeding great and bitter cry, "WHY...ME?" Never was it more manifest that He was without sin than in those hours in which "His own self bare our sins in His own Body on the tree" (1 Peter 2. 24).

Here we touch the vital consideration involved. His entire immunity from sin is an absolute necessity to His Saviourhood. He who will bear away the sin of the world must needs be Himself without sin.

The Bible teaches this from first to last. Ever in the foreshadowing ritual of Old Testament animal sacrifices the victim must be ceremonially clean, "without blemish and without spot" (Num. 19. 2). The Surety for the guilty must be personally free from guilt. The Gospel

doctrine of Substitution demands no less than this. If taint is found in the sacrifice it is rendered invalid.

Applying the apostle's contention concerning resurrection to this other foundation truth it may be said: If Christ be not sinless your faith is vain. Ye are yet in your sins...If we have hoped in the efficacy of a sacrifice which is found after all to be both blemished and spotted we are of all men most miserable, and deluded. But now, and evermore, let this triumphant word be proclaimed with joyful certainty:."God hath made Him to be sin for us, who *knew no sin,* that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5. 21).

A Risen One—"Without Sin."

HIS RESURRECTION IS THE DIVINE AFFIDAVIT OF HIS SINLESSNESS. Christ went into death in the full faith of resurrection. That God would justify Him before all created intelligences was the unshaken confidence of His heart. For death had no rights in Him. The sting of death is sin. He entered the realm of death already a conqueror, in order to draw its fangs for all who are "in Him." His emergence from death is proof that sin had no hold upon or place in Him.

Resurrection was justly due to Him. It was an act of simple righteousness on the part of God when He raised His Son from the dead. It is written that God loosed the pains of death for Christ at that victorious hour, "for it was *not possible* that He should be holden of it" (Acts 2. 24). NOT POSSIBLE! Why? Because the eternal righteousness of God could not permit wrong to triumph. Because the faith of the Righteous Man must

be honoured. Because deliverance out of death must be given Him as a matter of right. Therefore He was "raised from the dead *by the glory of the Father*" (Rom. 6. 4); that is, the whole of the attributes of the glorious character of God consented to, yea, demanded His resurrection.

Thus the empty tomb proclaims His sinlessness and the complete and glorious acceptance of His sacrificial offering for sin.

In Heaven—"Without Sin."

HIS PRESENT EXALTED STATION IN GLORY IS A FURTHER PROOF OF HIS SPOTLESS EXCELLENCE. Before all Heaven man's Representative is seen at the right hand of the Majesty on High; His Name—"Jesus Christ *the Righteous*" (1 John 2. 1). His moral whiteness befits the glory of that place.

"Who," asks the prophetic Psalm, "who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord, and who shall stand in His holy place?" And the answer comes back: "He that hath *clean* hands, and a *pure* heart, who hath not lifted up His soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord and righteousness from the God of His salvation" (Psa. 24. 3-5). This word has been fulfilled in the Glorified Man. The gates of the Heavenly Zion, her everlasting doors have been lifted up to give the Lord, strong in battle, His appointed seat in glory.

He represents His people in that place of power. He is their Intercessor, Advocate, and Priest. Only by virtue of His own glorious faultlessness does He sustain

those offices for His still sinful, failing people. Such an High Priest becomes, befits, and precisely answers our requirements, who is *holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners*, and made higher than the Heavens" (Heb. 7. 26).

The Sinless Man is not to remain in glory alone. He is the forerunner there of a great ransomed host, who, brought to glory by Him, are to shine before the throne in the beauty of holiness for ever. A host redeemed from sin by His death for sin, and marked and anointed for presentation on high, "holy, unblameable, and unreprovable in His right." He awaits the moment when He shall rise up and come forth to do for these the crowning redemptive act—"to them that look for Him shall He appear the second time *apart from sin*, unto salvation" (Heb. 9. 28).

The day hastens when the Sinless One shall behold from the Throne His new, sinless creation stretching before Him, a new creation out of both the Heavens and Earth of which all trace of evil shall have been banished. The present heavens and earth will then have passed away, and for the redeemed sons of Adam will have dawned that day without a night to which their hopes have turned through the present trials, and in prospect of which they have often cheered each other with this song of love:

"When I stand before the throne,
Dressed in beauty not my own,
When I see Thee as Thou art,
Love Thee with unsinning heart—
Then, Lord, shall I fully know,
Not till then, how much I owe."

CHAPTER VI.

Christ's Miracles.

IT was said by Moses to Israel, "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren *like unto Me,* unto Him shall ye hearken" (Deut. 18. 15). Messiah was to be in some respects *like unto Moses*. Now Moses' prophetic office and call were made certain to Israel by miracle. Moses said, "Behold, they will not believe...for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee." And thereupon the Lord appointed certain miraculous signs by means of which Moses was to be accredited as His prophet to Israel. First, the rod which changed into a serpent and then back into a rod again; second, the hand which became leprous and then became instantaneously clean. To these a third sign was added to be used in case Israel's unbelief proved even more obdurate than Moses anticipated—the turning of the water of the river into blood. "And it was so, for Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel, and Aaron spake all the words which the Lord had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people. And the people believed" (Exod. 4. 30. 31).

Isaiah also, speaking by the Spirit concerning the Messiah, uttered this oracle: "I, the Lord, have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people for a Light of the Gentiles to open the blind eyes, to bring

out the prisoners from the prison" (Isa. 42. 6, 7). And this, "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing, for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert" (Isa. 35. 5, 6).

"The Jews Require a Sign."

Because of this witness of the Scriptures it had become part of the expectation of the Jewish people that Messiah would be a worker of miracles. John the Baptist, languishing in Herod's prison, found his faith sorely tried because the One he had heralded as Messiah took no step to "bring out the prisoner from the prison." Perplexed, he sent a somewhat querulous inquiry to the Lord Jesus. "Art Thou the Coming One, or look we for another?" The answer of Jesus referred John back to the Book of Isaiah. "Go and tell John *again* these things which ye do hear and see." The blind receive their sight (Isa. 42. 8); the lame walk (Isa. 35. 5); the deaf hear (Isa. 29. 18). Yea, more, for signs beyond those foretold by Isaiah are wrought—lepers are cleansed, and the dead are raised up. Further, crowning mercy of all, true end which all the other signs did but subserve, "the poor have the Gospel preached to them" (Isa. 61. 1).

A Messiah who wrought no miracles would not have fulfilled the prophetic Word nor the legitimate expectation of the Chosen Nation.

Our Lord's Miracles Numerous.

It is clear from the Gospels that the miracles of our Lord were very numerous. Some forty are specially

recorded, but this is not an exhaustive list, so much as a representative one. There is, for instance, a brief summary of a single day's work in our Lord's ministry in Capernaum recorded thus: "And...all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto Him, and He laid His hands on every one of them, and healed them" (Luke 4. 40). Of the early Galilean ministry Matthew records that "He went about all Galilee... healing all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease among the people" (Matt. 4. 23). Indeed, as was natural, His reputation as a worker of deeds of beneficent power soon travelled far afield, and Matthew further records that "His fame went throughout all Syria, and they brought unto Him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy, and He healed them."

His enemies admitted His miracles to be numerous. "This Man doeth many miracles" (John 11. 47). The evangelist comments upon the extraordinary stubbornness of their unbelief in the words, "Though He had done so *many* miracles before them yet believed they not on Him" (John 12. 37). The populace asked of each other the question, "When Messiah cometh will He do *more* miracles than this Man hath done?" (John 7. 31). He Himself drew attention to the abundance of the signs He had granted in their midst in the words, "*Many* good works have I shewed you from My Father" (John 10. 32).

Our Lord's Miracles Real.

It remained for the unbelief of later ages, however,

to deny the reality of Christ's miracles. The critics of our times flatly deny the possibility of miracle. The records of the Bible whenever they tell of miracle are dismissed as legends, or are explained away along rationalistic lines. The usual method is to allege "mythical accretion," *i.e.*, that to the record of a small and ordinary happening this and that exaggeration, embellishment, and addition was made until, in course of time, it attained the full status of miracle.

The contemporaries of Christ never expressed any doubt about the reality of His miracles. His inveterate foes did not scruple to attribute His miracles to demon power in their endeavour to discredit Him, but to deny their reality seems never to have occurred to them. They were in a much better position than our own latter-day critics to challenge His miracles, for they could investigate them at close range, and had the advantage of witnessing Him actually at work, and the opportunity personally to cross-examine the subjects of His miraculous powers. Yet *not one word do they say against the reality of the miracles*. On the other hand, it was the reality and frequency of these signs that eventually goaded them to apprehend Him. "What do we?" they said to each other, "for this Man doeth many miracles" (John 11. 47).

"John did no miracle," was the comment made by the people about the Prophet of the Wilderness, "but whatsoever John spake concerning this Man was true" (John 10. 42). Note that the same contemporary witnesses who testify to Christ's miracle-working, also testify that John's ministry was without miracle.

Here are two Prophets, recognised as such by their

own generation, each working in the same small country and at practically the same time. Of one the testimony is that he did *no* miracle; of the Other that He wrought *many* miracles. Strange if the "mythical accretion" theory should operate with reference to the Lord Jesus, but not with reference to John the Baptist! For no one has since credited John with any miracle.

