



ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY

Contents

EDITOR'S MESSAGE

ASSEMBLY MEETINGS

by J. Heading

CHRIST IN THE APOCALYPSE

by J. B. D. Page

FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTALS

by J. B. Hewitt

ZECHARIAH

by E. R. Bower

A NEW CREATION

by C. F. Hogg

THE BELOVED OF THE LORD, OR ONE SON HIS WELL-BELOVED

by H. H. Shackcloth

COMMITTEE'S REPORT

HYMNS AND THEIR WRITERS

by J. Strahan

▲▲▲▲▲ THE PRAYER OF THE PILGRIM ▲▲▲▲▲

O Lord, once more,
as oft before,
I've heard Thy Word,
and notes so sweet have
captured once again
these wayward feet.

O Lord, again
I've heard the sweet refrain
of Thy great love,
and Heavenly atmosphere has
reached my soul
from Thee above.

My cry is unto Thee
Whose dwelling is on High
Though clothed in light and Majesty,
Thou art to sinners nigh,
behold me Lord, a pilgrim straying oft,
I need to hear again Thine accent soft,
while on the journey Home I wait that call,
do guard these wandering footsteps still,
Lest I should fall.

Yet though so near, Thy whispers linger still,
as sacred challenges assail my will,
my heart is Thine, Redemption's part is done
and I forever will be Thine alone.

But Blessed Lord there is within my breast
the awful scourge of sin—I am oppressed,
O undertake for me, Thy power alone,
can lift an erring sinner to Thy throne.

O save me, keep me,
lead and guide me still
cause me to know the meaning of Thy will
so that I may be firmer in my stride,
as underneath Thy shadow I abide.

Thy work is great, the power to do it Thine,
nothing from my stained hands can 'complish ought,
this flesh is prone to sin, and falters much,
O for the quickening of Thy Holy Touch.

Then touch me Lord with Living Power Divine
fit me a vessel solely for Thy use,
to do Thy mighty acts, to speak Thy words,
to live for Thee alone . . .

Most Precious Lord.

—H.M.M.

EDITOR'S MESSAGE

GOD IS FAITHFUL—so the Apostle Paul declared to saints at Corinth and this has proved to be true over the intervening centuries. We have arrived at the beginning of another year—1985—and would encourage ourselves in the Lord. He has the key of David, He opens and no man shuts, and shuts and no man opens, and He can and does set before His people many open doors.

The circulation of the magazine continues to increase, and readers kindly write to express their appreciation of the way in which we seek to stand foursquare on the Scriptures. We wish to thank the writers of the various articles, a lot of hard work goes into the production of these papers. They should be encouraged by the fact that many express that though they are simple saints, yet they are encouraged to go on for God in difficult days. The saints do need encouragement in these days—so many troubles almost everywhere one looks. He never changes, but everything else does. We therefore try to present a variety of ministry to meet the varied needs of the Lord's people.

There is no doubt that these are difficult days. The word of God has indeed forewarned of us of this "In the last days perilous times shall come!" Difficult days internationally and nationally. Difficult days in Christendom, but also difficult days in the assemblies of the Lord's people. Determined efforts are being made all over the mainland of the British Isles to change the shape of the assemblies, to make them more like the denominations around, to remove the distinctive feature of obedience to the word of God, and to speed up a deliberate departure from the word of God. Overseeing brethren need to be more and more on their guard, to take heed to themselves and to all the little flock that is among them, in the which the Holy Ghost has made them overseers. The need is two-fold, to feed as Shepherds and to guard against evil wolves. There are those who circulate literature, hold seminars and seek to lead astray young men by personal contacts—Beware!

We need to strengthen our hands in the Lord, and teach our young folks the basic truths of the Faith. Doctrinally, Prophetically and Church-wise the truth is being attacked by folks within—not from outside. Sound doctrine, Healthful words are needed, we must prove what we believe from the word of God. And young folk, take note—the only path that will please the Lord is the path of unquestioning obedience. Wake up brethren, we must contend for the faith which was once for all, delivered to the saints. Young men and women, and there are many, many of them in the assemblies, need to realize that there is a need to get down to concentrated study of the Word of God. We not only need to know the Book, but do it, teach it, stand for it.

"Steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." Quit you like men—be Strong!

Remember the Word of God is not out of date. The Lord, the Spirit, knows the end from the beginning. When He moved the apostles and prophets to write the New Testament scriptures He had a perfect knowledge of what things would be like in our day. He does not need to adjust His word for the conditions of our day. There is no new revelation. Our path should be simply one of absolute obedience to the word of God.

Let us see to it that the coming year be characterised by a determined effort to do and teach those things which are in accord with the word of God. We need to stand and advance.

Let us rejoice in the Lord—Stand fast in Him. "The coming of the Lord draweth nigh." He says "Hold fast till I come" and His reward is with Him.

May the Lord richly bless all our readers throughout the coming year.—A. M. SALWAY GOODING.

Assembly Meetings

by JOHN HEADING, Aberystwyth

(2) DOES IT MATTER?

Having considered various basic principles that should characterize the gatherings of the assembly for worship and service, we now examine four important questions that appear to have little relevance for traditional religion. These are: Does a pattern for the local assembly matter? Does it matter who gathers? Does it matter when we gather? Does it matter how we gather? Evidently it does matter, since the Word of God gives sufficient guidance to those who are exercised to seek out and to follow in its teaching.

1. Does a Pattern for the Local Assembly Matter? If not, then every man or group of men can do that which is right in his own eyes (Judg. 21.25). In the O.T., the pattern of the tabernacle and house mattered a lot; no architects among men were employed to produce their best designs. This was very important in the O.T., and no one should think in the present age of grace that things can be otherwise.

The idea of the pattern shown to Moses in the mount occurs six times. In Exodus 25.9 and Hebrews 8.5 the

reference is to *every component* of the shadow of heavenly things, "See . . . that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount." Obedience was necessary on the part of Moses and of the builders; God's design (reflecting on the then-future Christ and His sacrifice) had to be followed. This pattern was of heavenly origin, instruction having been given to Moses on the mount. In Exodus 25.40 and Numbers 8.4 the reference is to *the inner furniture* of the tabernacle—the ark (the throne of God), the table (food for the priests), and the lampstand (the light of the Spirit of Christ): "look that thou make them after their pattern, which was showed thee in the mount." In Exodus 26.30 a similar phrase refers to *the boards and the coverings*, recalling Paul's words, "I have laid the foundation, and *another buildeth thereon*. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon" (1 Cor. 3.10). The anti-type refers to the establishment and maintenance of the assembly and its service. Finally, in Exodus 27.8 the reference is to *the altar*; it had to be made "as it was showed thee in the mount," speaking of worship. In the N.T., the breaking of bread had a similar origin. Firstly, the Lord gave it directly to His apostles, while later Paul also received it from the Lord and delivered it to the churches (1 Cor. 11.23).

Solomon's temple also had a divinely given origin. David declared, "All this . . . the Lord made me understand in writing by his hand upon me, even all the words of this pattern" (1 Chron. 28.12,19). Similarly with the church which is the house of the living God; the N.T. revelation knows of one pattern only. Throughout the Epistles of Paul, the apostle condemns and corrects deviations from it, as does the Lord in Revelation chs. 2-3. Hence it does matter what pattern we follow, and young converts should search diligently until they find it, and then remain with it all their lives.

2. Does it Matter who Gathers? In this connection, there are many warnings found in the O.T. In Deuteronomy 23.3 and Nehemiah 13.1, we find that Ammon and Moab were not to enter into the congregation of the Lord for ever. Strictly, these were near religious neighbours of Israel, but not according to truth. In Psalm 79.1 there was the recognition that the heathen had entered the inheritance of God,

having defiled "thy holy temple." This must have taken place many times throughout Israel's history, since only in the prophetic future can it be said with certainty, "there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts" (Zech. 14.21; Ezek. 44.9). In the N.T., the Lord would not have those that defile to be present in a local company. The Corinthians were "not to keep company" with such (1 Cor. 5.11; 2 Cor. 6.14-18). Those forming the temple of the living God had to be separate, not touching the unclean thing. If the door is freely open, without "porters" to ensure "that none which was unclean in any thing should enter in" (2 Chron. 23.19), then every kind of evil man will take advantage of the liberty to enter in and sow the seeds of his particular propaganda. In many walks of social and political life today, this infiltration by pressure groups and militant minorities can cause disruption and havoc. It can be so in the local assembly. Paul warned the Ephesian elders that "grievous wolves" would attach themselves from the *outside* of the assembly to the eldership *within*, "not sparing the flock" (Acts 20.29). Into the churches of Galatia, the apostle recognized that "false brethren" had gained entrance, so that their traditional doctrine of circumcision should replace grace by bondage (Gal. 2.4.). In 1 John 2.19, John stated clearly that some antichrists had gone out from them, manifesting that "they were not all of us," meaning that these men had outwardly attached themselves to the assembly. How careful should we be today, in the light of these scriptural warnings and examples! The church in Jerusalem had been wise, therefore, not to accept Saul into their company when he tried to seek fellowship after his conversion; a verbal reference from Barnabas concerning Saul's conversion and immediate testimony was first of all necessary before he could be received (Acts 9.26-28).

In the N.T., the only fellowship revealed to us is a full-time fellowship. Never was there the attitude, "here today, gone tomorrow;" the breaking of bread on the Lord's Day morning, but that is all for the rest of the week. There was no such thing as "communion tasting," since such a practice is not part of a lasting bond of spiritual fellowship. A brief and temporary fellowship is not visualized in the Scriptures; in fact, to encourage arbitrary and spasmodic participation can be dangerous, for such men may be

“enemies of the cross of Christ” (Phil. 3.18), though if the assembly were entertaining angels unawares (Heb. 13.2), then no doubt the saints would love to know. For there must be an encouragement to spiritual interest and growth in those who are uncertain of the ground of gathering, with no stumbling of those young in the faith.

3. Does it Matter when we Gather? Certainly it did matter in the O.T. pattern laid down in the law. And since there is a corresponding N.T. pattern, then grace does not confirm a spirit of disobedience upon believers. Thus three times a year, a feast had to be kept unto the Lord, and all males had to appear before Him (Exod. 23.15). Again, every day the priests had to engage in the service of the altar, offering a lamb morning and evening (29.38-39). The psalmist expressed his desire to dwell for ever in the house of the Lord, so as to behold the beauty of the Lord (Psa. 23.6; 27.4). King Hezekiah would sing his songs “all the days . . . in the house of the Lord” (Isa. 38.20). In the assembly under grace, believers have an even greater privilege, and yet with a greater possibility of neglect. Certainly in Acts 2 there was spiritual regularity, with steadfastness in the continual gatherings. In Antioch, there was a series of meetings lasting for a *whole year*, when Paul and Barnabas “taught much people” (Acts 11.26). For Paul, “the first day of the week” was of great significance, for it was then that they came together to break bread (20.7); he had deliberately waited seven days in Troas for that meeting. Some time before that, he had written concerning the Lord’s supper “*as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup*” (1 Cor. 11.26). Paul could never neglect the local churches, as he wrote, “that which cometh upon me *daily*, the care of all the churches (2 Cor. 11.28). Thus no brethren or sisters should find it a convenient habit to forsake the assembling of themselves together (Heb. 10.25). Practically speaking, they may find themselves too busy to attend, with no interest in the prayer meeting or in the Bible reading, perhaps finding the entertainment of the world (even in their homes) more attractive at the hour of prayer. Yet it appears to be a fact that those who are most busy in their ordinary daily lives have also the most regular times to devote themselves continually to assembly service. It is a question of devotion and spiritual priorities.

4. Does it Matter how we Gather? (i) The Lord promised that even when two or three were gathered in His Name, there He would be in the midst (Matt. 18.20). The spiritual atmosphere of the gathering should be such that it is recognized that He is there—not supposedly as in the evil doctrines of trans-substantiation and consubstantiation (that elevate the symbols to a position of idolatry), but truly “in the midst.” Thus in John 20.19,26, the Risen Lord was with His own in the upper room, but He was not with the religious priests and Pharisees on the outside. Compare this with the times in the O.T. when He was *not* present (Num. 14.42; Psa. 78.60,61; Ezek. 11.22,23). In the assembly, we gather to His Person, and not to a man, however expert a preacher he may be, for the latter attitude is carnality.

(ii) There is no such thing in the N.T. as a division between clergy and laity. One has described this as the sin against the Holy Spirit in this dispensation, a practice that deprives the Spirit of His divine rights, even when Christians follow this practice. Rather, the true spiritual equipment of all believers is that of a common priesthood for worship, and a diversity of gifts for service.

(iii) The conduct of a meeting is described in 1 Corinthians 14. What is done should “excel to the edifying of the church” (v.12); all should “be done unto edifying” (v.26); all should be done “decently and in order” (v. 40)—namely, successively one by one (v. 31). It must be recognized that God, who controls, is not “the author of confusion” (v. 33). At the same time, women are to “keep silence in the churches” (v. 34; 1 Tim. 2.12), which is in contrast with much modern practice.

Practically speaking, when the hour is come for the meeting to commence, all should be present; a first hymn should not be looked upon as an excuse to arrive late as a matter of custom. In what is done, neither the time of the saints, nor the time of the Lord, should be wasted. There should be no unseemly noise, either before or after the meeting. Simple points like these need to be stressed quite often in these days.

In our final paper, we shall consider N.T. examples of assembly meetings.

CHRIST IN THE APOCALYPSE (4)

by JOHN B. D. PAGE

HIGH PRIESTLY GLORIES (ii)

Reading : Revelation 1, 13-18.

The Son of Man

Impressed by this three-fold title, John “turned to see the Voice”—yes, the Voice! Being turned, he was confronted with “seven golden lampstands” (R.V.), in the middle of which there stood “One like unto the Son of Man” (1.12f). The lampstands, like the one in the temple at Jerusalem already destroyed, are not said to be in a temple or in heaven but apparently they were on the earth being symbolical of seven named local churches.

The phrase, “like unto the Son of Man,” occurs twice in the Apocalypse, and it is used of the pre-incarnate Christ in Daniel 7.13. Literally, the inspired text reads “like unto Son of Man.” The omission of the definite article before the title “Son of Man” serves to stress a specific feature that characterizes Him as such. Essentially, this appellation signifies God’s Ideal in humanity in contrast to all other sin-spoilt humans. Initially, the title was self-chosen by the Lord Jesus (Matt. 8.20), and it was always self-applied by Him; John 12.34 is not an exception, because the multitude quoted from His own statement.

John’s attention was directed to the raiment of the Son of Man, Who was “clothed with a garment down to the foot, . . .” This word “garment” (*poderes*, Gr.) occurs nowhere else in the New Testament but it is the word “robe” in the Septuagint of Exodus 28. 4, 31.

Therefore, the Son of Man was attired with an ankle-length “robe” like that worn under the ephod by a high priest of old, and so the robe, all of blue in colour, points to His heavenly character and His high office of Priesthood.