An ordinary, unbiased inquirer would conclude that the witness of the evangelists is plain, unvarnished truth, *i.e.*, that they say John did no miracle, and Christ did many miracles, because these statements accurately represent the facts.

As WESTCOTT observes: "Whole structures of popular objections fall before a simple undesigned statement like this in which the evangelist contrasts the ministry of the Baptist with the ministry of Christ—"John did no miracle."

The Variety of the Lord's Miracles.

Not only in their number, but in their range and variety our Lord's miracles stand alone. They reveal Him as wielding mastery of the powers of the unseen world.

DEMONS are driven from their habitations in the bodies of men at His word. Not one could withstand Him. Even a legion is cast out when challenged by Him. His authority is acknowledged by these infernal beings. And, be it noted by those who regard the demon-possession spoken of in the Gospels as a superstitious or ignorant way of regarding lunacy, that the evangelist clearly distinguishes between these distinct and different evils. "He healed those which were possessed with demons, *and* those which were lunatic" (Matt. 4. 24).

His miracles also show Him Lord of the MATERIAL WORLD, its resources and its powers. "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof." The winds and the sea obey Him, so that at His word the billows become as a marble pavement for His feet. The harvest of the sea is gathered at His will, so that nets empty after long toil are immediately filled to breaking. The long processes of nature and of human toil by which bread is multiplied for man, and by which the vineyards' product is prepared for man's use and pleasure, are dispensed with when He wills, so that the multitudes are satisfied and the guests at the village wedding gladdened by His beneficent power over the increase of the earth.

His signs wrought upon MANKIND proclaim the Lord Jesus the Great Physician. The tragic ills to which poor human flesh is heir yield to His touch. "All manner of disease," says Matthew. Fevers, palsies, leprosies, bloody issues, and the whole host of the sad maladies that rack men's frames and torment their minds give place at His will. Yea, and those bitter afflictions under which our race groans, lameness, deafness, dumbness, blindness, mental derangement—He conquers these and sets men free from them in perfect wholeness.

Even DEATH itself in child, youth, and man acknowledges Him Lord, and looses its already-taken prey at His bidding.

The Character of the Miracles.

"He went about doing good" (Acts 10. 38). Such is the inspired summary of the Lord's earthly days. His works were good works. "Many *good* works have I shewn

you" (John 10. 37). The deeds of power wrought by Moses in Egypt were largely judgments upon the Egyptian nation. The prophet Elijah called down fire from Heaven upon his enemies. With the deliverances of Daniel from the lions and of his three friends from the furnace are connected dreadful judgments upon those who were the foes of God's truth. But the works of Christ are "*good* works" in the sense that they are deeds of mercy—they do men good, they dry tears, heal wounds, and quiet tormented minds.

Only two of the recorded miracles are deeds into which the element of judgment enters—the cursing of the barren fig tree and the destruction of the swine at Gadara. It is noticeable that in neither of these is a man the subject of the judgment action. It would appear that these have place in our Lord's ministry to make it clear that there is in Him no want of power to deal in judgment; but nevertheless all His miraculous deeds wrought upon man have the character of grace, kindness, and mercy.

For these works mirror the Father's heart to man. They are in this sense "the Father's works." They depict in the physical realm the concern of God over man's sad estate, and the readiness of God to bend in loving tenderness and power over man to cure his soul's more deadly maladies and heal its wounds. "In every healing ministry is depicted an atoning mystery."

Signs, Powers, and Wonders.

Three words are employed in the New Testament to describe miracles. First, SIGN (*semeion*), a word which indicates their purpose—they are signs, pointing clearly

to one unmistakable conclusion—that He who performs them is thereby Divinely accredited. Second, POWER (*dunamis*), a word which points to their source and cause, *viz.*, that they are due to the operation of the Divine might. Third, WONDER (*teras*), a word which indicates the effect produced on the beholder, expresses their arrestingness and their demand upon the observer to note that God is at work.

The Purpose of the Miracles.

Our Lord did not wish the emphasis in men's thoughts of Him to rest upon His miracles (see Luke 5. 14). A SIGN points elsewhere than to itself. It is not itself a goal, but guides to one, and may also indicate that a stage of the journey thither has been reached. It points the traveller in the right direction, but is not itself of any importance save as it serves this purpose. Therefore to be considered a healer, or miracle-worker, was not Christ's desire, for this would be for the *signs* to defeat their own purpose.

His miracles, considered as signs of His mission, were intended to dispose men to heed His Word and to receive Himself. So we read in John 2. 23, 24: "Many believed in His Name when they saw the miracles which He did, but Jesus did not commit Himself to them, for He knew all men."

In contrast to those whose faith rested in miracle Nicodemus is set forth as having been induced by a consideration of the Lord's miracles to inquire as to the Lord's message. "We know that Thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do these miracles which

Thou doest except God be with Him" (John 3. 2). To this sincere and awakened seeker the *signs* attested Christ's Divine mission, and led him to seek a personal interview, with blessed results both to himself and to those hosts of saved men and women who bless God for the third chapter of the Gospel by John and its revelation of the necessity of the "new birth."

Miracle and the Christian Revelation.

Nowadays miracle is out of fashion among the religious intellectuals. If the place of miracle in the Christian scheme is not flatly denied, belief in miracle is tolerated as well enough for the groundlings and the old-fashioned, whilst the up-to-date and scientific thinker affects to disregard miracle as an evidence of the truth of Christianity.

Let it be solemnly re-affirmed that our most holy faith is in its web and woof bound up with miracle. The revelation of God in Christ, in its every stage from Incarnation to Ascension, is intertwined with the miraculous. Should our clever folks ever disentangle the miraculous from our Bible and purge its every page of the last vestige of miracle, they will leave us a Bible shorn of its glory, its power, its majesty, and its truth, a Bible with no saving message, no living, delivering, renewing voice for poor, sinful men—a Bible no longer worth opening, a Bible so edited, amended, and abridged as to be bereft of all its living glory, a Bible become to us desolate and dumb.

Nay, brothers, our faith is cradled in miracle—INCARNATION IS A MIRACLE. "Let us now go, even unto Bethlehem."

"Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,
Hail the Incarnate Deity!"

Behold, a miracle of the Holy Spirit! "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee, wherefore also that Holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called Son of God!" (Luke 1. 35).

THE DEATH OF CHRIST IS A MIRACLE! Let us stand beholding Calvary. The Prince of Life dies! A death Divinely authorised (John 10. 18), voluntary, a death victoriously, calmly, and deliberately undergone. "He bowed His head, and dismissed His Spirit." A miracle of the Son—the death of deaths in the Death of the deathless Christ!

THE RESURRECTION IS A MIRACLE. Again, to the Garden of the Sepulchre. "Come, see the place where the Lord lay. He is not here, He is risen"—the cold facts of history prove that He who was laid in Joseph's tomb, having been taken down dead from the Cross, and borne thither, rose again, actually, corporeally, historically. He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father.

"And now He's risen, proclaim the joyful story,
The Lord's on high!"

Miracle—aye, miracle indeed!

So, we conclude, since miracle is the breaking forth of God into the midst of human affairs in unprecedented ways, suspending or superseding His usual method and working in a new mode which reveals Himself: because this is so Christianity is itself necessarily miraculous Yea, our LORD JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF IS THE SUPREME MIRACLE!

CHAPTER VII.

Christ's Cross.

THE Cross of Christ is central to Paul's Gospel. He glories in the Cross. His preaching is the preaching of the Cross. The whole redemptive scheme of God rests its full weight upon the Cross. There is no Gospel, no gleam of hope for a lost race, no ray to pierce universal gloom if the Cross be ignored, misunderstood, or belittled.

I. The Heart of the Gospel—THE CROSS.

Everything hangs upon the Cross being a sacrifice for sin, an Atonement, a Satisfaction, an Expiation, a Substitution, an all-effective Shelter from a pursuing justice threatening sentence upon guilty creatures. If the Cross be less than this—if it be merely a martyrdom, a crime, an example, a self-immolation; if it be merely one or all of these, then Paul's mouth is shut—he is no longer an apostle, he has no glad tidings to bear to his fellows. And if there be no Gospel, then the whole scheme of things is rushing to inevitable and universal doom.

This, of course, unless the human family is capable of self-salvation, unless it be moving forward toward self-cure of sin, toward the removal of its own guilt. Unless, too, simple mercy can over-ride justice and guilt be treated the same as innocence. Unless the universe is such, and is so governed that it does not

ultimately matter whether man obey or disobey the law of his Maker; and unless there is no deep and eternal cleavage between right and wrong, so that it is all the same whether men are moral or immoral. But if there be eternal righteousness enthroned on high, and if the Judge of all has bound together sin and penalty, righteousness and reward, then the Cross, divinely splendid in its conception, nobly perfect in its completion, solitarily vast in its breadth and permanence, and profounder than all our best thoughts of its wisdom and power, stands as the sole provision for the cancellation of man's sin, the removal of his personal guilt, and the consequent acceptance of his person by God.

II. **The Background**—WRATH REVEALED.

"For the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness" (Rom. 1. 18). Paul regards the human race as lost through sin, so that the salvation of any is a Divine wonder. To him the universe is one in which Omniscient Justice so rules that no offender evades those dues which his guilt incurs; a universe in which wrong is more to be feared than pain; and in which no transgressor is assured that his disregard of law will incur only measurable retribution. It is a universe in which is dispensed with inexorable equity "tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil," and "glory, honour, and peace to every man that worketh good."

In the face of this, the whole race lies under guilt, and no class is exempt from the sentence of wrath from

God. Paul does not mark out any class excepted from this sentence; a class having no need of salvation, a class of impenitents destined to be annihilated, a class privileged to obtain salvation after death, or a class in no danger of being ultimately lost. Nay, the wrath of God, like a gathering tempest, lowers over the whole race, so that salvation must needs be an intervention which will afford effective deliverance and shelter from the impending storm.

To Paul, this is the first view the penitent and believing sinner obtains of the Cross of Christ; to such a one the Lord Jesus is the "Deliverer from the wrath to come" (1 Thess. 1. 10). The believer is not "appointed to wrath, but to obtain salvation through Christ Jesus" (1 Thess. 5. 9). Those justified by the Blood of Christ are assured of being "saved from wrath through Him" (Rom. 5). The Death of Christ provides a shelter from judgment as the blood of the paschal lamb sprinkled on lintel and doorposts in Egypt sheltered the household from the stroke of the Destroyer. Not as saving men by counsel, example, methods of moral betterment, or by sacraments does Paul preach Christ, but as saving them through the propitiation, the satisfaction which consists in His own Blood, the delivering values of His own atoning death.

III. **The Foundation**—PROPITIATION.

Paul's Gospel teaches that God has revealed His love by redeeming man. "The revelation of the love comes through the redemption" (Dale). The modern ethical Gospel, on the other hand, teaches that the love revealed

in the Incarnation, life, and martyr-death for truth's sake of Christ redeems men by its beauty and attractiveness. It is objected that the idea of a propitiation for sin being essential to forgiveness and redemption is a slur upon God's character, beclouding His mercy and tenderness. The idea, it is said, sets a lower standard for God in His acting toward men that Himself enjoins upon His children in their dealings one with another. We forgive those who sin against us without demanding satisfaction from them—why then should it be thought necessary for God to require it as a condition of His forgiveness of our sins? The objection rests upon the fallacy that men's relations to each other are analogous to their relation to God. An old, oft repeated mistake this, "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself" (Psa. 50. 21). Even in human affairs differing relationships demand differences of attitude toward and treatment of wrong. You may be prepared to forgive the ingrate who callously robbed you by a villainous and deliberate forgery; but the Judge before whom he is brought by the long arm of the law must not do so. Such an action would undermine the sanctions of the law, and prove the Judge unfit for his high office. One of your sons may bully his younger brother to the point of injury, and yet, such may be the love of the injured boy for his brother that he may be more than willing to forgive and hide his conduct; but if you as a father became aware of what has happened and act toward the offender in the same generous way, writing him, so to speak, an act of oblivion for his wrong, every right-minded person will condemn your action as encouraging the strong to oppress the weak,

and as leaving the oppressed without defence or redress.

God, be it remembered, is "the Judge of All." Every father's right and obligation to judge in the home and the family, every magistrate's power to judge in the community is derived from that ultimate authority which rests ever with "the Judge of all the earth." The reason given why Christians should not exact private vengeance for wrongs inflicted upon them is not that retribution is revoked, but that its exaction is God's prerogative alone. "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord" (Rom. 12. 19).

To borrow an old illustration, let us suppose that five evil monsters, instinct with ill-will to men, rejoicing in seeing all suffering and inflicting suffering, all tempted and all tempting, were set over five separate peoples, and given a free hand to wreak their worst mischief. To give effect to their cruel desires one of them adopts a system of wars, a second one of spies and false accusations, the third one of tortures and murders, the fourth one of assassins and robbers. Let each of these ply his system with zeal. Then let the fifth adopt the simple expedient of proclaiming at every street corner of his dominions: "Punishment is abolished!" Nothing more, only oblivion for all offences and the assurance that evil need fear no Nemesis. Immediately men would explain to themselves the meaning of such a proclamation, and the course would be clear for every evil. Wrong would engender wrong, and oppression multiply oppression, till the land without justice would become the pattern for all who desire to overturn foundations, to destroy quiet, to banish security,

and to fill the land with the wailings of the despairing and despoiled. The fifth monster could sit and smile at the endeavours of his four neighbours.

Nay, we rebel against the fundamental moral composition of the universe if we wish to find it ruled by a Being in whom justice is reduced to impotence, whose law has lost its sanctions, and who is agreeably benevolent to all, irrespective of dessert. "Is there unrighteousness with God that taketh vengeance? perish the thought: for how then shall God judge the world?"

The Cross of Christ tells out the message that a complete answer, a full satisfaction, has been made regarding the offence and condemnation of the sin of man. Christ has dealt with sin in the especial character of that which draws down God's condemnation upon men. He has dealt with it by bearing it. He has taken it away by submitting to that death in which God's condemnation of sin is expressed. And in this work of His there is an infinitude of value, such as makes forgiveness available for the whole of human-kind.

Mathematical considerations have no place in this propitiation. Questions whether Christ dies for all the sins of all men or only all the sins of some men are beside the mark. The propitiation is an ocean in which each must plunge for himself, a fountain at which each must personally quench his thirst. But in its absolute values it is immeasurable.

"His blood *avails* for all our race."

IV. The Peace of the Gospel—SUBSTITUTION.

Sang ZINZENDORF as his soul entered by its acceptance

of the Propitiation into the calm assurance of salvation:

> "By faith I plunge me in this sea—
> Here is my hope, my joy, my rest;
> Hither when Hell assails I flee,
> I look into my Saviour's breast.
> Away, sad doubt and anxious fear,
> Mercy is all that's written there."

Peace, deep and quiet, possesses the soul that lays claim to the propitiation for itself. To Paul the undying wonder of the Gospel lay in the knowledge that on his behalf Christ died, that the Son of God so loved him as to become his Substitute. Here assurance of salvation has its birth, here liberty begins its song, here consecration begins to pour its gratitude forth, and here the conscience finds a quiet home where no intruder accuses or disturbs. Our sins have been borne, their penalty paid, their offence expiated, and ourselves accepted by a forgiving God—so whispers the faith of the believer within him, and to that voice innumerable assurances from the Word of God, and from Paul's epistles especially, make answer.

"At the foundation of the Atonement," says RABBI DUNCAN, the learned Scottish Divine, "lies the suffering of the very death deserved; at the foundation of the suffering of the very death deserved lies a legal obligation to suffer that death; and at the foundation of the legal obligation to suffer that death lies an act of self-substitution by which the just assumes the guilt of the guilty, but in a different way from the guilty. The guilty contracted guilt by infraction of law; the Righteous One in substituting Himself for the guilty did not produce that guilt, but, finding it already, and

taking it, performed an act which so far from being guilty, is an act most well-pleasing to God, respecting which the Eternal Father has delight in His own Son...In reference to this guilt He is dealt with as guilty, in reference to the assumption of it He is well-pleasing to God. And what is the end proposed if not that justice which requires that every sin receive its due reward be satisfied? What other end is subserved if not this—the awarding unto Him and inflicting upon Him, the Just One, what the unjust deserved? And when we have found some other end, conscience will tell us of this death which, as we deserve it and it has not been borne, the guilt which deserves it and has not been removed must remain to gnaw our conscience for ever and ever."

But, may we add, having seen and believed that Justice has been satisfied on our behalf by that Death of the Cross, the voice of accusing conscience is stilled into a great peace, and we enter into the experience of those for whom TOPLADY wrote:

"Since Thou hast my discharge procured,
And freely in my place endured
The whole of wrath Divine,
Payment God will not twice demand,
First at my bleeding Surety's hand,
And then again at mine.

"Turn, then, my soul, unto thy rest,
The merits of thy Great High Priest,
Speak peace and liberty;
Trust in His efficacious Blood,
Nor fear thy banishment from God,
Since Jesus DIED FOR THEE."

CHAPTER VIII.

Christ's Resurrection.

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST from the dead is the central historic fact upon which the whole Christian revelation depends. Were it possible to disprove that He rose again from the dead, and to demonstrate to finality that His dust still moulders in a Palestinian tomb, the knell of Christianity would have sounded, and the most elaborate and heartless hoax ever foisted upon poor human beings would have been exposed. If, on the other hand, the evidence is available, ample, dependable, and authenticated that He did rise—then our Faith is founded on a Rock.

Since the Resurrection of Christ is so centrally important there is little wonder that the witness to it is strong and sure. Divine foresight has provided us with lines of evidence, each of which is strong in itself, whilst their united testimony is certain and unassailable. Let us consider some of the proofs which show it to be historically true of our Lord that "He rose again from the dead the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15. 4).

I. Predictions of the Resurrection.

Himself is the greatest of the Prophets. Himself, too, is the heart and goal of His own predictions. He began, mid-way through His period of ministry, to predict His own death, adding with each new mention of it some

fresh detail or circumstance, until every principal feature of that tremendous tragedy had been included in His foretellings.