John observed that He was “girt about the paps with a golden girdle.” Of course, all men and women wore girdles around their loins (Exo. 12.11, Isa. 11.5), but here was One Whose chest was encircled with a golden girdle which, according to F. A. Tatford, signifies that “His affections

were restrained and the sovereign cincture controlled His emotions," which is a view commonly held and often expressed. If this statement is examined in the light of what follows in chapters 2 and 3, then it is tantamount to saying that the love of Christ is governed, even to the point of restraint, by the spiritual condition of local churches, making divine love conditional and variable like human love. According to the scriptures, the love of Christ like other divine attributes is constant. However, the apparently unusual position of this Man's girdle remains a problem, but the scriptures themselves solve it. Later, John saw in the heavenly temple, seven angels clothed in pure and white linen like that worn by priests in the earthly temple, and these angel-priests had "their breasts girded with golden girdles" (15.6). This verse shows that, unlike other people, priests wore their girdles at chest level, with which John, as a Jew, was familiar. Hence, the golden girdle about the paps of the Son of Man, Who was arrayed in the priestly blue robe and standing in the midst of seven pieces of temple furniture, simply identified Him as High Priest.

Before leaving the subject of the girdle, it may be noted that the scriptures speak three times of Christ wearing a girdle. As *Priest* at present, He wears a golden girdle, which is a girdle of dignity (Rev. 1.13). As *Servant* in the past, He girded Himself with a towel, which was a girdle of humility (John 13.5). As *King* in the future, righteousness will be the girdle of His loins (Isa. 11.5), and it will be a girdle of majesty.

Although John in his gospel like other writers of Holy Writ makes no reference to the physical appearance of the Lord Jesus in the days of His flesh, he describes the facial and other features of Him in exaltation. It is one of the wonders of scripture that no writer provides any detail of the Lord's bodily appearance during His sojourn on earth. Apart from divine inspiration, this would have been impossible. The scriptures only state He was "found in fashion as a man" (Phil. 2.8), and so all the pictures and paintings of Jesus of Nazareth are wholly the work of human imagination. Therefore, John's description of the Lord in glory is important, and the order of His seven physical features is noteworthy. The distinctive parts of His glorified body may be set out in a stepped pyramidal order :

- | | | | |
|------------------|---------|----------|----------------|
| | | 4. Voice | |
| | 3. Feet | | 5. Right hand |
| 2. Eyes | | | 6. Mouth |
| 1. Head and hair | | | 7. Countenance |

Instantly, from this arrangement, it is seen that His Voice is central, and it was the Voice that John turned earlier to see. Then His other bodily parts are grouped in three dyads. The Voice may be likened to the central shaft of the golden lampstand in the temple and the other parts to the three pairs of its branches.

“His HEAD and His HAIRS were white like wool, as white as snow” (1.14). The blinding whiteness, beheld by John on the Mount of Transfiguration, was seen once more, and a similar symbolical phrase is used of “the Ancient of Days” Whose “hair of His head (was) like pure wool” (Dan. 7.9). With Christ, the white hairs do not denote senility or decay but wisdom, for He is “the wisdom of God” and He is “made unto us wisdom” (1 Cor. 1.24, 30).

“His EYES were as a flame of fire” (1.14). Daniel saw a “certain Man clothed in linen” Who had “eyes as lamps of fire” (Dan. 10.5f). With such penetrating vision, Christ, as the righteous Judge in a coming day, will scrutinize believers’ works and hidden things will be brought to light (1 Cor. 3.13).

“And His FEET like unto fine brass as if burned in a urnace” (1.15). The soles of the feet of the four cherubic figures supporting the throne of God, as seen by Ezekiel in a vision, “sparkled like the colour of burnished brass” (Eze. 1.7). The feet of Christ which resembled burnished brass, refined in a furnace, symbolize the path of divine judgment which He will tread when He will exercise judgment in days to come.

“And His VOICE as the sound of many waters” (1.15), which is the simile used by Ezekiel when he saw the glory of the God of Israel, Whose “voice was like a noise of many waters,” come from the way of the east to enter the millennial temple (Eze. 43.2). The under-lying imagery appears to be that no obstacle can resist a mighty torrent of water. As Judge, Christ will yet speak in a voice of irresistible authority with a sound of rushing water, which nobody will be able to withstand.

“And He had in His RIGHT HAND seven stars” (1.16).

A man's right hand is emblematic of authority and security, whilst the seven stars are symbolical of the seven angels of the seven churches. With believers, both individually and collectively as an assembly, the authority of Christ as Lord should be acknowledged and the security of their salvation is assured by Him.

"And out of His MOUTH a sharp two-edged sword" (1.16). This may be an allusion to Isaiah 49.2, "And He hath made My mouth like a sharp sword." The two-edged sword that proceeded out of His mouth is identified as the word of God (Heb. 4.12). "The words that I speak unto you," said the Lord Jesus, "they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6.63), but the quickening power of His word is not here in view. Also, the Lord Jesus said, "the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12.48), and it is His word which will be as a sword of judgment to them that reject it. Hence, the judicial aspect of the word of God is depicted in this vision.

"And His COUNTENANCE was as the sun shineth in his strength" (1.16). In the hour of His rejection, men spat upon His face but, in the day of His exaltation, His face shines with resplendent glory brighter than the noon-day sun as it shone upon the holy mount of His transfiguration. To eastern converts who once worshipped the sun-god, the allusion was obvious as they read these words. Here was One Whose radiance outshone the splendour of their former false god. Its brightness paled into nothing before His incomparable glory.

No similar seven-fold description of the glorified Son of Man is found in another book. Through the inspired writer, it is the Holy Spirit's pen-portrait of Him Who is the brightness of the glory of God and the express image of His Person (Heb. 1.3).

The effect of this vision upon John was overpowering, for he fell prostrate before this glorious Person, the One Whom he loved and adored. Yet again the glorified Christ spoke as He did at the beginning of the vision saying, "I am the First and the Last, and the Living One" (1.18, RV), asserting His eternal Being. As previously, the words "I AM" are emphatic, forming a distinct part of this three-fold title.

It is noteworthy that the glorified Christ, as High Priest, takes upon His lips the incommunicable Name, "I AM,"

and He does it as He stands ready to act *as Judge*.

This same Person, prior to being glorified and at the close of His ministry on earth, stood for trial before Caiaphas, the high priest as judge, who asked Him the question, "Art Thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I AM: . . ." (the words are not capitalized in the AV). Here, the Divine Prisoner, destined to be the High Priest and Judge, is *being judged*, and He utters unequivocally the ineffable Name, "I AM."

In self-righteous compliance with the Mosaic law, the high priest avoided the name Jehovah by using the words "the Blessed" when speaking of Deity. Upon hearing the Prisoner before him utter the incommunicable Name, "the high priest rent his clothes" (Mark 14. 61-63) as an expression of anger and indignation at what, in his opinion, was a blatant breach of the Mosaic law (Lev. 24.16). Ironically, by rending his garments, he himself broke the law (Lev. 21.10). The high priest's action was not without significance, for it marked the end of the Aaronic priesthood, giving place to the approaching and unchangeable Priesthood of the Divine Prisoner standing before him.

The Living One

Turning from the reiterated titles, "I AM the First and the Last" to the new title, "the Living One," which does not occur again in the book, Christ asserts His absolute authority over death and hades. "In Him was life" (John 1.4), uncreated, unoriginated and eternal. Yet that Self-existent One "became dead" (RV mgn.). In His incarnation, death had no claim upon Him because in Him was no sin, but, as the sinless One, He submitted Himself voluntarily to death (1 John 3.5; John 10.18). Outwardly, His death was a defeat for Himself and a victory for His opponents. Actually, the converse was true, for through death He brought to naught the devil who had the power of death (Heb. 2.14). In consequence, He was able to add, "I am alive for evermore." In the power of resurrection life, He now lives not merely for time but throughout eternity.

By subjecting Himself to death, Christ entered hades (equivalent to the OT '*sheol*'), the waiting place for departed spirits of the Old Testament saints whom He released from their captivity and led them into heaven (Eph. 4.8), and so neither death nor hades could hold their prey for a moment

longer. In resurrection power, Christ wrested from Satan the keys of death and hades. "Keys" are a symbol of authority. Satan, now a potentially defeated foe, has lost that infernal authority, and so Christ said triumphantly to John, "and I have the keys of death and hades" (1.18, RV). For believers, there should be no fear of death or hades. Although death demands their bodies, there is the prospect of resurrection and changed bodies, whilst hades, having been robbed of its victims, has no claim upon their souls.

FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTALS

by J. B. HEWITT, Chesterfield

(29) THE ACTIVITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Gen. 1.1; 6.3; Exod. 31.1-4; Num. 27.18; Jud. 3.10; 2 Sam. 23.2
Ezek. 37.

The work of the Spirit in the O.T. is different from Pentecost in extent, duration, content and purpose. We can only touch the fringe of this fascinating subject in this article.

The Spirit of God operates in the Creation of the material universe.

His Omnipotence in Creation. (Gen. 1.2,3; Job 26.13). "By His Spirit He hath garnished the heavens." They are adorned, made beautiful. The Spirit of God "moved;" brooding over it, as a fowl does, when hatching eggs (Deut. 32.11). The beauty and splendour of the heavens is the work of the Trinity. What is "OF" the Father and "THROUGH" the Son, is "BY" the Spirit. Creation reveals the skill and omnipotence of the Spirit. He is the Operator and Executor in giving and sustaining life (Job 33.4; Psalms 104.30; Zechariah 4.6). The New Creation is illustrated from the Old in 2 Cor. 4.6. Restoration follows ruin, illumination replaces the darkness, separation through light, the reconstruction of the earth for the habitation of man (Gen. 1.2-31); with 2 Cor. 5.17; we are recreated.

His Operation in Conviction (Gen. 6.3). In the days of Noah Divine interest was shown "strove," but Divine in-

fluence was rejected. The Spirit still convicts, the world is "sinful," the Lord Jesus proved holy and righteous, and Satan conquered and judged (John 16.8-11). The days of Noah are with us (Luke 17.26,27).

For Administration (Gen. 41.38; Dan. 4.9; 6.3). Joseph and Daniel were given understanding; perception to see, ability to discern, authority to guide and legislate above the great men of their day. Spirit taught and enabled for the most difficult tasks.

Inspiration of the Scriptures (2 Pet. 1.21; 2 Tim. 3.16,17). Inspiration speaks of the divine authorship and perfection of the Word of God. All Scripture is of divine origin, it is inspired. Not the writers only, but the writings themselves, were inspired by God (2 Pet. 1.21). Verbal inspiration is proved by internal evidence (2 Sam. 23.2; Jer. 1.7,9; Neh. 9.30; Ezek. 2.7; Zech. 7.12). The authority of the Lord Jesus (Luk 24.44,47; Matt. 5.18; John 10.35). The Scriptures are the voice of God, the Word of God, no matter what the dispensation or instrument (Heb. 1.12). The very words of the original Scriptures were dictated by the Spirit of God. The passage quoted in Heb. 3.7, is taken from Psa. 95.7-11, the Author is the Holy Spirit. The expressions, "thus saith the Lord;" "Jehovah hath spoken," occur over 2,600 times in the O.T. The Scriptures are Divine in their source (2 Sam. 23.1); dynamic in their operation (Heb. 1.2,3); definite in their claim (Acts 3.21); and distinct in their prophecy, for Christ is the key (Luke 24.44,47).

His Association With Men (Exod. 31.1-4; Judg. 3.10; Neh. 9.20). In the construction of the Tabernacle we have a picture in Bezaleel of the Holy Spirit at work. Here is His educative activity preparing for all kinds of handiwork (Exod. 28.3; 31.3-5). God selects the individual that He requires for His particular purpose. True of Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13.2). Equipped for service, engaged and energised by the Spirit (Exod. 31.2). The Spirit is concerned with our intellectual powers (Eph. 1.16). With executive ability as seen in Joshua (Num. 27.18; Deut. 34.9). As the Spirit filled those servants to work for God, then so we should be filled by Him (Eph. 5.18).

The Revelation of Truth (Neh. 9.20, 30). Nehemiah and David were instructed by the Spirit. David owning the Lord-

ship of Christ (Psa. 110.1; Matt. 22.43,44). "God spake by the mouth of His holy prophets (Luke 1.70). The book of Psalms shows how unconstrained were the instruments used by the Spirit. Every conceivable experience of the child of God is met here. Sorrow, trial, gratitude, joy and worship; the Spirit of God is breathing through it all. The voice of the Spirit giving instruction is heard with authority and clarity.

Preparation for Service (Ezek. 2.2). Here is a man possessed by the Spirit, enlightened and established for a special task. He had revelation from God; controlled "Taken up," in communion, "heard a voice," and used as God's instrument. He fed so thoroughly on the roll that it found its way into the bloodstream of his life and the fibre of his being. His will was nerved and his mind was fed by a divinely prescribed diet of apparently unpalatable truth, it became sweetness (v. 3). One day the Lord released the tongue of His prophet (6.2; 37.4-7). The ruined state of Israel will be changed. The covenant made with Abraham will be honoured and God will restore Israel as a nation to national and spiritual blessing by His Spirit. Study the "I wills" of Gen. 17.2-8, with the "shall's" of Ezek. 37. In a future day there will be the vindication of the divine purpose and programme for Israel.

His Presentation of Christ (Isa. 11). All prophecy centres in Christ for the "testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev. 19.10). Isaiah 11 brings out the fact that everything radiates around Christ and finds its centre in Him. A glorious picture of the Coming of the Original Creator (v. 1-5); the restoration of the animal creation (v. 6-9); and the blessing of the personal creature (v. 10-16).

The Disposer Of All Things. The Spirit was necessary for the creation of the universe, for conviction of sin, controlling God's servants who contributed in building, conquering the flesh and the world, communicating of holy truth to Israel, their conversion after the Church has gone and coming upon all flesh (Joel 2.15-32).

Like Micah we need to be full of power to warn and witness. (Micah 3.8—4.2). The Spirit now works in the Church as the Spirit of holiness, equipping for service (1 Cor. 12. 4-11) and using us as His instruments.

ZECHARIAH

by E. R. BOWER (continued)

THE COMING AGE. (7.1 — 8.23)

(a) The question. (7.1-3)

v. 1. Nearly two years separate 1.7 and 7.1. Upon the 24th of the sixth month, the rebuilding of the Temple began, and was completed upon the 3rd of the twelfth month in the sixth year of Darius (Ezra 6.15), hence at the time of the question, the Temple was just half way to completion. Zechariah was not idle during these years for he gave assistance in the work of rebuilding (Ezra 5.1-2).

vv. 2-3. The opening of v. 2 can be read as, "When (the people) of Bethel sent . . ." or, "Bethel — Sherezer and Regem sent . . ." From the names of these two men it is possible that they were captivity born. The fast to which they referred was that of the fifth month which commemorated the destruction of the Temple by Nebuzaradan (Jer. 52.12,13; 2 Kings 25.8-10). For 70 years the fast had been maintained, but now that the Captivity was back in the Land and the Temple was being restored, was it really necessary to continue this particular fast? Was this fast one of the wearisome things? Cf. Mal. 1.13. Did the questioners remember the prophecies and the promises concerning the 70 years captivity?

(b) The answer. (7.4—8.23)

The answer is in four parts; each part beginning with the prophetic formula, 'thus saith the Word of the Lord' or "then came the Word of the Lord."

Part One. Remonstrance. (7.4-7)

The feast of the 3rd day of the seventh month commemorated the murder of Gedaliah (Jer. 41.2; 2 Kings 25.25). The impact of these verses is that if the nation had obeyed the word of God those 70 years ago, then Jerusalem and Temple would have remained and Gedaliah would not have been slain and thus there would be no need to fast. It is their sin which should be considered. Fasting had

become mere tradition. Go back to the Book, the Word of God. A message to ALL.