Thus the violence of His death, its mode by crucifixion, the act of treachery that should bring about His arrest, the conspiracy of the Jewish leaders which should be chiefly responsible for the death, the indignity of mockery, scourging, etc., which should accompany it, the fact that a Gentile power should act as His executioners—all these He spoke of to His disciples in the plainest words.

And on every occasion upon which He so foretold the circumstances of His own death, HE ALSO FORETOLD HIS OWN RESURRECTION, the favourite form of words being "and the third day He shall rise again" (Matt. 16. 21; 17. 22, 23; 20. 18, 19).

If, then, His prophecies concerning His death met with such exact and literal fulfilment as the evangelists record, it must be taken into account, in view of His character, His truth, and the power and dependableness of His spoken word on every subject on which He bore witness, that there is a probability that His word on this subject will likewise forecast exact and historical truth.

The testimony of Christ on any theme cannot lightly be ignored, in view of His known character; and least of all when He speaks of the miraculous sequel to His death upon the Cross.

II. **Precautions as to the Resurrection.**

His foes seem to have remembered His prophecies, of resurrection, whilst His disciples forgot them (Matt.

27. 63; John 20. 9). Strange, but true to life, that *hatred* has often a better memory than *love*.

The result of their recollection was the request to Pilate to be allowed to take precautions against any sequel which might give rise to superstitious rumours that He had actually risen from the dead. The stone was sealed, the watch was set, everything was made as sure as man could make it.

We now discern a Divine prescience ordering all these hostile precautions; forestalling every objection that might be raised to weaken the after-proof of the fact of the Resurrection. Had there been no guard set to watch the tomb, no sealed stone closing its portal, the evidence for the Resurrection would now be less strong and conclusive.

The Empty Tomb

challenges explanation, and none fits the circumstances save the fact asserted in the Scriptures: "He is not here: He is risen" (Matt. 28. 6). Where was the body that had reposed within the rock-hewn sepulchre? How is its removal to be accounted for? Either it was removed by human means, or by superhuman agency. If by human means, was it His friends or His foes who were responsible for the removal? The soldier temple-guards whisper furtively this account: "His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we slept" (Matt. 28. 13).

Suppose the members of the guard under cross-examination thus: "Do you actually admit being asleep on duty?" "Yes." "How, then, do you know what happened whilst you slept so soundly?" *No answer*. "Do you

know that for a handful of scared provincials, unarmed, to come at dead of night, pass every one of you, unseal and roll away the great stone that closed the tomb, enter the tomb, unwind the many yards of cloths that bound many pounds of sweet spices to the body, and then bring the body forth through the low opening and carry it away without attracting attention or disturbing one of you, is almost as much a miracle as the Resurrection itself?" *No answer*. "If you were not asleep you would have prevented the disciples from accomplishing the theft; if you were asleep you cannot know who the persons were who carried out the raid. How do sleeping men identify folks in the dark?" *No answer*.

The story of the guard would be laughed out of court in any serious trial where evidence was tested. "The legs of the lame are not equal" (Prov. 26. 7), and this story is about the lamest ever set in circulation. No wonder a considerable price had to be paid to get it repeated!

Removed by Friends or Foes—Which?

If, then, His friends did not remove the body, was it His foes who did it? But why should they? It was their purpose and in their interest to keep the body where it had been interred. So long as it remained there, no claim that Jesus of Nazareth had been raised from the dead could cause embarrassment to the Jewish authorities. They could disprove the claim immediately by exhibiting the body still in its resting-place. Suppose they thought well to remove it to some secret hiding-place for safety. Why did they not produce it when, a few weeks later, all

Jerusalem was ringing with the preaching that this Jesus "whom ye crucified God hath raised up?" (Acts 2. 23, 24). The answer is obvious. The authorities did not then produce the body in order to discredit this preaching, because it was not in their custody.

His friends could not if they would; His foes would not if they could have removed the body from the tomb. If, then, neither the human hands of friend or foe were responsible for the empty tomb on that first day of the week, the alternative only is left that superhuman agency brought about the absence of the body. This is the Bible explanation: "God raised Him from the dead" (Acts 13. 30).

III. **Evidences of His Resurrection.**

The evangelists record a number of appearings of the Lord to His disciples after His resurrection. These occurred at intervals during the period of forty days between the Resurrection and the Ascension. Luke says of these appearings, "He shewed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days" (Acts 1. 3). Taken in order they are: (1) To Mary Magdalene at the garden of the sepulchre; (John 20. 14); (2) To the other women a little later (Matt. 28. 9); (3) To Peter privately (Luke 24. 34; 1 Cor. 15. 5); (4) To two on the Jerusalem-Emmaus road (Luke 24. 13; Mark 16. 12); (5) To the company gathered in Jerusalem (John 20. 19; Luke 24. 36). This group of appearings took place on the Resurrection Day. A week later He appeared (6) to the disciples again, Thomas being now among the company (John 20. 26). (7) Later, in Galilee,

He appeared to seven disciples whilst they were fishing (John 21. 1). Then (8) He appeared to James (perhaps James the Lord's brother) (1 Cor. 15. 7). Later still (9) to a large company numbering over 500, probably on a Galilean mountain (1 Cor. 15. 6; Matt. 28. 16); and last (10) the appearing connected with the Ascension from Olivet by Bethany (Acts 1. 6; Luke 24. 50).

IV. **Objections to the Resurrection.**

The principal theories of unbelief, designed to explain away the plain significance of the records of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, are the HALLUCINATION theory, the PERSONATION theory, and the SWOON theory.

1. **The Hallucination Theory** asserts that the disciples' experiences had no objective reality, but were subjective visions induced by a peculiar psychological state which strong desire to believe in His resurrection created in them, and which presently led them to claim to have seen Him alive from the dead. They did not wish to deceive; the powerful mental impression was so convincing to them that their claim was sincere, but none the less they were deceived.

The variety of conditions which prevailed in the recorded appearings make this theory quite untenable. The facts are solidly against it.

He appeared to Mary in her grief, to Peter in his repentance, to Thomas in his stout unbelief, to Cleopas and his companions in their puzzled reasonings, to the disciples gathered in Jerusalem in their fear, to the seven on the lake whilst they were pre-occupied with their labours. In every case the manifestation took them by surprise,

and at a moment when there is no evidence that strong desire to believe He had risen possessed them.

Moreover, there is extraordinary variety in the circumstances of these appearings. He showed Himself at dawn to Mary, in the grey morning to the seven, in the afternoon to the travellers to Emmaus, and in the evening to the disciple-company gathered behind barred doors in Jerusalem. He appeared in a garden to Mary, indoors to the Jerusalem company, on the seashore to the seven fishers, on the open road to the travellers, on the mountain side to the five hundred, and by the humble cottage board in the village of Emmaus.

These various experiences cannot be explained as uniformly due to hallucination. Besides, groups of people do not have an identical subjective vision simultaneously. These many lines of witness demand objective reality—it is the only explanation.

2. **The Personation Theory** asserts that though the disciples had actual, real, objective visions, the person seen by them was not the Lord Himself, but someone impersonating Him in order to create in them the faith that their Master was risen.

Scripture furnishes equally strong testimony against this supposition. The records show the Lord solicitous to prove by every means that fact that He who appears is verily the same Person they had lost at Calvary. So far from being credulous, the disciples are persistent in their doubts. None of them is prepared to accept the testimony of the others—to each a personal manifestation of the Risen One is needful.

The report of the women is but "idle tales" to the others;

the message of the two returned from Emmaus is not enough for the ten; an appearing to them all is necessary. Thomas will not accept the resurrection story as true, even though every one of his fellow apostles assures him of it; he requires a personal sight and an actual identification of the Risen One. Even as the five hundred assembled in Galilee, "some doubted." And Mark tells us that the Lord upbraided the eleven with "their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen Him after He was risen."

The credulity of the disciples is not the reason of our acceptance of the Resurrection. On the contrary, it is evident that the Lord had to give *many proofs* before their faith found sure standing ground.

Proofs of Identity.

(*a*) He offered every proof of His identity that could be reasonably expected or demanded. He revealed Himself to be none other than He Whom Mary Magdalene mourned as lost when He uttered her name in the familiar tones she knew so well. "It was yet dark" (John 20. 1), and she could not descry His features. Besides, she was weeping, and her eyes were blinded with tears. So, as regards His form, she mistook Him for the gardener. But one word from Him was immediately sufficient to bring an exclamation of glad recognition from her: "*Rabboni*!"

The timbre of the human voice is one of the most recognisable features of personality. No two voices are precisely the same. His voice was different from all other voices. She knew it in Resurrection, the very

voice she had heard so often during the years before He died.

(*b*) He gave proof to the assembled company by showing them

The Scars Upon His Body.

There is no surer known means of identification than a scar. The scars of the Crucifixion, imprinted on His hands, His feet, and His side, were infallible as evidences of His identity. He who appeared in Resurrection is the same as He who had endured the Cross; their astonished eyes behold these signatures of suffering, and perplexity gives place to adoring faith. "The Lord is risen indeed!" (Luke 24. 34).