Part Two. Reminder. (7.8-14)

Cf. the marginal readings for vv. 11-12 and see Ex. 22. 21-24; Neh. 9.29; Jer. 7.5-7; 21.12; Is. 58.6-8, etc. The back-sliding and/or stubborn shoulder was just like an ox or an ass kicking against the yoke and the pricks. Deaf ears were turned to the voice of the Spirit of God speaking through the prophets from Moses to Jeremiah; this is why they were a scattered people upon whom the curses of the Law had fallen. Would their return from captivity and their rebuilding of the Temple make things any better? The wasting of the Land of their desire (margin) could be laid to their charge. Would they now learn the lesson or would history be repeated. Note the importance of the words, "in His Spirit" (v.12) and see Neh. 9.30.

Part Three. Return and Redemption. (8.1-17)

This part sub-divides into seven separate 'sayings.'

(1) vv.1-2. The tense here is, "I am jealous." Israel is again reminded of Sinai and the Decalogue (Ex. 20. 5,6), ". . . for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generations of them that HATE Me." See Ezek. 39.28-29; Ex. 34.14; Deut. 4.24; 5.9; 6.15, and note that the jealousy of God is linked to Israel's idolatry.

(2) v.3. See Ps. 48.1,2; Is. 2.2,3; Jer. 31.23; Cf. Ezek. 11. 22-25; 43.1-6. "Rend your heart, and not your garments . . who knoweth if He will return and repent, and leave a blessing . . .?" (Joel 2.14). "Return unto Me, and I will return unto you." (Mal. 3.7). "City of Truth"—the faithful city. (Is. 1.21-27).

(3) vv. 4-5. See Jer. 33.10-16; Is. 65. 17-25. From devastation to abundance—a hope still cherished in the heart of true Israel, even as in Maccabean days (168-142 B.C.) when "Old men sat in the streets, talking together of their blessings, and the young men dressed themselves in warlike apparel . . . each man sat under his vine . . and they have none to fear" (1 Macc. 14).

(4) v.6. "Marvelous"—difficult; "these days"—those days, i.e. the days when this shall come to pass. Thus still future. What may be 'hard' or difficult (margin) is not so with

God. "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." (Matt. 19.26).

(5) vv. 7-8. See 10.8-12; cf. Hos. 1 and 2; Rev. 21.3; Is. 43. 5-6. The promises are sure.

(6) vv. 9-10. "the prophets"—Haggai, Zechariah (and others?). See Hag. 1.6-11; 2.15-19; "affliction"—the adversary, or oppressor. "Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little . . ." Why? "Because of Mine House that is waste . . ." True today, both in the temporal and in the spiritual.

vv. 11-13. "Seed . . . prosperous"—the seed of peace, the vine. The vine can flourish only in times of peace, hence to sit under the vine and the fig tree was to enjoy peace and prosperity. Cf. Josh. 23.15; Jer. 24. 8-10. "Yet have I planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed" (Jer. 2.21). Israel would remember Is. 5. 1-6; and Hos. 10.1. "The vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel." and our Lord could say of Himself, "I am the true Vine, and My Father is the Husbandman . . . ye are the branches." (John 15. 1-5). Note that the emphasis is upon the "remnant of this people" and the tense is future, thus the mention of the "former days" appears to indicate that the "latter days" are in view. "Fear not" for the end is certain. See Deut. 28, 29 and 30. The curse turned to blessing.

(7) vv. 14-15. Unrighteousness had brought about their captivity; righteousness would bring restoration. Israel in those post-captivity days was just a remnant; the fulfilment of the prophecy that they should be as sand on the shore, and as the stars of the heavens, remains future. (Gen. 15.5; 22.15-18; Deut. 28.62). The picture of the gardener cultivating only good seed and purging out the poor strains comes easily to mind. Cf. our Lord's parable (Luke 13.6-9), Would this remnant now bring forth the harvest that God looked for? The opportunity was given them in "those days," but the internal strife of v. 10 must cease. Another lesson for today. For Israel, however, Is. 5.1-7 would, as history shows, repeat itself.

vv. 16-17. "Execute the judgment" — see margin. In few words the Law is summarized and (Mark 12. 28-34) our Lord gave the enquiring scribe similar advice, "The first of all the commandments is, . . . thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart . . . and the second is like, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none greater than these."

Part Four. Rejoicing. (8.18-23).

This part divides into three 'sayings.'

(1) vv. 18-19. Having given, as it were, an introduction to the question of 7.3, a complete answer is now given, but two fasts are added to the two already mentioned in 7.5. In sequence the fasts commemorated the fall of Jerusalem in Zedekiah's eleventh year (Jer. 39.2; 52.4); the destruction of the Temple (Jer. 52.12,13; 2 Kings 25.8-10); the murder of Gedaliah (Jer. 41.2; 2 Kings 25.25); and the siege of Jerusalem in the ninth year of Zedekiah (2 Kings 25.1; Jer. 52.4) The fasts shall be turned to feasts of joy. Note the three exhortations in the answer—7.8; 8.16-17, and here. Jewish tradition, we are told, held the fasts in abeyance when there was peace and prosperity, but resumed them in times of trouble. A typical attitude throughout all generations! The question was (7.3), "Shall I weep?" And the answer? "The fasts shall be joy and gladness, and cheerful feasts, therefore . . ." Yet again we think of the Prince of Peace and of The Way. Judah mourned a destroyed Temple and a fallen Jerusalem; a murdered leader and a broken nation, but God would restore them all—if only . . .

(2) vv. 20-22. The fulfilment of the promise of God to Abraham (Gen. 22. 1-8) is long awaited, but Isaiah (2.1-4) and Micah (6.1-4) give assurance for the last days. The gathering of the nations to Jerusalem will be for peace and not for war; for intreaty and not treaty. The "inhabitants of one city" the LXX reads as the "inhabitants of five cities shall come together to one city." cf. Is 19.18-25.

(3) v. 23. "Immanuel"—God with us. Pogroms give place to prayers. "Those days are still the theme. Those days when Israel shall indeed be as the sand and as the stars for multitude, and ten men of the nations for every one Jew!

A NEW CREATION

(Galatians 6 : 15)

by the Late C. F. HOGG

At the opening of a new year it is customary usually to greet each other with the familiar words 'a Happy New Year!'

There are conditions, however, for only in the new creation is true happiness to be found and experienced. On the old

creation sentence of death has been passed; it but awaits execution. Shall this year see the beginning of the end? Who knows, save God? But the wise are prepared. The happiest thing that can happen to any man, woman or child in this New Year is that in it he should pass out of death into life, out of the old creation into the new.

This old creation is patent enough; the new, though not so evident is as real, and with this difference in its favour, that whereas the old is doomed and must pass away, the new remains new for ever.

When we speak of anything as 'new' one or both of two ideas may be intended. We may mean new in time, or new in character. The Greek language has two words, however, where we have but one. When the Lord spoke of new wine in Matt. 9.17, He used the word that means newly produced, but when He spoke of the new 'fruit of the vine' in the Kingdom of God He used the word that describes character, for that wine will differ in kind from the wine of this world. It is with the second of these words we are concerned: that which tells not only of what is new, but of what is *better* because it is new.

1. The Christian is one who has been brought into the new creation by the communication to him of a *New Life*, which is 'the gift of God . . . in Christ Jesus our Lord.' Henceforth his 'life is hid with Christ in God.' Indeed Christ Himself is our life, for life is not imparted save as faith brings us into living union with Him. In so saying the Apostle seems to have in mind words spoken more than once by the Lord, 'I am . . . the life.' To those who are united to Christ by faith, life is imparted by the Holy Spirit; they 'have passed out of death into life,' they are '*born anew*.' A Christian, then, is not merely one who has been forgiven, he is a new creature in a new creation. For him 'the old things . . . are become new' (John 14.6; Rom. 6.3; 2 Cor. 5.17; Col. 3.3,4).

2. The Christian has a *New Aim* in life, for whereas his former ambition was to please himself, now he 'makes it his aim to be well-pleasing unto his Lord' (2 Cor. 5.9).

3. The Christian acts from a *New Motive*; a double motive, indeed, for while 'the love of Christ constraineth' him, he bears always in mind 'the fear of the Lord,' that is, the sense of responsibility to Christ at His Judgment-seat, where he fain would hear his Lord say, 'Well done, good

and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord' (Matt. 25.21; 2 Cor. 5. 11,14).

4. The Christian measures himself by a *New Standard*, for whereas before he was satisfied to compare himself with those around him, now he takes for his pattern One Who, being 'meek and lowly in heart,' washed the feet of His disciples and said, 'I have given you an Example that you should do as I have done to you.' Only by acquiring His mind, and following His steps can we 'attain unto . . . the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ' (John 13.5; Eph. 4.13).

5. Whereas the Christian was at one time under a law that wielded the power 'of sin and of death' he has been 'made free' therefrom by being brought under a *New Law*, 'the law of Christ,' the law by which Christ Himself walked, the law of Love. That law Christ defined when He said, 'A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.' (Rom. 8.2; 1 Cor. 9.21; Gal. 6.2).

6. The Christian is not discouraged by these high ideals, for a *New Power* has come into his life. He prays that he 'may be strengthened with power through His (God's) Spirit in the inward man' and knows that his prayer is heard and answered. Nor does he doubt the adequacy of the promised power, since it is the same 'strength of His (God's) might which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead,' that now works in the Christian to enable him to live 'soberly and righteously and godly in this present age' (Eph. 2.19; 3.16; Tit. 2.12).

7. And whereas before the Christian was either careless of the end of the journey, or haunted by a 'certain fearful expectation of judgment,' now he rejoices in a *New Destiny*. He is numbered among those who confess that they are 'strangers and pilgrims on the earth . . . who seeking after a country of their own, . . . desire a better country, that is a heavenly.' He looks for 'the City which hath the foundations, whose Architect and Builder is God,' where are 'the Throne of God and of the Lamb' and where 'His servants shall do him service; and they shall see His face; and His name shall be on their foreheads.' And not only does he

look for a new environment, he knows that he himself shall be 'fashioned anew,' 'conformed to the image of (God's) Son': with the 'many brethren' beholding and sharing in the glory of the Firstborn in the day when every knee shall bow and every tongue 'confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.' (Heb. 11.10,14-16; Rev. 22.3; Phil. 2.10,11; 3.21).

As we salute the new year we ask ourselves in what sense will it be A NEW YEAR to us? Will it be new merely because the old has faded away? Will it be a year like that just gone, with its memories of faithlessness and defeat, of suffering shirked, of self-will and disloyalty, of pride and covetousness, of following the Lord afar off, of having a name to live yet in ways bordering on spiritual death? Or shall it be, in the grace, wisdom and power of God, a *New Year*, a different kind of year, a year dominated by a *purpose to walk with the Lord and to be well-pleasing unto him?*

THE BELOVED OF THE LORD, OR ONE SON HIS WELL-BELOVED

—Mark 12.6.

by H. H. SHACKCLOTH, Norwich

If there is one supreme motive for being present at the celebration of the Lord's supper it must be that the worshipper attends because his Lord is worthy of his devotion. Apart from the sense of gratitude for being the recipient of His abundant grace and mercy, the moral character of the Saviour as it is set forth in the Gospels calls forth wonder and admiration that such a Person could ever have passed through this world to manifest the glory of God, as it seen 'in the face of Jesus Christ.'

It was the fact of this unique revelation which called forth on two occasions the Divine exclamation, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

The first of these occurred when the Lord presented Himself to John the Baptist as He left nearby Galilee to identify Himself with the people as they responded to the call to repentance and confession of sin. (Matthew 3). Understandably, John fully grasped the seeming incongruity of such a request, because of his awareness of the sinless perfection

of his Divine Visitor. His comment, 'I have need to be baptised of Thee, and comest Thou to me,' fully expresses his surprise.

That it became the Saviour, by submitting Himself to such an ordinance 'to fulfil all righteousness' prove conclusively that whilst He was, by right, above the law, He none the less subjected Himself to the forerunner, as the last representative of the law and the prophets, for a baptism which in fact shewed that His purpose in Coming, though, 'made under the law,' and 'made of woman,' was to 'redeem them that were under the law.' (Galatians 4.4).

As John, the disciple, recalled this occasion, he wrote 'This is he that came by water, even Jesus Christ, not by water only, but by water and blood.' (1 John 5.6). His obedience had everything to do with the efficacy of His redeeming work.

This willing obedience to a Divinely given and extant law called forth the approbation of the Father from the open heaven.

If this first expression of the Father's love for His Son occurred during the early days of His ministry, the second, the occasion of the Transfiguration would seem to have taken place during the last year of His life (Matthew 17).

The first was an act of humiliation in keeping with the character of His mission; the second, an unveiling of the future King in His glory and Kingdom. The one marked the trend of His life on earth, the other the deserved place He was to occupy in the Day of His Power.

The well-known passage, Philippians 2. 5-11, expresses the apostle Paul's appreciation of this truth.

The prophetic word too, had declared the Father's love for His Son. The Saviour had healed the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath day, much to the disapproval of the Pharisees, who as a result used the incident as a pretext for plotting His death. As the Lord withdrew Himself from them, He further demonstrated His healing power, which was said to be in fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy, "Behold, my servant, whom I have chosen, *My Beloved*, in whom My soul is well pleased, I will put my spirit upon Him, and He will shew judgement to the Gentiles.' (Isaiah 42.1-3, Matthew 12.10-18).

Here the Father's one-ness with His Son at the time of His rejection is seen as a confirmation of the prophetic word;

that the Spirit ever rested upon Him. Truly He was beloved of the Father.

It may be further urged that our Lord is 'the Beloved' of the church. Little wonder that the inspired writer of the great poetic epic, 'The Song of Solomon' refers prophetically to 'the Beloved' something like twenty-seven times, and so doing furnishes a word-picture which harmonises readily with the sentiments of the New Testament writers.

In a past age it was more customary to refer to the Lord's Supper as the 'love-feast,' which it should continue to be if it is approached in the true spirit of worship.

In the gospel the Spirit-filled church as the Bride of Christ is seen to be eager for the coming of the Bridegroom after the midnight cry, 'Behold the Bridegroom cometh (Matthew 25. 1-11), and due preparation is seen to be made for His Coming. We can but conjecture the thoughts and feelings of the Bride, for as Mr. George Salton wrote in a contemporary periodical, 'The door is shut and no hint is given of what takes place behind the scenes. The marriage of the King's Son has come, and there in Matthew's Gospel the details stop. There is no description of the Bride, for the Gospel was not written to explain the high calling of the church, only to give glimpses of the condition on earth of Christendom which would profess to be under the rule of the absent King and to be loyal to Him whilst beneath the surface would abound iniquity, falsehood and apostacy'. (Morning Star 1895, p. 152). Alas the writer's interpretation has been fulfilled to a degree none would have dared to consider possible.

This brings us to an examination of what the New Testament epistles have to say about the attitudes of its few writers to the person of our Lord. We may feel a measure of surprise that so little was recorded of their deeper feelings. Paul rejoiced that, together with the Ephesian believers, he could say, 'We are accepted in the beloved' (Eph. 1.6) whilst John could state, 'we love Him because He first loved us' (1 John 4.19). His epistle none the less breathes a restrained devotion to the Godhead of the Father and the Son which is said to be proven in one way by the believer's love to his fellow Christians. We need to regard this observation in the light of the general teaching of the New Testament.' The key phrase in John's first epistle is, 'if a man say,' by which he discriminates between love in action and

mawkish expressions of a devotion which is not backed by obedience.

Some of the protestations in some of the insipid choruses and 'group' productions prevalent today alongside the shallow lives seen in the professing church may explain why the stress in the New Testament is on our doings rather than our words. Those who love the Master, keep His Commandments however little they may understand the reason for them. Well did our Lord say, 'Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven' (Matthew 7.21). A principle for all time, and words we do well to ponder!

The beauty of Lebanon fadeth,
The glory of Carmel decays,
The dew falleth not upon Carmel,
And silent are Bethlehem's lays.
Fair Salem is shorn of her splendours,
And Sharon's delightsomeness wanes
But the glory of Jesus remaineth
His beauty for ever remains.

The chiefest among the ten thousand
The desire of all nations is He,
We never shall know what His beauty,
Till Him in the glory we see.
No shadow can cloud or diminish
The brightness which in Him obtains
For the beauty of Jesus remaineth
His beauty for ever remains.

—*Albert Midlane.*

To enumerate all that is to accrue to our Lord out of love to Himself it is decreed that the remnant of the estranged nation of Israel will ere long be counted among those who express their love to their Redeemer and Messiah.

Paul in his Roman Epistle expressed that which still obtains, 'blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, and so all Israel shall be saved as it is written. 'There shall come out of Sion, the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. For this is my covenant unto them when I shall take away all their sins.' (Romans 11.25-27).

The major Prophets especially abound in promises of this people coming through tribulation, of being gathered from the four corners of the earth, only to survive a decimation of their numbers, and leaving a godly remnant, expecting and welcoming the wound-scarred Messiah with repentance and deep sorrow of heart. As the prophet writes—"I will pour out upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication, and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and shall mourn for Him *as one mourneth for his only son*, and shall be in bitterness for his firstborn (Zechariah 12.10,11).

Those disciples that followed the Lord Jesus had much in common with their races' future. After three years and more of close relationship with Him He had to remind them that like every pious Jew, they believed in God, but need to believe in Him as Lord.' (John 14). An analogy with the people in that coming day, and providing a reason for their strange behaviour within a few hours, including Peter's denial, the general desertion, to say nothing of Judas Iscariot's betrayal, who must be regarded in quite a different relationship than the rest.

The reconciliation with the Lord on the part of Peter (John 21.15,17) seems a fitting fore-shadowing of this momentous event, concluding as it does with Peter's words 'Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee (v. 17).

The thirty-fourth chapter of Ezekiel describes in detail the final restoration of Israel (v. 11-31). May we take special note of the words 'I will set up one shepherd over them, even my servant David, he shall feed them, and he shall be their Shepherd. And I the Lord will be their God and my servant David a prince among them. I the Lord have spoken it' (vs. 23/24).

Though David had lived five hundred years before this time, and is therefore excluded from a literal fulfilment of these words they can only be understood to mean that the One who is the 'offspring of David' (Rev. 22.16) will take up His fore-parents name as a Prince among His people.

The very mention of the name of David (Heb.—beloved) is in itself a confession of their love to the One who long ago rejected, will have become the object of their Devotion; the Beloved indeed.

COMMITTEE'S REPORT

In Christian experience there is never a marking of time. We either have progressed during the last year or have lost ground.

There were those during the famine days in Egypt who, when the year was ended said to Joseph "our money is spent" (Gen. 47.18). They ended the year in poverty and need. However the Lord indicates that His mind for those who have come out of Egypt is that the end of the year should be marked by "the feast of ingathering" (Ex. 23.16). As we stand on the threshold of a new year and review that which is past we are either poverty stricken in Egypt or, in the power of separation from Egypt, bringing something to God for His pleasure.

As we, the committee of Assembly Testimony, look back over 1984 we can say with joy "there failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken" (Josh. 21.45). Our borders have been enlarged with the circulation of the magazine now in excess of 15,300 copies per issue. Despite higher costs of postage and printing the Lord continues to meet every need and to Him be all the glory. We gladly agree with the Psalmist "Thou crownest the year with Thy goodness." (65.11).

In a day of departure and increasing darkness we appreciate all who have written articles for the magazine. Without their diligent and time consuming study the continuation of 'Assembly Testimony' would not be possible. It also is cheering to receive the correspondence of our readers who write to encourage us to press on in the work. Even with many turning from the truth the letters of appreciation by far outnumber those intimating "The place where we dwell with thee is too strait for us."

As we anticipate another year in the will of the Lord, we would covet the prayers of the Lord's people that we may be able to provide a scriptural magazine which will help to stem the fast flowing tide of modernism and declension.

We have cause to thank our Editor and his assistant, our Secretary and our brother Glenville for their faithful and untiring labours. Our brother Robert Martin continues to audit our accounts with careful diligence and gives any necessary professional advice cheerfully and without charge. We thankfully acknowledge his work assured that it is noted in Heaven. As is known by most of our readers, and can be confirmed by our brother none of the brethren who share in the work receives any remuneration whatsoever. All of the money received is used exclusively to cover the expenses of the magazine and to improve it where necessary.

Finally our thanks goes to all who help with the distribution of the magazine and to our readers. If the saints are encouraged, instructed and helped on their homeward journey and drawn closer to Him, then the ambitions of the Committee will have been realised.

Brethren pray for us.

“HOW GREAT THOU ART”

CARL BOBERG (1859—1940)

“O Lord my God! When I in awesome wonder
Consider all the works Thy hand hath made,
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder,
Thy pow’r throughout the universe displayed :

Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to Thee,
How great Thou art! How great thou art!

When through the woods and forest glades I wander,
And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees ;
When I look down from lofty mountain grandeur,
And hear the brook, and feel the gentle breeze :

And when I think that God, His Son not sparing,
Sent Him to die—I scarce can take it in;
That on the Cross, my burden gladly bearing,
He bled and died, to take away my sin :

When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation
And take me home—what joy shall fill my heart!
Then shall I bow in humble adoration,
And there proclaim, ‘My God, how great Thou art!’ ”

“How great Thou art!” is a majestic, soul-stirring hymn begetting worship to Almighty God. Though written originally 100 years ago by Carl Boberg as a Swedish poem, “O store Gud” (O great God), the sequence of events by which it has come to us in our English language is a fascinating story, involving many writers and translators, covering a period of over 60 years and taking us to many countries—to Sweden, to Estonia, to Russia, to Czechoslovakia, to Romania and to England. We are greatly indebted to Stuart K. Hine, not only for giving to us the English version of this hymn but also for the documentation of its fascinating story in booklet form—“The story of ‘How great Thou art!’ ”

The story of the hymn begins in Sweden in the year 1885. Carl Boberg, a young Swede, was then living in the town of Mönsterås on Sweden’s south-east coast. He had been born there of humble parentage in 1859 and there he had been converted to God at the age of 19 when, as “a sinner beyond measure” he found rest for his troubled heart in the promise of John 14, v. 13, “Whatsoever you shall ask in my Name, that will I do”—that word of the Saviour had satisfied his heart. Boberg had reached the age of 26 and on a summer’s evening was returning home from a meeting when he was overtaken by a violent thunderstorm. The

lightning flashes and the thunder peels filled his heart with awe. The storm passed quickly and the rainbow appeared. On reaching his home, he surveyed the scene from his open window. It was an inspiring atmosphere—before him lay the Mönsterås inlet of the sea in perfect peace, across the inlet floated the song of the thrush from the distant woods, while the stillness of the evening was punctuated by the toll of the church bell. 'Twas then that Boberg composed "O store Gud" ("O Great God")—a lovely poem of nine verses.

This Swedish poem was translated 22 years later into the German, "Wie gross bist Du" ("How great Thou art") by Manfred von Glehn, a resident of Estonia and then from the German into the Russian by I.S. Prokhanoff, (known as the "Martin Luther of modern Russia"). Prokhanoff's version was greatly used of the Lord inside Russia but God was to send that message with accompanying blessing to yet wider spheres, and in His divine purpose Stuart K. Hine was instrumental in giving it to the English-speaking world. Mr. Hine first heard and learned it in the Russian when he and his wife were serving the Lord in Western Ukraine. There they used it much in their labours for the Lord and God honoured and blessed it, but the re-birth of the hymn in its English form awaited their arrival among the Carpathian mountain villages of Czechoslovakia and Romania.

Just as Carl Boberg was inspired by the beauty of the Swedish landscape after a summer thunderstorm, so Stuart K. Hine tells us that the first verse of the English version was inspired by a remarkable thunderstorm in a Carpathian mountain village in Czechoslovakia where he had been forced to take shelter for the night. The second stanza, "When through the woods and forest glades I wander" was penned in mountainous Bukovina in Romania, where among "the woods and forest glades" he one day heard a group of young Christians spontaneously burst forth into singing Prokhanoff's Russian version of "How great Thou art!"

The writing of the great third verse, "And when I think—that God, His Son not sparing" is a thrilling story. Mr. Hine had been distributing gospels among the Carpathian mountain villagers. On arriving at one village, he found the Spirit of God already at work. Nineteen years earlier, through Divine providence, a Russian soldier had left behind him a bible. However, no-one in the village could read and the bible lay unopened through all those years. At length the wife of Dimitri learned to read and slowly she spelled out to her village neighbours the words of God's book. She had come to the story of the cross, and when Mr. Hine arrived, he found many hearts in that village melted and broken down by the love of God. What a story for those villagers! They

had never heard it before. In their surrounding beautiful mountainous scenery they had seen God's handiwork but never before had they heard that "God so loved . . . that He gave His only begotten Son" and they "scarce could take it in" that Calvary had been divinely planned for them. The hymn was completed many years later in England when Mr. and Mrs. Hine, forced to return to their homeland at the outbreak of World War II were working among displaced Eastern Europeans. The incessant question in the hearts of those refugees, "When are we going home?", "When are we going home?" gave the stimulus to the composing of that lovely concluding verse.

Two optional verses, having their roots in Boberg's original poem, further extol the greatness of the heart of God. In today's world, their truth is very real; and so comforting for the child of God.

"Oh, when I see ungrateful man defiling
This bounteous earth, God's gifts so good and great;
In foolish pride God's holy name reviling
And yet, in grace, His wrath and judgement wait;
When burdens press, and seem beyond endurance,
Bowed down with grief, to Him I lift my face;
And then in love He brings me sweet assurance :
'My child! For thee sufficient is My grace.' "

A simple two line melody befits the lovely words of this majestic hymn, born as a poem a century ago in south-east Sweden, hidden in obscurity for many years, put before the eyes of the world in its English form by Stuart K. Hine, and popularized during the 1950's by such elegant voices as James Caldwell of Central Africa and George Beverly Shea of America.

This is a great hymn for its theme is great. It speaks of God and God is great. "O LORD, my God, Thou art very great" (Psa. 104, v. 1). As Boberg gazed contemplatively on a tempest that was stilled he saw God there—sovereign, majestic, serene; and his heart like David's went on to ponder the great enigma, "When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained: What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? (Psa. 8, 3,4) — man, so proud and puny; man, so selfish and sinful — and yet God was mindful and God visited His creature in compassion and in grace. The glory of God's creation has now been eclipsed by the glory of His redemption—may the undivided praise be to **Him alone**.

"Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and created."
(Rev. 4.11).

"Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation:" (Rev. 5.9).

"O LORD, my God, Thou art very great." Within our hearts we feel that He is too great for comprehension down here. Probably only when we get "home," will we appreciate the greatness of our God.

"Then shall I bow in humble adoration,
And there proclaim; 'my God, how great Thou art!'"

ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY

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ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY



Contents

ASSEMBLY MEETINGS

by J. Heading

FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTALS

by J. B. Hewitt

CHRIST IN THE APOCALYPSE

by J. B. D. Page

ZECHARIAH

by E. R. Bower

PHILIP THE EVANGELIST

by J. G. Hutchinson

THE HEIGHTS OF THE HILLS ARE HIS

by A. Naismith

LOSING THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT BY DEGREES

by D. N. Martin

HYMNS AND THEIR WRITERS

by J. Strahan

JESUS

"And thou shalt call His Name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins." —Matt. 1.21.

"The name of the Lord is a strong Tower; the righteous runneth with it, and is safe." —Proverbs 18.10.

O precious Name ! O wondrous Name !
The Name in which we plead.
Petitions brought in that dear Name,
They shall avail indeed !
A Tower of strength ! A Refuge sure !
A sweet-eternal song ;
A blest, untiring, Holy theme
Throughout the ages long !

The Name was given to our Lord
Because He came to save
His people from the power of sin,
Its judgment and the grave.
O saving Name ! O healing Name !
As ointment flowing forth :
O mighty, tender, soothing Name,
I will extol Thy worth !

The Name of Jesus is so sweet ;
Its fragrance reaches me ;
I love to breath it o'er and o'er—
Repeat it constantly.
The Name of God is my strong Tower ;
I'm hiding always there,
For my unfailing fortress is—
Just "Jesus" breathed in prayer.

—EDITH L. HENNESSAY.

Assembly Meetings

by JOHN HEADING, Aberystwyth

3. NEW TESTAMENT EXAMPLES

Specific meetings of a local assembly are convened for special purposes. Both the general objects of a meeting, and the time that the meeting lasts, are based on local exercise. There are plenty of examples in Scripture, but the Lord would not tie down His people to a rigid set pattern (as existed under the law for tabernacle and temple). In fact, meetings at Corinth and at Troas (Acts 20.7) were very long occasions, based on convenience and opportunity. Today, we have more "free time," and as such more meetings can be arranged, with objectives more specialized and compartmentalized. Thus assemblies differ one from another in the range of meetings that are convened, also depending on the size of the assembly. Those who attend should respect the declared objectives; hence let no brother turn a meeting for the breaking of bread into a prayer meeting. (Thus in 1 Samuel 2.12-17 there were priests who attempted to turn the occasion of the sin offering into a passover!).

In Matthew 18.20, the verb "gathered together" has the same basic root as the noun "synagogue." This noun is used 53 times in the N.T. to refer to Jewish synagogue buildings, which were named (Acts 6.9). Once it refers to the congregation in the synagogue (13.43), twice metaphorically as "the synagogue of Satan" (Rev. 2.9; 3.9), and once it is translated "assembly," apparently as a place where the early Christians met (James 2.2). But the verb is **never** used to describe the act of Jews coming together into a synagogue. It is often used in the Lord's parables, and it is often used of the priests and Pharisees meeting together against the Lord. But six times in The Acts and once in 1 Corinthians this verb is used of a local assembly coming together, and on each of these seven occasions the objective of the gathering is clearly stated. We can learn from these occasions as a guide to assembly exercise today. One habitual meeting, however, is missing—the gospel meeting as we call it, no doubt because this is distinct from the seven

in that we expect unsaved people to be present with the congregation.

1. The Breaking of Bread. "Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples **came together** to break bread" (Acts 20.7). Troas, where Paul had waited seven days in order to participate. The breaking of bread was the chief priority, though Paul used the occasion to engage in a lengthy session of preaching. Together with the actual act of breaking bread, the object of the meeting is to render to the Father and to the Son a spiritual "sacrifice of praise" (Heb. 13.15). To those participating and who are spiritually minded, it can be very discordant if worship is interrupted by an ill-conceived prayer, by practical teaching or exhortation, or even by an out-of-context hymn.