(*c*) Yet again, He gave proof of His identity by

The Repetition of a Former Deed

of power, when He gave direction to the seven as they fished without success on the Lake, and caused their net to be filled instantly with a great draught of fishes. It was when this was done that John, reaching intuitively the true conclusion, said to his companions, "It is the Lord" (John 21. 7).

Three years back the Lord had given them a similar proof of His power. Now in Resurrection He repeats the proof, showing Himself to be the same as of yore, able still to perform the deed which none save Himself could do.

These proofs of identity are so clear and strong that unless the records are clever fictions He who died on the Cross and He who was raised again are the very same, and the Personation theory is baseless and discredited.

3. **The Swoon Theory** supposes that our Lord did not really die upon the Cross, but swooned only. That He recovered consciousness only after He had been laid in Joseph's new tomb; that He emerged thence weak and ill, and was hidden away by His followers, until later He succumbed to His injuries.

The story of the Death as told by John includes the record of the piercing of the Saviour's side and the flowing forth therefrom of blood and water. Medical testimony agrees that this is a proof of the fact that death had actually taken place.

"Modern" wisdom usually goes upon the assumption that previous generations have been composed entirely of the ignorant, so this theory assumes that the authorities at the time of the Crucifixion were incapable of discerning between a dead man and an unconscious one.

The Basis of this Theory.

But it is necessary to assume more. For this theory to hold its ground it must be decided that the men who went forth and preached everywhere the Message of the Risen Christ were deliberate deceivers, privy to a conspiracy to propagate a lie. It must be concluded that the Church is built upon this falsehood, and that the apostles courted suffering, privation, toil, imprisonments, and martyrdom in a cause they well knew to be false.

Further, it is necessary to accept the unthinkable proposition that the noblest characters that have blessed the world were moulded by faith in a deception, and that the host of noble men and women who have served and are

serving Christ and humanity have been inspired by a calculated and carefully carried out trick.

But, as grapes do not grow on thorns or figs on thistles, no more do holy and radiant lives rear themselves on a foundation of falsehood. Selfless sacrificial service is not born of a cause that is itself evil. The Church of Christ is too solid to have been erected on a fable, too noble to have been built upon a mean pretence, and too lasting to have its roots in the vile soil of deceit. The Gospel that overcomes evil cannot itself be based on evil. The Message that turns men from darkness cannot be founded on a deed of darkness. Well saith the Scriptures, "A house divided against itself shall not stand" (Matt. 12. 25).

Cowards Changed to Heroes—How?

As to this "unreal death" theory, we may well ask, "Is it likely, is it possible, that One who was not Victor over death, but instead, like the rest of mankind, its pale and helpless victim, could have so inspired and transformed the disciples that they, suddenly mastering timid and palsied inertia, should have gone forth, fearing not prince, priest, or people, Devil, danger, or dungeon, preaching the Message, 'CHRIST IS RISEN,' and counting it all joy to suffer for His Name?"

No rewards but hardship, scorn, poverty, oppression, and martyrdom were offered them; no promotion other than the prospect of the Presence of Christ in the world beyond, yet

> "They met the tyrants' brandished steel,
> The lions' gory mane,
> They bowed their necks the death to feel;"

and we are asked to believe that they did it to foist a lie upon mankind!

No! Take this puerile lie out of the way—it is lamer than the story told on the Resurrection day by the soldiers of the Jerusalem watch.

V. Spiritual Survival or Bodily Resurrection?

The records are so direct and plain-spoken that no ordinary reader can carry away any other impression from his reading than that our Lord Jesus Christ was raised bodily out of death: that He appeared in real, actual flesh and bone to His disciples, who were chosen before of God to be witnesses to the Resurrection (Acts 10. 39-41). He asked them to handle and touch Him, that they might be certain that he was not a disembodied spirit, but fully and verily Man (Luke 24. 39).

He gave them on the same occasion yet further conclusive proof of the actual corporeal reality of His Resurrection. In order to dispel the frightened idea that He had appeared to them in ghostly guise, He took food in the presence of them all. "They gave Him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb, and He took it and did eat before them" (Luke 24. 42).

In this homespun way He showed Himself to be not a spirit, but Man, full, complete, embodied; and at the same time afforded us some faint glimpse into the revelation of the redemption of the body of the believer. "There is a spiritual body," says Paul (1 Cor. 15. 44). This is a revelation peculiar to Christianity. No other religion has so much as conceived such a wonder. A "spiritual body," having those powers of superiority over space,

distance, and material barriers, and all those imponderable qualities which we associate with the idea of spirit, yet possessing at the same time the substantial, tangible, material reality which in our experience is associated with the term "body."

The Resurrection a "Spiritual Revival?"

Further, this revelation puts out of action the modern idea that the Resurrection was merely a "spiritual survival;" *i.e.*, that it had no corporeal actuality. This notion, usually connected with the present-day objection to Bible miracles, is as absurd as it is foreign to the plain testimony of the evangelists.

Resurrection is a term that has to do with the body. It is the body that is buried; it is the body that is resurrected. It is folly to talk of the Resurrection of His spirit. His spirit was never buried, therefore in the nature of things it was not possible that it could be raised. Manhood disembodied is manhood incomplete, unclothed, unperfected. Man is spirit, soul, and body, and our Risen Lord is raised very Man.

In this His Resurrection is the earnest and prototype of ours. He is "the firstfruits," a term which teaches that He in resurrection is the Pattern, the Representative, akin in order to the great harvest that is yet to be reaped in the time of the Second Advent—"afterwards they that are Christ's at His coming" (1 Cor. 15. 23).

VI. The Unity of the Disciples.

Then, last in order, but not last in importance as evidence, the complete change in the demeanour of Christ's

followers, the contrast between their deportment on the Day of the Crucifixion and that on the Day of Pentecost seven weeks later must be taken into account.

Gamaliel well knew that the followers of a pretender could not hold *together* when their leader had been exposed, degraded, and executed. He had precedents upon which to base this conclusion. Had there not been one THEUDAS, who in Gamaliel's own lifetime had made great claims, gathered a considerable following, and given the authorities a good deal of anxiety? And had not the whole movement collapsed when Theudas was seized and killed?

Besides, there had been another similar case—that of one JUDAS, whose rising had ended in the same inglorious fashion. When a leader is dead and discredited, when his claims have been exploded, his pretensions exposed, and the magnetism of his personality withdrawn, the followers are soon scattered. The irretrievable loss of a cause is always followed by the disbandment of its adherents. So argued the learned counsellor, Gamaliel, when advising his fellow counsellors how to deal with two troublesome disciples of Jesus, the Crucified Nazarene (Acts 5. 34-40).

Speaking thus, the great rabbi drew the attention of succeeding generations to a powerful line of proof of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ: the line which asks for explanation of the unity, coherence, continuance, and fearless witness of the disciples of the Crucified in the very city that had but recently witnessed His execution.

Disintegration Arrested—by What?

On the night of His arrest He said to His followers,

"All ye shall be offended because of Me this night, for it is written I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered" (Mark 14. 27). Even before His death took place they were in flight. Scared, broken-spirited, beaten, they scurried to hiding like rabbits to their burrows. The day that followed His death found them silent as though they had all died with Him. The next day found them beginning to scatter—one of the eleven (Thomas) missing, two toward the country (Mark 16. 12.), faith broken, hearts heavy, hope gone.

But then something arrested the disintegration of that band of men and women. All day through on that first day of the week rumour flew from house to house in Jerusalem, where they hid: "HE IS RISEN! HIS TOMB IS EMPTY!" Women began it in the morning. Soon Peter confirmed it. John believed it. In the late afternoon they were gathering again in their upper room when disciples returning from the outlying country returned joyfully to tell of having seen Him, until that evening found the believing band with one notable absentee, once more *together*.

From that day they were never again in danger of being disbanded. They were together as disciples, held by the same bond as of old—the presiding Presence of their Master. Their faith in His claims, their conviction of His risen life and nearness, and of His place in Heaven on the right hand of power soon became settled, steady, sure.

In another week Thomas was restored to a worshipping faith. A little later he and six others are seen together at the Sea of Galilee, in the full expectation that He

would presently fulfil His word to them who, before He suffered, said, "After I am risen I will go before you into Galilee" (Matt. 26. 32).

Together on a mountain there 500 of them heard Him utter the Great Commission. Together by Bethany a group of disciples saw Him go into Heaven. Together they prayed and waited till the descending Spirit came, baptising them into one Body in a mysterious, vital, indivisible union, enduing them with power for their task of witnessing. As the number of believers increased in Jerusalem, this "together-ness," this being grouped about their Unseen, Living Lord, became characteristic of them; "all that believed were together" (Acts 2. 44).

From then till now in invincible faith Christ's followers have continued together. Through persecution, defection, declension, corruption, heresy, schism, the True Church has continued. The gates of Hell have failed to overthrow or scatter it. The Living Lord is building His Assembly on the Rock of His own Person, and the Message by which He builds is that which announces "JESUS AND THE RESURRECTION."

The Keystone of Christianity.

Because the fact of the Resurrection is an integral, vital part of the Christian Gospel, the Scripture witness to it is remarkably full, clear, and satisfying. About some matters on the outskirts of things spiritual there may be room for difference of judgment or excuse for want of certitude. But here we are at the very citadel, the key position of Christianity.