2. Prayer. "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they **were assembled together**" (Acts 4.31). This was on the occasion of the release of Peter and John from their first brief spell of imprisonment. It was to their "own company" that they went upon their release (v.23), and where Psalm 2 was quoted in their prayers. Such prayer that used the Scriptures was answered by the power of the Spirit; they were granted boldness to ensure that the believers were "of one heart and of one soul" (vv. 31,32). This prayer was an example of the fact that "they continued stedfastly . . . in 'the' prayers" (2.42); another example was the apostles' insistence that "we will give ourselves continually to prayer" (6.4). Later, when Peter was in prison again, "prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him" (12.5), though when their prayer was answered, a strange form of unbelief was manifested (v.15). God takes action "at the beginning" of our prayers, not only at the end (Dan. 9.23; 10.12).

3. Teaching or Ministry. After the assembly in Antioch had been formed, Barnabas brought Paul (or Saul, as he was still named) into the assembly, and for "a whole year they **assembled** themselves with the church, and taught much people" (Acts 11.26). This is a very important method for collective and individual growth in the faith. In Corinth, Paul needed a year and a half, while in Ephesus three years were necessary. But much can be done in a year, if every effort is made to use the time profitably. We do not hear of such lengthy concentrated sessions of teaching these days! But it ensured that the assembly became missionary-minded,

since Paul and Barnabas were sent out from among them (13.1-4), and since Paul used this assembly as a base of fellowship (14.26-28; 18.22-23). The Lord Jesus did not stay so long in one place, but when in Jerusalem He taught daily in the temple (Luke 21.37,38; Matt. 26.55). Now-a-days, it is possible to give ministry easily and to receive it easily; brief and shallow messages are often looked upon as satisfactory food. Some young people are used to long sessions of lessons and lectures at school and university, and some to long hours of listening to the entertainment of the world in the home, and yet sometimes the excuse is made that only a short session of ministry is preferred. But to know that the whole assembly gathers regularly for rich ministry is to realize that here is a prosperous assembly.

4. Bible Reading. The assembly at Antioch had been disturbed by false Jewish doctrine spreading from Judaea. To settle the matter, and to establish the fact that a uniformity of doctrine existed between Paul and the assembly at Jerusalem, a conference at Jerusalem was convened, and a letter (now part of the N.T.) was written to "the brethren which are of the Gentiles" setting out certain vital principles (Acts 15.23-29). Paul, Barnabas, Judas and Silas took the letter to Antioch, and **gathered** the multitude **together**" (v. 30). This meeting was, in effect, a Bible Reading, for the letter was delivered and read, bringing about rejoicing, exhortation and confirmation by those who took part (vv. 30-32). Here was the reading of Scripture, with explanations and applications by brethren with gift—in this case by "prophets." A mutual exchange of epistles and their reading took place between Colosse and Laodicea (Col. 4.16). The Lord conducted quite a lot of His teaching like this—namely, questions and answers as in John chs. 6 and 8. In the temple, at an early age, the Lord is described as "hearing them, and asking them questions," as well as providing "understanding and answers" (Luke 2. 46-47). Today, Bible Readings can be profitable if gifted brethren take part, dealing with a passage in a consistent order rather than in a haphazard way. But the lack of prior preparation and exercise can turn a Bible Reading into a very dull, uninformative and unprofitable session. The order in which to discuss a passage is the order chosen by the Spirit of inspiration in the original text of Scripture, and a verse-by-

verse explanation in detail will then be for the edification of the assembly.

5. Missionary. At the end of the first missionary journey, Paul returned to his home assembly at Antioch (Acts 14.26). There, "when they . . . had **gathered** the church **together**, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles" (v. 27). Later at Jerusalem "they declared all things that God had done with them" (15.4). Here is a secret of successful service; they recognized that their service was really what God was doing. This is a good illustration of Mark 16.20, "the Lord working with them." To take this attitude afterwards, when giving a missionary address, is true humility, for such servants own that "the excellency of the power" is of God and not of men (2 Cor. 4.7). Such service also recognizes that it is God who is being pleased, and not men (1 Thess. 2.4), for in himself Paul owned that he was "nothing" (2 Cor. 12.11).

6. Elder's Meeting. Elders are those men who watch over the souls of the saints in spiritual and moral matters (Heb. 13.17). Hence in Acts 15.6, "the apostles and elders **came together**" to consider the false doctrine carried up to Antioch by certain men from Judaea. Such a group of brethren form a distinct class of mature believers, not lording it over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock which they were responsible to feed (1 Pet. 5.2-4). In Acts 20.17, the elders of the assembly at Ephesus were counselled by the apostle Paul, such a meeting being occupied with their responsibility in feeding the flock, in taking heed to the flock, and in keeping the eldership pure from entryism by those outside and inside the flock (vv.28-31). In this meeting, these elders were commended "to God, and to the word of his grace" (v.32), this being the basis of an elders' meeting, far removed from being just an administration committee.

7. Discipline. The collapse of moral decency in the assembly at Corinth led Paul to write, "in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye **are gathered together**, and my spirit, with the power of the Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan" (1 Cor. 5.4-5). Strictly, the immediate context of the Lord's promise in Matthew 18.20—"where two or three are gathered together in my name"—is that of discipline. In 1 Corinthians 5.11, the apostle provides a list of sins that demand discipline; those who committed

such deeds were not those with whom the assembly should keep company. Be careful how we add to this list to meet problems of the present day; Paul adds false doctrine to the list (1 Tim. 1.19-20; 2 Tim. 2.16-17).

These seven examples do not form the sum total of meetings that an assembly may convene. But all must maintain that great principle spelt out by the apostle Paul, "communicating spiritual things by spiritual means," as 1 Corinthians 2.13 should be translated. Other methods may be but carnality.

In conclusion, we should mention that there is another Greek word often translated "come together." Thus there was a gospel meeting in the home of Cornelius where Peter preached (Acts 10.27); he "found many that **were come together**." In Philippi, Paul preached during a prayer meeting, where by the river side women "**resorted together**" (16. 13). In Corinth, in dealing with the Lord's Supper, Paul wrote, "when ye **come together** in the church" (1 Cor. 11. 17,18,20,33,34), using the word five times. He used the same word twice in describing a meeting for the exercise of spiritual gift, when all should be done unto edification (14.23,26).

FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTALS

by J. B. HEWITT, Chesterfield

(30) "THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE LORD JESUS"

The ministry of the Spirit is to glorify the blessed Son of God (John 16.14). He is the Holy Messenger and Co-operator of the Saviour and as the Stream from Him the Fountain. He is as freely said to be "sent" by the Son as by the Father (John 16.7; 14.26). Called "the Spirit of the Son;" "the Spirit of Christ;" "the Spirit of the Father (Rom. 8.9; Gal. 4.6; Luke 24.49). There is a deep connection revealed in Scripture between the Holy Spirit and the Son of Man.

Our Lord's humanity was due to the power of God through the Holy Spirit. He was the immediate Agent in the Conception of "that holy Thing" (Luke 1.35). The Son in Divine will, willed to assume our nature, and the blessed

Spirit wrought the process whereby that will was carried out (Matt. 1.20). It is for this reason that He is at the same time Man and God. Never indeed, not for one moment from the first, was that Manhood dissociated from the Godhead of the Son. The Manhood He took was begun and maintained in its perfect holiness and power by the Holy Spirit.

His Ministry. Thirty years later, the Spirit descended upon the Lord at His baptism (Matt. 3.16). He was anointed with the Holy Spirit for His ministry (Luke 4.18); confirmed by Acts 10.38. In the "power of the Spirit" He went first forth to temptation and then to ministry (Matt. 4.1; Luke 4.1; John 3.34). The Old Testament clearly announced that the Messiah would be clothed with the Holy Spirit (Isa. 42.1; 66.1); and anointed (Psa. 45.7).

Everything our Lord did as Man was in the power of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 12.28). He was sealed by the Spirit, a mark of His heavenly origin and the proof of His divine Sonship (John 6.27). The Spirit lived in Him, even as He lives in our hearts (John 10.38; 14.11; Eph. 2.22; 3.16).

His Sacrificial Work. Through the Spirit He offered Himself without spot to God. The assistance of the Spirit was necessary to Him in His voluntary humiliation and atoning work, accomplishing the will of God (Heb. 9.14; 10.8-10).

His Resurrection. The Spirit was the Agent in His resurrection, He was declared to be the Son of God (1 Tim. 3.16; Rom. 1.4; 8.11; 1 Pet. 3.18). By the self same Spirit we have been quickened (Eph. 2.1) and "born again" (John 3.8); by the vivifying seed of the Word of God (1 Pet. 1.21). After His resurrection by the Holy Spirit He "gave commandment to the Apostles" (Acts 1.2). In the Revelation the glorified Saviour speaks to the seven Churches, the voices of the Lord and of the Spirit are as one (Rev. 2.1-7). We owe our saving faith to the Lord the Spirit (2 Cor. 4.13). Every step we take in life is by the Spirit (Gal. 5.25). All the virtues mentioned in Gal. 5.22 were only perfectly possessed and expressed by the Lord Jesus (Luke 10.21). In some degree these experiences can be ours "by the Spirit" (Rom. 8.13; Eph. 5.18; Jude 20). We wait for the hope of righteousness through the Spirit (Gal. 5.5). The cry of the Spirit and the Assurance of the Lord should produce this response, "Amen, even so come Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22.17,20).

CHRIST IN THE APOCALYPSE (5)

by JOHN B. D. PAGE

SEVEN AUTOGRAPHS (i)

Reading : Revelation 2.1-29.

In typically eastern style of Bible times, each of the letters addressed to the seven churches in Asia opens with the name of the writer like the epistles of Paul and others. These letters are, however, unique because, unlike other epistles, they each bear an autograph of the glorified Lord Himself and John, of course, was His amanuensis.

In each letter, Christ presented Himself in a different manner, and comparison indicates that many of the autographs adopted are distinctive features of Himself selected from the earlier vision of His glory (ch. 1). The particular characteristics and titles chosen as autographs are invariably appropriate for the church addressed.

Ephesus :

To this church, Christ presented Himself with a title composed of features of Himself, taken from the vision seen earlier (ch. 1).

In the first part of His autograph (2.1) Christ describes Himself as

“He that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand . . .”

In the vision, He *had* the seven stars, figurative of the churches, in His right hand, but here He *holds* them in that hand. For this figurative title, not one star for the angel of the church at Ephesus was held in His right hand, but all seven stars. This metaphorical designation indicated divine security is not restricted to one church but it is for all the churches, and it would have brought assurance to the faithful and inspired confidence to the weak. His right hand symbolized the hand of authority, which is needed where there has been failure.

In the remainder of this autograph, the Lord Jesus says of Himself,

**“. . . Who walketh in the midst of the seven
golden lampstands”**

If the first part of this symbolical title is authoritative in character, then this part is discriminative, for Christ is not seated in heaven exercising a high priestly ministry but He is walking among the seven golden lampstands, emblematic of seven churches on earth. He is discerning what is right and what is wrong in them. From His searching scrutiny, He had knowledge of this church, and so He first commended its members and then censured them for leaving their first love. In Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, twenty references are found to love, which then characterized them. During the intervening years, worldliness had extinguished the fire of their first love.

Smyrna :

The Lord's autograph to this letter, like the last, is composite. For the first part of the title, He described Himself as

"The First and the Last"

This (2.8) is the third time out of four that He applied this part of the title to Himself. When considering its first occurrence (1.11), it was noted that this title is a quotation from Isaiah, signifying that Christ ante-dates and post-dates every being and thing, and so the title denotes the eternal nature of His Person.

The second part of the title

"Which was dead and is alive"

is a qualifying phrase of the first, and it testifies to His death and resurrection.

The saints at Smyrna, who were poor materially but rich spiritually, faced tribulation, suffering and imprisonment instigated by Satan but they were told to be "faithful unto death" (2.10). In view of such circumstances and prospect, the compound autograph of this letter was appropriate, because it signified that Christ is not only eternal but, having tasted death, He has triumphed over it and is now alive. Therefore, these saints had, and likewise we should have, no need to fear death, because it is a door into the presence of the risen Lord.

Pergamos :

To this church, the Lord depicts Himself with a symbolical autograph (2.12),

"He which hath the sharp sword with two edges"

Here, the sword is not proceeding from His mouth as in chapter 1.16, but Christ holds it drawn and it is ready for use. To the Smyrnan church, the Divine autograph showed that Christ possessed the power of life. But to the church at Pergamos, His title revealed that He had the judicial power of death when He chose to wield His sword.

At Smyrna, Satan's tactics were violent but at Pergamos they were crafty. For tackling "the wiles of the devil," not only defensive weaponry is required but also offensive, even "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph. 6.11,17). At Pergamos, where there was false teaching in the form of "the doctrine of Balaam" which produced spiritual fornication. Therefore, the Divine Warrior called upon those indoctrinated with this falsehood to repent, otherwise He "will fight against them with the sword of (His) mouth" (2.14-16).

Thyatira :

Of the seven letters addressed to the Asian churches, this is the fourth, and so it is the middle one. In this central letter, the Lord Jesus designates Himself as

"the Son of God"

This is the one and only occasion (2.18) in the Apocalypse when Christ states expressly His Deity, and so it is important.

In this autograph, Christ does not describe Himself as "God the Son." In fact, the expression is found nowhere in the scriptures, which applies also to the phrase "God the Holy Spirit," although the term "God the Father" occurs several times (e.g. Gal. 1.1,3; Phil. 2.11; 1 Thess. 1.1). Such phrases suggest there are other Gods besides God the Father. When speaking of the Godhead, it is advisable to avoid unscriptural phraseology and to adhere to the language of scripture, that is, "God the Father," "the Son of God" and "the Spirit of God."

This reference in the Apocalypse is the only occasion recorded in the scripture when the risen and glorified Christ has styled Himself as "the Son of God," although once prior to His ascension He abbreviated this full title to "the Son" (Matt. 28.19). During His earthly ministry up to the time of the cross, He used the full title of Himself several

times (e.g. Jno. 5.25; 9.35; 11.4) besides its abbreviated form (e.g. Jno. 3.35f, 5.22f, 8.35f).

Being the only occurrence of the full title, "the Son of God," in the book of Revelation, it is, of course, the last in the New Testament, whilst the first occurs in Matthew 4.3. Remarkably, according to these two references, Satan, our Lord's greatest opponent, was the first to use this title in full, and the glorified Lord Himself was the last.

The designation, "the Son of God," does not mean that Christ was begotten of the Father or derived His Deity from the Father, for in either case He could not have been co-equal or co-eternal with the Father, as He is. From eternity, the Father and the Son have co-existed in a relationship of complete Deity. "Thus absolute Godhead, not Godhead in a secondary or derived sense, is intended in the title," says W. E. Vine.

For His incarnation, Christ did not lay aside His glory, as it is sometimes said. In His humiliation, He retained His divine glory, and whilst the veil of flesh concealed His glory, it revealed His humanity. For His exaltation, commencing with His resurrection, His glory has been, and is, manifested, so that His whole Being is radiant with His glory.

To this title of Deity, Christ added the following symbolical description,

"Who hath His eyes like unto a flame of fire, and His feet are like fine brass."

These figurative features, relating to "His eyes" and "His feet," were seen by the seer in the vision of the glorified Son of Man (1.14f), and so not only the Deity of Christ but also His Humanity is contained in this composite autograph.

This symbolical part of the title indicates judicial activity. The Father has committed all judgment to "the Son," an abbreviated form of the full title "the Son of God," because He is "the Son of Man" (Jno. 5.22,27), and so His two natures, both divine and human, are involved in the One Who is destined to be the righteous Judge. With His fiery eyes, He will search out the horrors of every sin and, with His feet of brass, He will crush every evil thing, so this church was warned.