Without the Resurrection there is no Gospel, no justifica-

tion for the sinner, no guarantee that the Cross effected its purpose, no Victor over death, and no hope for us in death; without it there is no Living Lord, no Prevailing Advocate, no Merciful and Faithful High Priest, no Coming King, no Reign of Righteousness, no Age of Glory.

BUT (blessed "but") NOW IS CHRIST RISEN FROM THE DEAD (1 Cor. 15. 20). Therefore all these gloomy negatives are transformed into *glorious positives*, and faith and hope rest in unruffled peace on the fact that "JESUS DIED AND ROSE AGAIN."

CHAPTER IX.

Christ and the Church.

TO the unconverted Paul's message was "Christ and Him crucified" (1 Cor. 2. 2). He renounced all show of intellectuality or philosophic disputation in making known "first of all that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15. 3), and gloried in the fact that the faith in Christ resulting from such preaching depended not upon the argumentations of the preacher, but wholly upon Divine power working through the Message.

In instructing believers, however, Paul claimed to be a revealer of the deep secrets of God. To him in an especial way had been made known the Divine programme of the present age. More than to any other had been unveiled to him of things hitherto hidden; things which give character to the activities of God in the age then at its beginning and now nearing its close, the age of the Church of Christ.

Central among these revelations is that of the Church. This mystery, the apostle says, was

Hid in God

(Eph. 3. 9). Inaccessible hiding-place! No explorer, no scientist, no philosophic dreamer could ever have discovered it. "Hid *in God*"—not hid in creation, in the heavens, in history, in literature, in Old Testament

prophecies, but in God Himself. Locked in His own heart, a plan so dear that it remained undivulged to patriarch, priest, or prophet, until the time was fulfilled for its inauguration. Paul speaks of it as the "mystery which was kept secret from eternity" (Rom. 16. 24), and regards his ministry as a charge to make transparent to all men the plan and scope of this secret purpose, which is so glorious that by it will be unfolded to all the higher intelligences sphered above, the many-sided wisdom of God (Eph. 3. 8-10).

After this manner is the disclosed plan: God has willed the redemption of a vast host of mankind, through the period between Pentecost and the Second Advent. These are to be incorporated into a spiritual commonwealth, a living, organic, and indivisible unity. In it earthly preferences and dispensational advantages, hitherto peculiar to one nation, are to give place to an amazing breadth and wealth of spiritual privilege, enjoyed by every member without regard to nationality, culture, or rank. Each one is to be named an heir of God, each called and anointed to eternal dignity and bliss. No individual, saved through the power of God operating by means of the Message, is to be left an unattached unit, but by the same Spirit who convicted, quickened, and now indwells, is to be united to Christ, and thus to every other member of the Church.

Figures are freely employed in the apostle's writings, in order to make clearer to the apprehension of his readers the nature, character, constitution, position, and destiny of this masterpiece of God's grace and wisdom.

I.—THE BUILDING.

First among these instructive metaphors is that of the Building.

The earliest mention of the Church in the New Testament introduces this figure; and it is the Lord Himself who speaks: "I will *build* My Church" (Matt. 16. 18). The apostle therefore is but taking up and elaborating the Lord's own metaphor when he says: "In whom (*i.e.*, Christ) the whole *building* fitly framed together groweth into an holy temple in the Lord" (Eph. 2. 21). Mark the present tense—"is growing"—at this time, rising by little and little, stone upon stone, from foundation towards its shining pinnacle, the apostle sees this Edifice in course of actual erection. To him the salvation of each individual was the addition of yet one more living stone to the spiritual temple, the Lord Himself being the Master-Builder and His servants the labourers.

Silently as rose from Moriah the "exceeding magnifical" temple of Solomon, when stone after stone and ornament after ornament was placed, already prepared and shapen, into its appointed position, so in Paul's eyes was the Building planned in eternity, rising in his own times, "fitly framed together," the Masterpiece of wisdom, and the glory of ages to be.

A sanctified Building this, indeed. Is not every stone of it chosen, separated, prepared? An *holy* temple, this: here "every whit uttereth His glory" who planned, builds, and beautifies it. No profane foot must tread its courts, but dedicated to God it is to be set apart for

His glory everlastingly: "To Him be glory in the Church to all generations of the ages of the ages.

A Temple,

too, this Building; a place for God's own habitation, where His awful holiness rests and is still: where the longing of God for the fellowship of man is answered, and His sovereign delight in man is gratified. The word the apostle uses for temple is *naos* (a shrine), not *hieron*, the word usually employed to speak of temple buildings generally.

The Ephesians, with their temple of Diana, and the Jewish Christians in Ephesus with their knowledge of the Old Testament and the structure of the Temple in Jerusalem, both well understood this distinction. In the temple of Diana there was within, jealously guarded, the shrine where (so ran the idolatrous legend) the image from Heaven, the goddess herself actually dwelt. If the precincts of her temple were holy, then this shrine was most holy in the eyes of a Diana-worshipper.

Now this false thing imitated the true, for in the Temple at Jerusalem were courts and outer spaces regarded as sacred; but within, far deep from the gaze of all save the appointed priest, was the inner shrine (*naos*) where of old abode the Presence, the awful glory of the Shekinah in the Holy of Holies.

Now the whole Church is a sanctified shrine, no part is less sacred than the rest—God dwells within it as a whole. It is all a Holy of holies. There, in a way beyond what is true of the outer creation is His Presence vouchsafed, and where He dwells cannot but be holy.

Of this vast spiritual Building

Christ is the Foundation

and the Chief Corner-stone, *i.e.*, its beginning and its end. Of Him may be said, as was said in other days of Zerubbabel, "his hands have laid the foundation of this house, and his hands also shall finish it" (Zech. 4. 9). The "foundation of the apostles and prophets" (Eph. 2. 19) is that laid by them in their teaching, and is expressed in one Name—Christ. As Chief Corner-stone He is the Unifier of the whole vast structure. Some have thought that the capstone of a pyramid is the idea expressed in this figure of the Chief Corner-stone. If this be so, then Christ is both base and apex, beginning and end, first and last, founder and finisher; He is the Church's Architect and Master-builder, the True Solomon who prepares for God a dwelling-place more to be admired than any material structure, however costly and ornate, could ever be.

II.—THE BODY.

A second figure conveying truth yet more lofty and spiritual is used by the apostle. He speaks of "THE CHURCH WHICH IS HIS BODY" (Eph. 1. 21). This figure intimates that the Church's unity is a unity of life. The Church is not an organisation, but an organism. Each member is instinct with the same life; each is linked in life with the Head, which is Christ. The figure of the human body with its complete dependence upon the head for life, and every function pertaining to life, is an illustration of the relationship of the members to the

Head of the Church. So, we read, "The Head, Christ, from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth."

All the supplies necessary for "the Church which is His Body" flow down from the Head, so that every member is nourished and strengthened. From the Lord on high are given to the Church apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. These and all other gifts, are bestowed in order to perfect the saints unto the work of the ministry, so that the Body may be built up to perfect stature. Each member has an appointed function: the well-being of the member is dependent upon the supply ministered from the Head by way of the other members: the well-being of the Body upon the right functioning of each member.

The Church is as closely linked to Christ as such a figure implies: she is His complement, who fills all things with His all-pervading fulness.

This figure of the Body, then, teaches that

Christ is the Living Head

of the Church: that all the Church's spiritual supplies and energies are His gifts; that His life is expressed in the world through the Church, His seeking love for the lost being manifested through the redeeming activities of His members. And this also—that all the members are one in the possession of the life of the Head.

Much else is taught by the apostle from this figure; the sympathy between the members, their obligations to each other, the variety of their functions, and the diversity of their gifts and abilities; and, most important of all,

their responsibility to Christ, expressed in Colossians 2. 19, as "holding (*i.e.*, owning and practically recognising) the Head."

III.—THE BRIDE.

Choicest figure of all is the intimate one used in Eph. 5, that of the Church as His Bride. Here the Church is regarded as the object of the tenderest affections of the Saviour. "Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for her" (Eph. 5. 25). As Eve owed her being to Adam's deep sleep and riven side, so the Church is born out of the Saviour's sufferings. She is taken from the wounded side of Him who descended into the darkness of death. Therefore is the Church dear to Christ, His love was expressed in that which He endured to win her.

> "Behold with what labour I won thee,
> Behold in My hands and My feet
> The tale of My measureless sorrow,
> Of love that made sorrow e'en sweet."

Jacob served long for Rachel. On high in resurrection life and power Christ still serves His Church, awaiting the nuptial day. He prepares her by His service, ceaselessly serving for her sanctification and cleansing her by means of His Word. Such is her high destiny that He prepares her for it even now, so that her royal honours may well beseem her when she shares with her Lord the throne of the worlds.

Meantime, too, she is nourished and cherished, her every need forespoken and supplied, as is love's way for its object. Borrowing the phrase of the song, she "comes up out of the wilderness leaning upon her Beloved"

(Song of Sol. 8. 5). No good gifts withheld, no withdrawal of support in days of cloud or weariness, no alteration when inconstancy turns her face toward the world. For she is dear to Him; is she not, as Adam said of Eve, "bone of his bones, flesh of his flesh" (Gen. 2. 23), "now no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth it, and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church" (Eph. 5. 29).

For He awaits the coming day when, having purchased, prepared, and preserved her, He will at length "present her unto Himself

A Glorious Church

not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing: but that it should be holy and without blemish."

"Ah!" said SAMUEL RUTHERFORD, in one of his soulful outbursts, "then there shall be none but He and we, the Bridegroom and the Bride; devils, temptations, trials, desertions, losses, sad hearts, pain and death shall all be put out of play, and the Devil must give up his office of tempting. O, blessed is the soul whose hope hath a face looking straight out to that day!"

The Consummation.

Recounting, we may say of these three figures that the *Building* speaks of the Church's foundation on Christ, the Body of her nearness to Christ, and the *Bride* of her dearness to Christ. To Him she owes her standing, her life, and her dignity. From Him is her growth, her supply, her cleansing. He builds the Temple, supplies the Body, loves the Bride. She is the work

of His hands, the care of His thoughts, and the object of His heart.

No eye, save His who calleth those things which be not as though they be, has ever seen this Church. To human reckoning its members are separated by generations of time, by barriers of race, by hedges of ecclesiasticism, by divergencies of doctrine, by barricades of sect and party. To the eye of the observing world, through long centuries the sundering effects of earthly failures to translate into practice the oneness of which the apostle witnesses, have been the byword of the mocker and the taunt of the sceptic.

Yet God's foundation stands sure: yea, and God's superstructure also. The hidden glory shall yet be seen in full radiance: the Church cleansed and sanctified, beautiful with the beauty of resurrection, splendid with the Lord's splendour, free for ever of all that so long defiled her through the days of her sojourn here, shall shine forth with such magnificence and triumph as shall more than compensate for all the sorrowful failures and denials of her chequered experience in the world. The day hastens when "He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe."

CHAPTER X.

Christ and the Future Ages.

AMID all the sombre and depressing portents of the days in which Paul lived and wrought, he maintained concerning the world's future a sunny optimism that refused to hang its harp on the willows, and held firmly to the conviction that the world's future lies in the hands of Christ. In our own days the outlook is dark and forbidding also, and we need for our comfort and joy of faith the same persuasion deep-rooted in our souls. By Divine decree the future is in Christ's keeping; nations may rage and peoples imagine vain things; human forms of government may be irreligious or anti-religious, but the Lord will have them all in derision and in His own time will set His King in His holy hill of Zion. On this, and the ample testimony of many other infallible promises faith rests and is quiet amid the hubbub of the bewildering present.

None of the inspired writers bears fuller testimony concerning the future triumphs of Christ than Paul. In a number of passages scattered through his epistles are found revelations of the programme that is to be carried through in the age succeeding ours, a programme whose commencement may be upon us before we are aware.

It is proposed to collect the principal passages together, and from them seek to gather a general impression of the apostle's teaching, and of the legitimate expectations of faith concerning the age to come.

I. The Coming.

"Afterwards they that are Christ's at His Coming," or "*in* His Coming" (almost "during His presence") (1 Cor. 15. 23). The Coming, so often spoken of by the apostle as the hope of the believer, is not to be thought of as an isolated and solitary event, but rather as a period, an epoch, holding within its limits a number of events. The Coming means, strictly, *presence*, and is intended to turn our thinking to the age succeeding ours. Our Lord's *absence* marks the present season, His *presence* will mark that which succeeds it. Its duration we do not know. Though many prophetic students read in this or that Scripture some hint, it is wiser to admit our ignorance here.

II. The Rapture of the Saints.

"For the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4. 16-17; see also 1 Cor. 15. 51-54). The Coming will mean, so far as those who are Christ's are concerned, their being ushered into His presence. Nothing can be clearer than the testimony of these Scriptures that the believers who have died will then be raised, that those who then live upon the earth shall undergo instantaneous physical change, that both companies shall be rapt into the upper atmosphere, and there will "meet the Lord," the blessed

beginning for them of eternal bliss—"so shall we ever be with the Lord."

> "O blessed Hope! with this elate,
> Let not our hearts be desolate,
> But strong in faith in patience wait,
> Until He come."

III. **The Judgment of Believers.**

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ" (2 Cor. 5. 10; 1 Cor. 4. 3-5; 1 Cor. 3. 13-15). Believers are taught in the apostle's writings to keep in mind a coming judgment of their works, a day when their service to the Lord shall be tested and appraised, when the hidden qualities and the hidden defects in their lives will be made apparent; a day when much so-called service will be found worthless and will vanish in the consuming fire of the Judge's eye; and when, on the other hand, much that went unrecognised and unapplauded in this life shall be seen to have been true and real, and shall receive its recompense. Then shall every one have his due meed of praise from God. This judgment is spoken of as pertaining to a particular "Day" or season (1 Cor. 3. 13), and to the time of the Coming (1 Cor. 4. 5).

IV. **The Presentation of the Church.**

"That He might present to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing" (Eph. 5. 27). Paul speaks of the presentation of the Church by Christ to Himself in this Scripture, describing her as glorious, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and without blemish. Only in Divine purpose

is this description true in the present age: in its final accomplishment it pertains to a future day. No precise time is specified in connection with this fulfilment, so that whilst its true place would appear to be within the period of the Coming, we cannot gather this definitely from Paul's writings.

V. **The Apostasy.**

"Now we beseech you, brethren, by the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind...as that the Day of the Lord (R.V.) is at hand...for that Day shall not come, except there come a falling away first" (2 Thess. 2. 1-3). In a passage which is introduced by a reference to the Coming, a "falling away" is predicted as necessarily preceding a period called "the Day of the Lord" (R.V.). By the "falling away" or apostasy, is meant a wholesale movement in Christendom leading to decided repudiation of the Christian name and profession by multitudes.

VI. **The Man of Sin.**

"Let no man deceive you by any means: for that Day shall not come except there come a falling away first, and that Man of Sin be revealed the son of perdition... and then shall the Wicked be revealed" (2 Thess. 2. 3, 4, 8). In this period of the Apostasy there shall arise the sinister and terrible figure of the Man of Sin, called "that Wicked one," the crowning product of Satanic principles, the bold claimant for Divine honours, the Usurper, Deceiver, and Arch-liar. In Paul's day a restraining person and power delayed the manifestation

of this awful embodiment of sin; we doubt not that the same restraint has delayed it through the intervening centuries, and still withholds it at this very moment.

VII. The Appearing in Glory.

"Looking for that Blessed Hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2. 13; read also 2 Thess. 1. 7 to 9; Jude 14; 2 Thess. 2. 8). The world is again to behold Christ! The last view was at Calvary, when in shame and weakness He died. The next is to be in a blinding blaze of unbearable glory of itself sufficient to destroy every foe (2 Thess. 1. 7 to 9). That dazzling effulgence will consume the Boaster, the Man of Sin (2 Thess. 2. 8).

Accompanying the Returning One will be myriads of His glorified saints (Jude 14; Col. 3. 4), and angels excelling in strength, doing His commandment and hearkening to the voice of His Word decreeing judgments upon those who have sold themselves to work iniquity. Swift and terrible will be His action in that day. The testimony of Paul here seems to fit into that of the many prophets who bear witness to a great and notable "Day of the Lord," an epoch of cleansing judgments preparatory to the inauguration of the world-kingdom of Christ.

VIII. The Deliverance of Israel.

"For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery;...that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved" (Rom. 11. 12-15, 25-32). His Coming will be for the deliverance of the ancient

chosen nation. By His appearing will be brought about a deep national repentance, ungodliness will be turned away from Jacob, the nation will be received and forgiven by the covenant-keeping Deliverer. To them then shall be granted regeneration, a veritable life from the dead, the flood-tide of blessedness, and the fulfilment of every promise made of old to the patriarchs.

IX. The Reign of Christ.

"For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet" (read 1 Cor. 15. 23-28). In this passage important features supplement the numerous other testimonies of Scripture relating to the reign of Christ. The Old Testament has a considerable body of predictive passages on this subject. In the ministry of our Lord not a few references are to be found on the same theme. John of Patmos reveals much concerning it in the Revelation. Here Paul is inspired to speak of the reign as succeeding the Coming in a revelation which marks the sequence of some events with unusual definiteness.

Beginning with the Resurrection of Christ as the first-fruits pledge of the glorious harvest to be gathered as the result of His death, the resurrection of those who are Christ's is shown to mark the next stage, and its period specified, "in His Coming." "Then," continues the writer, "the END time," the closing age of the world's history.

Four features will make this coming age:

1. THE REIGN OF CHRIST. "He must reign" (v. 25).

2. THE SUBJECTION OF EVERY RIVAL RULERSHIP. "He shall...put down all rule and authority and power" (v. 24).

3. THE SUBJUGATION OF ALL THINGS TO CHRIST AS KING. "All enemies under His feet" (v. 25).

4. THE DESTRUCTION OF DEATH. "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (v. 26).

Paul's view reveals the Millennial reign as a militant period; a time in which peace and prosperity abound not because of a vital inward change of heart in mankind generally, but through the wise rule and strong hand of the Beneficent Autocrat. He wields a sway of world-wide blessedness, yet showing swift strength and power that cannot be resisted, crushing instantly every evil element that is insubject to Him. Paul's passage should be read in conjunction with John's (Rev. 20. 1-6), for a full view of this aspect of the Reign; whilst we must turn to the Hebrew prophets for unfoldings of the health, well-being, security, and peace that will be enjoyed by all nations in that golden age of the world's history. All that prophets foretold, that poets dreamed and sang, that earth's noblest spirits yearned and toiled for, will then stand fast, accomplished in Christ, the Lord's Anointed.