(To be continued)

ZECHARIAH

by **E. R. BOWER** (continued)

THE BURDEN. (9.1 — 11.17).

(a) Israel's enemies. (9.1-7).

vv. 1-6. From 7.1—8.23 is the 'when' of fulfilment. This section (9.1—11.17) is the 'how.' “. . . Damascus . . . toward the Lord” might be read. “Damascus shall be the resting place (i.e. of the burden): for the Lord has an eye upon mankind as upon ALL the tribes of Israel,” but the A.V. is more appropriate to the nature of the prophecy. This is a natural progression from the “many people and strong nations” and “all languages” of 8.22-23, and it also links with 4.10. Syria and Phoenicia are the nations immediately involved. Alexander the Great in his campaigns took Tyre and utterly destroyed it. Zidon and Gaza were also taken (c.320 BC). Ashkelon was destroyed and became “not inhabited” by Sultan Bibars in 1270 AD. So history fulfils prediction, but as we in this penultimate decade of the twentieth century express concern about Syria, Lebanon and the Gaza strip, do we see the foreshadowings of a yet future fulfilment? Cf. Ezek. 27 and 28; Amos 1.1-10. “Bastard”—a people of mixed race.

v.7. “His blood”—the blood of their sacrifice. A change of heart is brought about by God. The remnant of the Philistines will become part of the remnant of Israel. “Governor”—clan (R.S.V: N.E.B). Absorbed into Israel, as were, for instance, the Jebusites. Philistia as a nation disappeared from history after the days of the Maccabees. Again we see history repeating itself in our day.

(b) Israel's deliverance. (9.8).

v.8. Do we see here a hint of Dan. 11 and the tides of war which in the last days will ebb and flow across the Holy Land? Or is Rev. 11 in view—a measured Temple, protected worshippers and a city trodden down? Some see a reference to the time when, after the sieges of Tyre and Gaza, Alexander marched upon Jerusalem. Jaddua the high priest led a procession of priests to meet Alexander

and the city was spared. (Josephus. Ant. 11.8.4,5). Cf. Joel 3.17; Is. 52.11. Cf. 7.14, "no man passed through nor returned," and 4.10, "the eyes of the Lord" with the expression here.

(c) Israel's King. (9.9-15).

v.9. "Just"—righteous; "having salvation"—saved, or delivered, i.e. he has experienced the Lord's deliverance; "lowly"—poor, or afflicted. The Gospel concerning the King (Matt. 21.1-11) records the fulfilment of this verse. See also Ps. 34. The King is the bringer of salvation for, being saved, He saves. Cf. Ps. 22.21. N.S. Snaith (Distinctive Ideas of the O.T.) translates, "Behold, thy King cometh unto thee righteous (victorious) and saved." The King rides the ass and not the war horse; He has already triumphed; He comes as the Messiah of Peace. See 2.10 and Zeph. 3.14-17.

v.10. "The river"—Euphrates. See Mic. 7.12; Is. 7.20; "the earth"—the Land, Palestine. See Deut. 17.14-16; Ps. 72.8. Disarmament comes through the Prince of Peace. (Cf. Mic. 5.10). The extent of the kingdom appears to fulfil the Abrahamic covenant (Gen. 15.18-21) made on the basis of sacrifice, when God Himself was the sole 'go-between.' Cf. Jer. 34. 17-20; Ps. 50.5; Ex. 24. 3-8; Deut. 1.6,8; 11.23-24.

vv. 11-13. "Ephraim"—the leading tribe put for the ten and known otherwise as 'Samaria'—is much in the picture, and the figure of the waterless pit would, perhaps, remind Israel of the deliverance of Joseph (Gen. 37.24) or of Jeremiah (Jer. 38.13). The call to return goes out to those who were the prisoners of an ever present and burning hope; the 'scattered' in many lands (cf. 8.8). See Ezek. 37.11; Hos. 2.15; Jos. 7.24; Is. 11.1-16. Judah will be the bow for the arrow of Ephraim, and Zion the sword in the hand of God against Greece. This was partially fulfilled in the days of the Maccabees. Cf. Joel 3 and Dan. 8.21; 10.20; 11.2.

vv. 14-16. "The Lord will be seen over them"—a reminder of that day in Israel's history when He "passed over" them in Egypt (Ex. 12.13,23). The first mention of the 'shophar'—trumpet—is at the giving of the Law (Ex. 19 and 20); here, it is the last mention in the O.T. Cf. Zeph. 1.14-18; Ps. 18.7-15; Is. 21.1. The victory is the Lord's! The Shepherd of Israel will gather His flock; they shall shine as gems set

in a crown; they will be as an ensign in "His Land"—that which was His in the first place (Lev. 25.23; Deut. 11.12; Mic. 5.5-15; Is.12; Jer. 46.1-10.). The metaphor of vv. 15-16 is one of battle and of victory. "In that day" does not take into account "any particular historical standpoint, in the manner characteristic of apocalyptic, in using past events to typify a supremely important future event. "Subdue with sling stones" see margin and compare 1 Sam. 25.29. "make a noise" i.e. to shout with exuberance. "They will taste victory and shout with triumph." "They shall be filled" etc. —it seems that a thank offering is indicated. Just as the blood of the offerings was sprinkled and poured at the altar, so triumphant Israel will pour itself out in thanksgiving. See Ephes. 5.15 and 2 Tim. 4.6 for a similar metaphor. The crown indicates separation; the ensign, exaltation. See Mal. 3.16-18; Is. 11.10-16. The mention of the flock leads into the following section which concerns the Shepherd of Israel. See Gen. 49.24; John 10.14-16.

v.17. See 8.5; Is. 28.5; 64.4; Jer. 31.9-13; Joel 2.24; 3.17-18; 1 Cor. 2.9-10.

(d) Israel's Shepherd. (10.1—11.17)

vv.1-2. "Idols"—teraphim or household gods. v.1 follows on from 9.17 for corn and wine are associated with the latter rain. See Deut. 11.13-15 for the first mention of the latter rain. Here, it is the last mention in the O.T. Is this the "times of refreshing" of Acts 3.19-21? The promise and the warning of Deut. 11.13-21 was ever before Israel in the 'law' of the phylactery and perhaps even more so at the time of our Lord, when there were those who "made broad their phylacteries." The days of the latter rain were days of fruitfulness. cf Joel 2.21-32 where v.18 speaks of "His Land" and where the latter rain is linked with the restoration of the locust-eaten years, and the pouring out of the Spirit of God as seen by Peter (Acts 2). Note the marginal reading of Joel 2.23 where "former rain moderately" reads, "teacher of righteousness." In the original, Joel 2.23 is marked with a particular emphasis. See Deut. 32.2; Hos. 6.3; 10.12; Ezek. 34.6-8, 23-31. Israel will yet acknowledge that "all we like sheep have gone astray" (Is. 53), and when our Lord came to them He saw them "as sheep not having a shepherd" (Matt. 9.36; Mark 6.34). Will Israel remember the great Messianic prophecy, "He shall feed His flock like

a shepherd" (Is. 40.1-12)? John 10.6 tells us, "they understood not what things they were which He (the Good Shepherd) spake unto them." It is the epistles written for Jewish believers (Heb. 13.20; 1 Pet. 5.4) which speak of the Great and of the Chief Shepherd.

vv.3-4. "Goats"—or 'goat-leaders;' "hath visited"—will visit; "corner"—corner stone; "nail"—tent-peg; "every oppressor"—every ruler. These verses are regarded by the Targums as Messianic. Israel could say, ". . . we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand. Today if ye will hear His voice . . ." (Ps. 95; Heb. 3.7) and the desire of true Israel is that God will visit them (Luke 1.68; 1.78; 7.16), but our Lord could say, "Thou knewest not the day of thy visitation" (Luke 19.44). Cf. Is. 10.3; Jer. 8.12; 10.15, etc., Hos. 9.7; Mic. 7.4; We have already seen in this prophecy the word concerning the corner-stone, and Is. 28. 16-17 reads, "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone. ." See 1 Pet. 2.1-8. Isaiah also speaks of "the nail that is fastened in a sure place" (22.20-25)—not a nail in our meaning of the word, but a tent-peg in firm ground. The 'bow' was seen in 9.10,13. "Every ruler" takes us back to Gen. 49. 8-12, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah . . . until Shiloh come, and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be."

vv.5-7 "Joseph—cf. Gen. 49.22-26 and note v.24. These verses are a repeat of 9.9-17. Israel—as seen in Ephraim, Joseph's son, and Judah are re-united. The curse of the Second Law has passed, and the blessings of that Law take its place (Deut. 28.7). God is on their side "and if God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8.31). "I will hear them" indicates previous heart-felt prayer.

vv. 8-10. See Is. 5.26-30. As a man calls for his bees (Is. 7.18) so God will call His people from afar, and they will by their increase fulfil the ancient promise to Abraham. The Redeemer has come! (Is. 59. 19-20; Rom. 11). As we read this prophecy we may see it as the summing up of all the promises of God for His people Israel. This is a sure word of prophecy. How often has God looked at His people and said, "I have redeemed them?" (And has He not said this also of the Church? "Ye are not your own. Ye are bought with a price." Zechariah is without doubt

the messenger of Hope. Gilead (east of Jordan) and Lebanon take on for us today a new meaning. "Live with their children"—teach their sons. "I will sow"—harvest anticipated. See Hos. 2.23. Israel repopulated—cf. v.10 with Is. 49.20-21—and we have seen this during the past half a century (1930's on).

vv.11-12. The prophet changes from the first person "I" (this is, God) in v.10 to the third person "he" in v.11, but it seems obvious that the prophet is, or at the least appears to be, making a comment here. Will God indeed pass through the sea of affliction (straitness)? See Is. 63.8,9—note marginal reading and context. Haggai and Zechariah were witnesses of, and participants in, a partial restoration—just 42,000 people returned under Zerubbabel, but vv.8-12 speak of an increase being sown and of insufficient room when Gildad and Lebanon—the old territory of the ten tribes on either side of Jordan—are taken back. Just imagine the immigrant flood in accordance with Is. 11! The sovereignty of Egypt (in the shape of the United Arab Republic?) broken; Assyria (where the ten tribes were taken); Syria and Iraq, Israel's enemies, finally subdued. Israel free, and they shall "walk up and down in His Name."

(To be continued)

PHILIP THE EVANGELIST

by J. G. HUTCHINSON

Philip is the only man in the New Testament called an evangelist, we wonder why. Timothy was to do the work of one, but he is not called by that name.

As we consider Philip we will think of his PERSON, what kind of man was he?

He was a man of humble beginning, he "served tables," (Acts 6). One who would be useful in his home assembly, selected from amongst his brethren, no special Bible School or College training. He was a man of sterling character, no duplicity or questionable actions, "of honest report." He was a spiritual man, one in whom the Spirit was not grieved or quenched, at the beginning we read of him being "full of the Holy Ghost," we note how in later life he was guided and controlled by the Spirit. He was one who was "wise," not necessarily clever. Many in Corinth were gifted and knowledgeable, but Paul says, "is there

not a wise man among you?" His homelife was commendable (Acts 21,8-10), his daughters were pure in life, "virgins," and interested in Divine matters, "they prophesied." Apparently his wife was one with him, the home was open for visitors, given to hospitality. He had no spirit of rivalry or envy, other labouring brethren were made welcome in his house.

Let us now see his **PATHWAY**, how did he operate?

It is clear he was God's free man, not "freelance!" but free to serve God as He directed, yet in fellowship with his brethren. He was not a servant of a church, some were that in a good sense (Romans 16,1), he was not serving men or a committee of men! not even a slave to a diary! Circumstances guided him (Acts 8. 4-8). The close knit community was disturbed and scattered to needy parts. From a human viewpoint, what a pity to see some areas with such a concentration of help and large areas with little or none, a little scattering would be a blessing.

Not only did circumstances guide him, but we see how "the angel of the Lord" directed him (Acts 8.26), his ear was attuned to heaven's voice, his must have been a life of close communion with heaven. "The Spirit of the Lord" constrained him (Acts 8.29). This truly was the leading of the Spirit, strictly speaking "the leading of the Spirit" is not whether to take part or to refrain from taking part in meetings, it is the general Control of life (Romans 8.14).

The "Spirit caught away Philip" (Acts 8.39). God removed His servant to another field. Such was the work of God in the heart of the eunuch he didn't require Philip to keep him right!

Let us now think of his **PRACTICES**. Firstly we see he preached (Acts 8, 5,35). Men might have said, look after tables, care for the poor. God would say, "Go preach," "join thyself"—some seek to explore other avenues and adopt other methods, Paul says "it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save," (1 Cor. 1.21). He conversed with individuals (Acts 8, 29-35). Not only preaching to numbers, but willing to sit beside enquiring individuals, not to press for decision, sign a card, or just believe a verse, but to speak of "Jesus." In avoiding the dangers of pressure and after meetings, it is possible to err on the other side

and not be to the troubled the help we should be. He travelled from City to City, not confined to one place or company. The Scripture makes no provision for a man in charge of a Congregation.

It is interesting to notice God's sovereign ways of working, though Philip was at Caesarea, when God would save Cornelius it was Peter He used.

Philip's work was to preach the gospel. It is true that some like Paul would have the gift of both evangelist and teacher, but not many. It is a mistake either for the man concerned, or the saints, to imagine because one is engaged in gospel work, he should occupy the Conference platform and try to teach.

Well it is for the evangelist to keep at his own work and not interfere with other servants or meddle in assembly affairs. God has given "to every man his work."

The words of John Bunyan are worth considering at this point. "The Evangelist."

His eyes were lifted up to heaven, the best of books was in his hand, the law of truth was written upon his lips, the world was behind his back! he pleaded with men, and a crown of gold did hang over his head.

Finally let us think of his **PREACHING** (Acts 8. 5,12,35). It contained no element of politics, amusement, recreation or social matters, it was a message about Christ. If Christ and His work be not preached, the mark is missed, we have failed. The ruin of man and the fearfulness of coming wrath must be made clear, but the gospel is; "How that Christ died for our sins," (1 Cor. 15, 3-4).

When this great message was preached by Philip, the people "gave heed" (Acts 8.6), "There was great joy" (Acts 8.8), "They believed and were baptised" (Acts 8, 12). Such preaching produced lasting results.

The early life of Philip was busy and fruitful, he sowed some of the first fruits of Gentile Christianity, yet it would seem the latter part of life, possibly nearly twenty years, was spent in quietness and large measure of seclusion.

In a world of deepening darkness and increasing despair, may God be pleased to raise up evangelists, men who with clarity and conviction will proclaim the good news of the gospel.

THE HEIGHTS OF THE HILLS ARE HIS

by A. NAISMITH

1. MOUNT MORIAH

(References : Gen. 22, 1-5; Chron. 21, 18-27; 2 Chron. 3, 1-2; 7, 1-3; Mark 12, 41-44)

The summit of the highest mountain in the world—Everest—was reached at the end of May 1953, after a number of previous attempts that had all failed in their objective. It has seen exemplified conspicuous courage and a tremendous expenditure of energy, money and human life, for some of its intrepid climbers lie buried somewhere in its snows. Moriah is a hill of only 2,448 feet. The original hill has been much altered artificially, but its slopes still fall precipitously down into a deep ravine on one of its sides. Though the summit of Mount Moriah is not even a tenth of the height of Mount Everest, yet for centuries it had resting upon it the visible Shechinah glory of Jehovah that linked it with the Heaven of heavens: for there the Temple of God with its Holy of holies stood. Many costly sacrifices in life, time, talent and energy were made to conquer Everest, but these are insignificant in comparison with the immeasurable cost of the sacrifice of Christ to make a way for the sinner to return to God.