Associated with Him in that era of power and glory, His own believing people will reign also. Trained for this high entrustment during the testings of their sojourning during this period of the Absence, they will enter into the joy of their Lord then with responsibilities proportioned to their faithfulness now (Rom. 8. 17, 18; 2 Tim. 2. 12).

X. The Heading Up of All Things in Christ.

"That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, He

might gather together in one, all things in Christ, both which are in Heaven and which are in earth; even in Him" (Eph. 1. 10). Here the apostle speaks of the consummation of a purpose in God to unify, harmonise, and completely liberate from the sundering and divisive effects of sin both the heavenly and earthly spheres of the present creation. All things that offend, every stumbling-block to holiness, joy, and peace are to be weeded out and destroyed, till from the King's Throne to the ends of the earth and Heaven at long last shall the ways of God through patient ages of ceaseless dealing with mankind be vindicated, and His original purpose of an earthly creation blessed under the dominion of man more than realised.

Some have identified this period, called "the administration of the fulness of times," with the Millennial Reign itself; others have seen in it a post-Millennial epoch lying between the destruction of death and the unveiling of the New Heavens and the New Earth. The writer inclines to the view that this passage describes conditions brought about through Christ's rule at the time when He delivers up the Kingdom "to God, even the Father," as it is expressed in 1 Corinthians 24, and pertains to that consummatory moment.

XI. The Delivering Up of the Kingdom.

"Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power" (read 1 Cor. 15. 23-28, 51-57). This deep oracle, "dark (as another has expressed it) with excess of light," is

one which gives us to realise that our knowledge is but in part. So many other Scriptures speak of the Kingdom as "for ever," and affirm that "it shall not pass away," that we are led to wonder whether the delivering up of the Kingdom can really be intended to indicate its relinquishment and cessation. May it not be that on the very border of Eternity "the dispensation of the fulness of times," Christ presents His kingly work perfectly carried through, as in "the fulness of time" long ago He carried through His redemptive work? And that in that moment of His supreme victory He is still the subject One, doing the Father's will, as fully and obediently as in that other hour of His deepest humiliation?

Who, save Himself, in the New Heavens and Earth could administrate the blessing that shall from age to age maintain all the redeemed and glorified in their felicity?

XII. **The Sequence of These Events.**

That the things thus briefly summarised stand awaiting their fulfilment every devout and believing student of the Inspired Word holds true. The exact chronological sequence of the events is another matter; and considerable differences of view emerge when their exact order is insisted on. Are these divergencies due to our pretending to be wise beyond what is "present truth," *i.e.*, beyond what is the Spirit's will to divulge at the present stage?

Prophecy has not been given to satisfy our curiosity, but to keep our hearts stayed in quiet confidence upon a faithful God through evil days. Someone has said that "prophecy is history written beforehand;" certainly the

array of already-fulfilled prophecies should teach us two lessons. First, that as these have been fulfilled, so surely shall those which yet remain be fulfilled also. Second, that even as fulfilled prophecy passed into history in a manner entirely different from the best expectations of the wisest men (so much so that frequently prophecy is part concealment, part revelation, until its appointed moment comes) so will these foretellings of "the Sure Word" pass to their accomplishment in ways surpassing, and it may be confounding, all our best thoughts about them.

"A lamp that shineth in a murky place" (2 Peter 1. 19) is better much than the dark. Yet it cannot take the place of the sunrise. Rather should its ray, creating shadows by its very gleam, make us long for the high noon.

THE STUDENT'S LIBRARY OF HELPFUL VOLUMES ON THE SCRIPTURES

Uniform Binding in Black Art Cloth Gold Title on Back

BIBLE STUDENT'S COMPANION, THE. A Cyclopedia, Concordance, and Commentary in one volume. 5/ net.

BIBLE TEXT CYCLOPEDIA. A complete classification of Scripture Texts under List of Subjects. By JAS. INGLIS. 5/ net.

CRUDEN'S COMPLETE CONCORDANCE, with Life of Author, Proper Names, etc. *Square Shape.* 10/ net.

EARTH'S EARLIEST AGES, and their connection with Spiritism and Theosophy. By G. H. Pember, M.A. 5/ net.

EMBLEMS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. Detailed Studies of the Different Emblems. By F. E. Marsh. 4/ net.

EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS, THE. A Verse-by-Verse Commentary, with Notes Analytical and Exegetical. By C. F. Hogg and W. E. Vine, M.A. 6/ net.

EPISTLES TO THE THESSALONIANS, THE. A complete Commentary. By C.F. Hogg and W.E. Vine, M.A. 4/ net.

EXPOSITION OF THE REVELATION. With Articles on The Coming Week, etc. By Walter Scott. 5/ net.

FACTS AND THEORIES AS TO A FUTURE STATE. By F. W. Grant. A Masterpiece on this Subject. 6/ net.

FIVE HUNDRED BIBLE READINGS. Heavenly Light from the Divine Lamp of Truth. By F. E. Marsh. 4/ net.

FULLY FURNISHED; or, The Christian Worker's Equipment. Thirty-four Concise Studies. By F. E. Marsh. 4/ net.

GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, THE. A devotional exposition with notes. By William Kelly. 6/ net.

GOSPEL OF LUKE, THE. A Devotional Exposition with Notes and several Indices. By William Kelly. 6/ net.

JOURNEYS OF JESUS CHRIST, The Son of God. With large Chart in colours. By A. T. Schofield, M.D. 3/6 net.

ONE THOUSAND NEW BIBLE READINGS. A book of Suggestive Themes. By F. E. Marsh. 6/ net.

PEARLS, POINTS, AND PARABLES. Illustrative and Suggestive Outline Studies. By F. E. Marsh. 6/ net.

PLAIN PAPERS ON PROPHETIC SUBJECTS. A Comprehensive Survey of Prophecy. By W. Trotter. 5/ net.

STUDY OF THE PARABLES, THE. A treatise eminently stimulating and suggestive. By Ada R. Habershon. 4/ net.

Postage extra: 1 Copy 6d.; 2 Copies 9d.; 3 Copies 1/

PICKERING & INGLIS, PRINTERS AND PUBLISHERS

14 Paternoster Row, London, E.C.4; 229 Bothwell St., Glasgow, C.2

ACCREDITED BOOKS

ON

IMPORTANT THEMES

INSPIRATION

DIVINE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE, THE. A simple presentation. By W. E. VINE. 2/6 net (2/10 post free).

GOD'S LIVING ORACLES. Evidences of the Bible to prove its Divine Origin. By A. T. PIERSON. 2/ net (2/4 p.f.).

CAN WE TRUST OUR BIBLE? Deals with difficulties such as Creation, Noah's Ark, Sun Standing Still, Jonah and the Whale, etc. By A. GOOK. 6d. net (8d. post free).

RESURRECTION

DID JESUS RISE? A fearless facing of one of the vital facts of Christianity. A book to remove doubts and inspire faith. By Dr. JAMES H. BROOKES. 2/ net (2/4 post free).

REGENERATION

HOW AND WHEN do Children of Adam become Children of God? Answered by 50 accredited witnesses. 1/9 net (2/1 p.f.).

SALVATION; OR, THE WAY MADE PLAIN. A clearly put statement of man's need of a Saviour, and the Saviour for man's need. By Dr. JAMES H. BROOKES. 1/9 net (2/1 post free).

JUSTIFICATION

GRACE AND TRUTH: Under Twelve Aspects. A veritable *vade-mecum* for seekers after the way of life—blessed to hundreds. By Dr. W. P. MACKAY. 1/ and 1/9 net (postage 4d.).

SANCTIFICATION

LIFE THAT IS LIFE INDEED, THE. The Scriptural doctrine of Holiness. By GEO. F. TRENCH. 2/ net (2/4 p.f.).

EXPECTATION

"I AM COMING." The Personal, Pre-Millennial Coming of the Lord. By Dr. JAS. H. BROOKES. 2/ net (2/4 post free).

REVELATION

EXPOSITION OF THE REVELATION and Prophetic Outlines, with separate Articles on the Six Chief Actors in the Coming Week, etc. By WALTER SCOTT. 5/ net (5/6 post free).

PROPHECY MADE PLAIN. A simple bird's-eye view of God's Prophetic Plan. Full of heart and glow. By Dr. C. I. SCOFIELD, of the "Scofield Bible." 2/ net (2/4 post free).

INCARNATION

WAS CHRIST THE TRUE GOD? Answers of Revelation and Reason. By HY. PICKERING. 2d. net (3d. post free).

DIVINITY OF OUR LORD, THE. The renowned Bampton Lecture by Canon LIDDON. 2/6 net (2/10 post free).

PICKERING & INGLIS, PRINTERS AND PUBLISHERS

14 Paternoster Row, London E.C.4 229 Bothwell St. Glasgow, C2