The significance of the name Moriah is **Jehovah sees**, or Jehovah provides. It is therefore, in an unparalleled sense, the place of Divine provision as well as the mountain of costly sacrifice, as the incidents associated with it prove. A lecturer of the Palestine Exploration Society who was for twenty-five years its Secretary, said, 'The discoveries in Palestine not only proved that the Bible events might have taken place as described, but in many cases they could not have happened anywhere else.' The three main incidents associated with Moriah in Scripture are Abraham's offering up of Isaac in obedience to the behest of Jehovah (Gen. 22); David's purchase of the place of the threshing-floor of Ornan, and his offering of the sacrifice which enabled Jehovah to stay the raging plague; and Solomon's choice of the mountain as the site for the temple (2 Chron. 3.1). The three characters conspicuous in those happenings were

Abraham, the friend of God and father of the chosen race, David, the 'man after God's own heart' and the founder of the dynasty of Judah, and Solomon, David's son, on whom God bestowed more wisdom and riches than on any other ruler of his time.

Mount Moriah is, in a special sense,

1. The Place of the Altar

the altar of the tested Abraham, the altar of the troubled David, and the altar of the Temple courts. In the case of the first of these three altars, the emphasis is on the **son**: in the second on the **sin**, and in the third on the **sacrifice**.

(i) The first of the three Moriah incidents, the offering of Isaac, teaches us two great lessons, one from the Divine and the other from the human, standpoint. It is essentially a Type of God's love and it was temporarily a Test of Abraham's faith. Here we find the first mention of 'love' in the Bible (Gen. 22.2). 'Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac whom thou lovest'—is an illustration of the truth that 'the Father loveth the Son.' The words—'He that received the promises offered up his only-begotten Son' in Heb. 11.17 obviously refer only to Abraham, but the typical significance of his offering is indisputable in light of John 3.16, 'God gave His only-begotten Son', and Rom. 8.32—'He that spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?' On Moriah Abraham's faith, often sorely tried, was tested to the utmost, for the son of his old age, in whom all his hopes and all the Divine promises to him were centred, was virtually offered to God as a burnt-offering at the command of Jehovah. But the triumphant faith of Abraham, reasoning that Isaac, supernaturally given, would be supernaturally restored, stood the test.

(ii) 'The wages of sin is death.' 70,000 Israelites died when King David yielded to a temptation to number his people and omitted to collect from each the atonement money, the half shekel per head according to the injunction in Ex. 30, 11-16. David purchased from Ornan the ground on which the threshing-floor stood, the threshing-floor itself, the oxen required for sacrifice, the flails for fuel for the fire, and the wheat for the meal-offering. Then he built the altar and offered the holocaust and peace-offerings: the sacrifices were accepted and the acceptance ratified by fire from

heaven. David learnt, to his sorrow, that sin, whether it be that of commission or that of omission, is a costly thing; for he had experience of the fruit of both, of the former on Olivet's slopes and of the latter on Mount Moriah.

(iii) The brazen altar that stood in Solomon's Temple courts must have witnessed the slaughter and sacrifice of innumerable victims, as day after day its fire consumed the offerings. In those sacrifices there was repeated and continual remembrance of sins: for 'it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin.'

Moriah is also, in each of the three events,

2. The Mount of Divine Provision

(i) It was there that God revealed Himself to Abraham as *Jehovah-jireh*,—'the Lord will provide.' On the way to its summit Isaac had asked his father, 'Where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?' and had received the reply, 'My son, God will provide.' At the time of the question and answer neither Abraham nor Isaac had any idea of the provision that God was going to make, but He did provide a substitute, a ram that Providence placed within the reach of Abraham just as his knife was uplifted and about to fall upon his only son. The great doctrine of *Substitution* is clearly stated here: 'Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up or a burnt-offering *in the stead of his son*.' The truth of Propitiation presents the death of Christ on the cross as the act by which Divine justice was completely satisfied and because of which God can be just and yet the Justifier of every one that believes in Jesus. Substitution is that aspect of Christ's sacrifice which makes a personal claim on what the cross of Christ has achieved and acknowledges that He suffered 'in the stead of me, the sinner.' 'Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God' (1 Pet. 3.18).

(ii) The provision of the *Redemptive* price, the 'atonement money,' which David had omitted to collect when he sent Joab to take the census of the people, was also the provision of Jehovah. At the Divine command, through the seer Gad, David was directed to Mount Moriah to build there, in the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite, an altar on which to offer a burnt-offering to the Lord. The whole place, including the threshing floor and the oxen for the sacrifice which he purchased for the insignificant price of

fifty shekels of silver (2 Sam. 24.24), cost six hundred shekels of gold, the equivalent of 9,000 shekels of silver, and that became the site of the magnificent temple built by David's son, Solomon. To this David contributed out of his poverty 100,000 talents of gold and a million talents of silver, besides brass, iron and timber in abundance. Had Israel's population when David took the census been several millions, the ransom for their souls at the prescribed rate of half a shekel *per capita* would have been more than met.

David had written, 'The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof' (Ps. 24.1). Asaph was to record the proclamation of Jehovah in connection with the temple sacrifices, 'Every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills' (Ps. 50-10): and Haggai was later to encourage the remnant in rebuilding the temple with the affirmation, 'The silver is mine, and the gold is mine,' saith the Lord of hosts (Hagg. 2.8). Yet all that David out of his poverty and Solomon out of his wealth gave for the sanctuary on Mount Moriah was insufficient for the redemption of even one soul from the tyranny of sin and Satan. 'Ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world' (1 Pet. 1, 18-20). The most costly provision of God for sinful man was the *Redemption* of his soul. For this His only-begotten Son, man's Redeemer, must suffer and die.

(iii) On Moriah God has revealed Himself to man as Jehovah-jireh, the God Who provides, not only in substitution and redemption, but also in conferring the privilege of *Access*; for, in the temple erected on its summit, the veil that shut out the sinner from the holy presence of God 'was rent in twain from the top to the bottom' at the death of Christ. The efficacy of that one sacrifice for sins for ever, and the entrance of Christ our great High-Priest, into the heavenly Sanctuary in virtue of His blood poured out for sinners on the cross, removes for the believer the defilement that excluded him from God's holy presence. The veil was rent from the top to the bottom, not by the hand of man but by the hand of God.

'Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the

holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God; let us draw near' (Heb. 10, 19-22).

Lamb of God, through Thee we enter inside the veil;
Cleansed by Thee, we boldly venture inside the veil;
Not a stain; a new creation;
Ours is such a full salvation;
Low we bow in adoration inside the veil.

From the human standpoint, as well as the Divine, Moriah is also conspicuously

3. The Hill of Costly Sacrifice

(i) 'Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that received the promises offered up his only-begotten—of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called' (Heb. 11, 17-18). God could not have claimed from Abraham a sacrifice that was more costly, more precious or more difficult to offer than his son, his only begotten, his well-beloved, and the one in whom all the Divine promises of blessing to the world through Abraham were centred. Yet Abraham did not withhold him.

(ii) It is difficult to appraise David's offering, of which he himself declared, 'neither will I offer unto the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing.' His material gifts were exceedingly bountiful but who can estimate the intangible offerings of the king who, while denied the privilege and honour of building the temple, contributed liberally the devotion of a zealous heart, the physical strength of a frame that had endured untold hardships and sufferings, and the planning and motivating energy of a steadfast mind?

(iii) The narratives of Mark and Luke record an outstanding instance of costly giving in the very place where Abraham and David made their offerings (Mark 12, 41-44). The Lord Jesus, seated by the treasury in the temple built on Moriah's summit, observed the manner and measure of each offering: He saw how and what each person cast in. But He took particular notice of a nameless, penniless and helpless woman, a widow, who 'cast in all that she had, even all her living.' No one can give more than this, and no true Christian should give less. On Moriah Abraham gave his son to the Lord, David gave his substance and his service, but the widow gave her *all!*

LOSING THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT BY DEGREES

by **DAVID N. MARTIN**, Weymouth

In our assemblies there is more concern being paid to the academic and professional qualifications of our fellow brethren than we have authority for in the Scriptures. An intelligent reading of 1 Corinthians 2 deals comprehensively to refute any ideas of human understanding, in fact we learn from chapter one of this first epistle verses 19-20 that God had utterly rejected it, this was initially revealed to Isaiah (29. v. 14).

If this was true where intellectualism reigned and where a skilled and learned apostle was present how dare we revert to such thinking today? It is still true that the world by its wisdom knows neither God nor the things of God. How then you may ask are the things of God to be made known to us. Paul tells us in verse 7, they are hidden from human intellect, but the communication is made known by the Spirit of God and only by Him is the divine revelation all embracing vv 10b and 11. This all knowing Spirit is God's gift to them that love Him. In Luke's gospel we read of eight people who were filled with the Holy Spirit, but what does this mean? Are believers today spirit filled or is it the experience of a select few? Eph. 1 tells us that at conversion we were sealed by the Holy Spirit Whose power we are utterly dependent upon for any service for the Lord. If we are encouraged to see any results from our service, it will be by none of our efforts, not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says God. This should be a suitable rebuff to any thought of pride. To be indwelt, means to be in union with, consecration to the same end—one in mind, purpose and life, not bodily entrance into.

Let us consider the examples of Zecharias and Elizabeth, the account we have of their lives. Both were well stricken in years, (verse 18), he was of exemplary character he was righteous before God, (verse 6). This does not mean he was sinless or possessed a righteousness of his own entitling him to a place in heaven, for this would contradict the truth of Roman's 3, v. 10. It just means that the whole tenor of his life was the love and practice of

right, so that God could look upon him and saw the fruit of His grace in Zacharias' life walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless, v. 6. It is possible for an unsaved person to do this (Phil. 3.6). It is not a question of the soul's relationship with God, but of outward conformity with stated commandments. But Zacharias was not like Saul, the persecutor of the saints. He was born of God, He was a man of prayer. We can assume that even to old age, he had not ceased praying for a son, verse 13. His faith like ours was not of a very robust nature, slow to believe even though Gabriel was sent to tell him his prayer was heard, v20. Still in spite of his limitations he served the Lord all through the days of his ministrations, v 23. This was no listless or superficial service, it was performed in "The fear of God." v. 8.

Elizabeth his wife shared the blameless life of Zacharias, but the longing of her heart as with every Jewish woman was as yet still unfulfilled, every Jewish woman desired a son. Without one, life was reckoned more or less to be a failure. Similarly in our Christian lives we pass into the valley of imagined failure. When we were first saved we anticipated what happy times we would have in our Saviour's service. We made up our minds then and there to be earnest and fervent, warmhearted, constant in prayer, diligent in searching the scriptures, victorious over sin, Satan and self, zealous in the Lord's service, but in reality it has all been so different. Often we have to reprimand ourselves for coldness of heart, lack of fervency in prayer, loss of appetite for studying the scriptures, failure to resist yielding to temptation and weakness in carrying out our service to Christ. Truly a life marred by failure and disappointment, yet outwardly your life may have been free from blame and conformed to all the reckoned standards of right, as the lives of Zacharias and Elizabeth. This however gives you no satisfaction. You are conscious that something is missing though perhaps difficult to say what it is. You meet other believers who seem to possess something outside your experience, they have a joy which seems to be beyond that of which you have had an occasional taste. What does it mean? Observe carefully what is brought to our notice in Luke 1, v. 67, Zacharias and Elizabeth were both filled with the Holy Spirit and this made all the difference. Elizabeth

was filled first and the result was an outpouring of testimony, praise and faith, she bore witness to the yet unborn Saviour, calling Him "My Lord" and affirmed her confidence in the fulfilment of all things promised in connection with Him vv. 41-45. Zacharias was later filled (v. 67), his unbelief vanished and dumbness ceased as he opened his lips in glorious and triumphant song, this great and amazing experience came to this aged couple nigh the end of their lives, it altered their outlook and lifted them to a higher level of spiritual life.

To be filled with the Spirit does not mean we need pursue a specific experience, we are nowhere bidden in scripture to be born of the Holy Spirit, nor to be sealed, anointed, indwelt or baptised of Him, because they are **already true of everyone of us as believers**, We have been born of God, by His Spirit, these therefore are not things for which we have to pray, but things for which we should give thanks. They are already ours, not so with the filling of the Spirit, we are definitely bidden to be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5.18). What exactly does this mean? What will be the result? How will it manifest itself? Again and again we find chosen men of God, of whom His Spirit took control, even as early as the days of Moses. Bezaleel was one such, he was filled with the Spirit of God (Ex. 31.3) Othniel (Judges 3.10), Gideon (Judges 6.34) and Amasai (1 Chron. 12.18). These instances clearly indicate that the Spirit of God took complete control of these men and women as chosen vessels for a certain purpose.

We are to be 'filled with the Spirit' not that we may be wonderful people, or do wonderful things and having wonderful experiences, but that **Christ may be exalted in us**, We learn this if we consider those people who were filled in the Acts of the Apostles, Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit (Ch. 4.8) **and immediately** bore witness to Christ, His resurrection, and glory, and to the fact that salvation is through His Name alone. Not one word about the speaker's own blessing, joy or spiritual experience. Stephen was 'full of the Holy Spirit (Ch. 7.55) **and as a result** his vision was filled with Christ, and the one sight he saw banished all others taking place around him as he stedfastly looked he received great peace, as he bore testimony to the Lord's glory. Barnabas was full of the Holy Spirit, this led him not

to secure disciples for himself, or adherents to his ministry, but to exhort those who had recently received the gospel to cleave to the Lord, to have Christ as the object of their souls devotion. It is interesting how the Holy Spirit records in just 23 words in verse 24 Barnabas' character. Saul, the persecutor, was converted that he might be 'filled with the Holy Spirit (Ch. 9.17) and thus filled he confronted the sorcerer Elymas and called him a child of the devil. A man who is filled with the Holy Spirit does not give credence to the lie that all men are children of God. He knows nothing of false charity that refuses to call wickedness by its true name. He takes up the attitude of uncompromising hostility to evil in every form.

It is not only eminent servants of the Lord, we have just considered that were filled. The nameless disciples at Antioch in Pisidia were 'filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit (Ch. 13.52). They were taken possession of by the Spirit of God, that their hearts might be filled with **Christ's Love**, and that their lives might reflect His praise as they walked in His ways and suffered in His Name. It is something we believers should seek, for to be "filled with His Spirit" simply means He controls us on behalf of Christ. It is not that He fills us from the outside, but that already abiding within us He takes complete possession of our souls and of our lives, in order that Christ may be glorified therein.

A guest in a house does not fill it; he confines himself to certain parts and exercises no authority, but, if for any reason, the house is put entirely into his charge, he then fills it and exercises control in every part. It is the same with the Holy Spirit, he wants to dwell in us, not as a guest, but as The One who is in complete control.

We often sing:—

I am not skilled to understand,

What God hath willed what God hath planned.

But since it is neither a question of skill nor scholarship, but of heart, too often people do not care to understand, and are content with knowing they are safe forever. May we all, writer and reader alike, have a truer insight of what real Christianity is! That we may be numbered among those that live godly but distinctively in Christ Jesus (2 Tim. 3.12). Amen.

"PRAISE GOD FROM WHOM ALL BLESSINGS FLOW"

THOMAS KEN (1637—1711)

"Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host,
Praise, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."

This immortal doxology was penned by Thomas Ken, and has probably been sung more frequently than any other stanza in hymnology over the past 300 years. However, these words were not originally written as a separate doxology but at the first appeared as the concluding verse of three of Thomas Ken's hymns—his morning hymn, "Awake my soul, and with the sun," his evening hymn, "All praise to Thee, my God, this night" and his midnight hymn, "Lord, now my sleep does me forsake."

Thomas Ken was born at Berkhamstead, Herts., England in July, 1637. His mother was the daughter of a poet and died when Thomas was only five. His father died when he was fourteen and young Thomas then came under the care of an older married sister Ann and her devout and gentle husband, Isaac Walton. Walton, a very distinguished angler, had a refining influence on young Thomas and many hours they spent together by the river bank. Thomas was educated at Winchester School and later at Oxford where he graduated B.A. in 1661 and M.A. in 1664. He was ordained in 1662 and following ordination served as chaplain to the Bishop of Winchester. The years that followed were some of the most momentous in English history and Ken's ecclesiastical career was deeply affected by the rapidly changing events. In 1679, he was appointed as chaplain to Princess Mary and this took him to the Royal Court at the Hague in Holland. There, in that court, he witnessed immorality; he openly denounced it and this led to his dismissal. He returned to Winchester and in 1684 was appointed chaplain to King Charles II. When, at Winchester, the king sought the use of Ken's residence as quarters for his mistress, Ken bluntly and resolutely refused. He would not consent to the King's request. "No, not for the king's kingdom." The king in return esteemed Ken highly for his manliness and integrity and advanced him to the bishopric of Bath and Wells. A few days afterwards Ken was summoned to minister at the king's death-bed and this he did solemnly and faithfully. He swore allegiance to the new monarch, King James II, but three years later incurred the king's

wrath by refusing to comply with the reading of the Royal Declaration of Indulgence. He was not "afraid of the king's commandment." However, for this misdemeanour, he was committed to prison in the Tower of London, there to await trial, but in the end he was triumphantly acquitted. Three years later when William III came to the throne, Ken, strong Protestant though he was, felt that he could not in all good conscience take the oath of allegiance to the new king while King James II was still alive, though in exile. Ken, therefore, was deprived of his see. "With his lame horse, his famous flute, his little Greek testament and his shroud," he took leave of his friends and the palace and went to live at Longleat, the home of an old college friend, Viscount Weymouth, and there he spent the last twenty years of his life.

"Dead to all else, alive to God alone,
Ken, the confessor meek, abandons power,
Palace and mitre, and cathedral throne,
(A shroud alone reserved), and in the bower
Of meditation hallows every hour."

Increasing communion with God marked those closing years of Ken's earthly pilgrimage and the shaded groves around that princely retreat at Longleat on the Somerset/Wiltshire border were often made vocal with his Morning and Evening hymns.

"I the small dolorous remnant of my days,
Devote to hymn my great Redeemer's praise;
Aye, nearer as I draw towards the heavenly rest,
The more I love the employment of the blest."

Ken died at Longleat on March 19th, 1711, at the age of 74, and was laid to rest 'at the rising of the sun' aside the eastern window in the parish church of Frome. The company gathered for his simple funeral service united together in singing the words of his lovely Morning hymn,

"Awake my soul, and with the sun,
Thy daily course of duty run;
Shake off dull sloth, and early rise,
To pay thy morning sacrifice.

Redeem thy mis-spent time that's past
And live this day, as if thy last;
Improve thy talent with due care,
For the great Day thyself prepare.

Let all thy converse be sincere,
Thy conscience as the noon-day clear;
Think how all-seeing God thy ways
And all thy secret thoughts surveys.

Awake, lift up thyself, my heart,
And with the angels bear Thy part,
Who all night long unwearied sing,
Glory to the eternal King.

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,
Praise Him all creatures here below,
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."

Ken was a man of exceptional character. His whole life was one paen of praise to God. The letters he wrote were usually headed, "All glory be to God." His last recorded words were the same. H. L. Bennett in his tribute says that, "The saintliness of Ken's character, his combination of boldness, gentleness, modesty and love, have been universally recognised." He was filled with the love of Christ and constantly left behind him a fragrance wherever he went. Though Ken never married, he was very fond of children and it was to the boys of Winchester School that he gave his three great hymns. "A Manual of praise for the use of the scholars of Winchester College" was published in 1674 and in this Ken enjoined the boys of the college, "Be sure to sing the Morning and Evening hymn in your chamber devoutly, remembering that the Psalmist, upon happy experience, assures you that it is a good thing to tell of the loving-kindness of the Lord early in the morning and of His truth in the night season." Ken used these hymns regularly in his own personal devotions, morning and evening, right to the close of life. He had a beautiful voice and sang them to the accompaniment of the viol or spinet, and was accustomed to remark that it would enhance his joy in heaven to listen to the Morning and Evening hymns as sung by the faithful on earth.

"And should the well-meant song I leave behind,
With Jesus' lovers some acceptance find,
'Twill heighten even the joys of heaven to know
That, in my verse, saints sing God's praise below."

The familiar lines completing each of Ken's three great hymns is truly a wonderful doxology. No hymnbook is complete without it. It has been the death song of martyrs and the paen of victorious armies. It was sung with great effect at Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee service by 10,000 people in front of St. Paul's Cathedral, and no matter where the people of God are assembled and a spirit of gratitude fills their hearts, it is wont to find expression in the words of Ken's doxology. Indeed, in the experience of the child of God, the lines of Ken's doxology seem to become increasingly meaningful with the passing of the years of life. James Montgomery says of it, "It is a masterpiece at once of amplification and compression, amplification on the burden "Praise

God," repeated in each line; compression by exhibiting God as the object of praise in every view in which we can imagine praise due to Him; praise for all His blessings, yea, for all blessings, none coming from any other source—praise, by every creature, specifically invoked, "here below" and in heaven "above;" praise to Him in each of the characters wherein He has revealed Himself in His word, "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."

Ken's doxology is a call to every living creature to praise God, the great Benefactor of all. In its original, it formed the great climax and conclusion of his Morning, Evening and Mid-night hymns; verses which were at once an exhortation and a prayer culminated in a final call to the exercise of praise. The great Psalter in our bible culminates and concludes in a similar theme, "Let everything that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD" (Psalm 150 v. 6).

"Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."

ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY

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ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY

Contents

THE HEIGHTS OF THE HILLS ARE HIS

by A. Naismith

CHRIST IN THE APOCALYPSE

by J. B. D. Page

ZECHARIAH

by E. R. Bower

FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTALS

by J. B. Hewitt

A TRIAD OF TRUTH

by J. G. Good

WHITHER ARE WE DRIFTING?

by R. Webb

IN IMMANUEL'S LAND

by J. Jardine

A FORM OF GODLINESS

by D. N. Martin

HYMNS AND THEIR WRITERS

by J. Strahan

PRAISE YE THE LORD

Praise ye the Lord, with heart and soul and voice,
Praise ye the Lord, again I say rejoice ;
Praise ye the Lord, to Him your anthems raise
He, He alone is worthy of your praise.

Seek ye the Lord, today He may be found,
Seek ye the Lord, He'll make your life abound,
Seek ye the Lord, your sins He will forgive,
Trust Him with all your heart and for Him live.

Pray ye the Lord, He loves to answer prayer,
Pray ye the Lord, He'll keep you in His care;
Pray ye the Lord, your needs He will supply
For He is true, on Him you can rely.

Serve ye the Lord, your Master and your Friend,
Serve ye the Lord, be faithful to the end;
Serve ye the Lord, and when the battle's won
His great reward for you will be 'Well done.'

Praise ye the Lord, with heart and soul and voice,
Praise ye the Lord, again I say rejoice;
Praise ye the Lord, He's faithful to His Word,
So let us praise His Name with one accord.

—*T. Cornforth Taws*
Leicester.

THE HEIGHTS OF THE HILLS ARE HIS

by A. NAISMITH

II. THE MOUNT OF OLIVES

East of the city of Jerusalem there rises a bare, rocky ridge sloping up from an unprepossessing valley and towering somewhat higher than the capital of Israeli, which stands some 2,500 feet above sea level. It is separated from Jerusalem by the Brook Kedron and the Valley of Jeosaphat, and stretches from North to South commanding a noble view of the city. That eminence is the Mount of Olives. At sunrise the light breaks over the ancient city from above the crest of Olivet, flooding the highest buildings with crimson glory. This elevation has sometimes been designated 'The Hill of the Prophets,' but, from its associations with the Davidic dynasty, we might justly call it 'The Mountain of the great King.' From this vantage point our Lord looked toward Jerusalem and wept over it; and from it He also predicted its destruction in that wonderful eschatological utterance familiarly known as 'the Olivet discourse.' On that occasion He had come from one great mountain within the city's precincts—Moriah, the place of sacrificial giving—to another outside the city—Olivet, the place of the departing glory. How eloquently significant were His movements on that occasion of all that His first advent was to mean to Him and to His earthly people Israel! The Shechinah glory—in Ezekiel's prophecy—had halted there: our Lord Himself stood on its summit on His way from the cross to the glory, as He had during His sojourn in this world graced its slopes on His way from the glory to the cross. Finally it was desecrated and robbed of its beauty by Titus, the Roman Emperor, who hewed down its trees for the construction of assault-ladders and for crosses on which to hang his victims until crucifixions had to cease for lack of wood.

In this study of the Mount of Olives it will be taken as

The Mountain of Kings

1. In 2 Sam. 15.30 the mount is seen **under a cloud**, the scene of a **king's abjection**. 'David went up by the

ascent of Mount Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and he went barefoot; and all the people that were with him covered every man his head, and they went up, weeping as they went.' What a scent of sorrow, mourning and abjection, an exiled king fleeing before his own son! David's association with the Mount of Olives was indeed a sorrowful one and the climax of a very sad story. Within a very short space of time 'the man after God's own heart' had broken four of God's commandments in the law, becoming a covetous man, a thief, an adulterer and a murderer. Nathan's parable, concluding with the words 'Thou art the man' had convicted the erring king and produced that genuine repentance that expressed itself in the language of Psalms 51 and 32; but he had broken four of God's laws and restitution must be made in restoration according to the law of God, Who claimed the child of adultery born to Bath-sheba, and David's three sons, Amnon, Absalom and Adonijah. The wandering eye that too soon became the wanton eye (2 Sam. 12.2) gave place to the weeping eye (2 Sam. 15.30) and later to the anxious, watchful eye (2 Sam. 18.24). David's sin was covered through Divine forbearance, expiated by great David's greater Son 'Whom God set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past'; but its consequences brought David under a cloud of sorrow and shame.

2. What a different picture is depicted by Luke in his Gospel narrative (19.37)! 'When he was come nigh, even to the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen.' It was the occasion of the partial fulfilment of Zech. 9.9,— **the King's acclamation**, and the mountain is seen resplendent **in the sunlight**. This scene stands in striking contrast to the one already considered.

There the central figure was David, the first of the dynasty: here the central figure is Jesus the Messiah, the last of the dynasty.

There it was the ascent of Olivet by a king leaving his capital: here it is the descent of Olivet by the King entering His capital.

There a sinful man was dishonoured: here the sinless Christ is temporarily honoured. There weeping prevailed

in the royal retinue : here rejoicing prevails among the people of the great King.

Curses then were heaped upon the head of David : blessings are here showered upon Him Who is both David's root and David's branch.

For the moment the rightful king was acknowledged, yet how soon the fickle crowd changed their acclamations of praise to vociferations of hatred and cried, 'Away with Him! crucify Him!'

3. The next royal visit to Olivet's slopes was in the night time under the Paschal moon, and is recorded in Luke 22.39-44. It was the night of the betrayal of Jesus by His professed friend and follower, but antecedent to that act of treachery the Lord Jesus had sought the solitude of a garden on Olivet's slopes to commune with His Father. 'He came out, and went, as He was wont, to the mount of Olives; and His disciples also followed Him.' The Mount of Olives **in the moonlight** tells the story of **the King's anguish**. The clamorous crowd raising their loud 'Hosannas' are now silent, the hush and stillness of night has fallen on the mountain side, and the King has entered the Garden of Gethsemane which signifies 'the olive press,' and, prostrating Himself in the shade of the venerable olive trees that typified Jehovah's privileged ancient people soon to be stripped of their branches (Rom. 11.22), He sweats, as it were, 'great drops of blood falling to the ground.' The burden of a world's sin is about to fall on the sinless King of the Universe.

'He is speaking to His Father,
Tasting deep that bitter cup :
Yet He takes it, willing rather
For our sakes to drink it up.'

There 'He offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared.'

4. Once more, after death and resurrection, the King's journey is from Moriah to Olivet, from the cross to the crown, from the sufferings of Ps. 22 to the sovereignty of Ps. 24. 'Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this king of glory? — The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.'

The next time the feet of the King touch Olivet's mountain is the last time for centuries (Acts 1.9-12). Its slopes are again bright with glory. It becomes the Mount of Olives **in the spotlight**, as the apostles of the Lamb witness in **the King's ascension** the climax of a finished work, a defeated foe and a glorious resurrection: for 'while they beheld, He was taken up and a cloud received him out of their sight.' A spotlight is defined as 'a circle or patch of intense light projected to throw a person or object into relief.' The light was focussed on the ascending Lord Whose hands were uplifted in blessing. The Greek word—'atenizo'—used in Acts 1.10 and translated 'they looked steadfastly,' aptly expresses the rapt attention that the Lord Jesus commands as the central object of His people's gaze. It occurs in Luke 4.20 when 'the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him' as He read from the prophecy of Isaiah and applied the Scripture He read to His mission to this earth. It is found again in Acts 7.55, where it is recorded that Stephen, 'being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing on the right hand of God.' The vision of the great sheet, bringing to Peter the revelation of the universality of the Gospel of salvation and the impartiality of the Author of eternal salvation, commanded like attention, for Peter says of it, using the same Greek word, 'upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes.'

5. The future holds for Olivet a still more wonderful event,— **the King's appearing**, His second advent when the Mount of Olives will be seen **in the floodlight** of glory. (Zech. 14.3-4). That is one aspect of the Christian's 'blessed hope,' even 'the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ;' and it is also the hope of Israel. 'Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against the nations, as when He fought in the day of battle: and His feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem in the east, and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof.' Jerusalem and Israel's land will be floodlit by His advent, and the whole earth will be miraculously illuminated. Three distinctive phenomena are outlined in Zech. 14.1-15.

- (i) vs. 1-5. **The return of the Lord**, resulting in the scattering of His enemies, the escape of the besieged

Israelites, the liberation of the captives and the dawn of a new era.

(ii) v. 6-7. **The resplendence of the Light**, in one unbroken day, never too brilliant and never dim, not like the natural light of the sun nor like the artificial light men use at night, for the Sun of Righteousness has arisen with healing on His wings.

(iii) vs. 8-15. **The restoration of the Land**, its people, prosperity and preeminence.

The most fitting quotation with which to conclude the contemplation of this wonderful mountain in Scripture is part of Moule's beautiful poem on **The Mount of Olives** :

Rocky grey and flowery-bordered	Jesus rested, teaching, blessing,
Rise the cliffs of Olivet;	Tarried oft in Martha's home;
Bethany beneath them clusters,	Jesus from the Olive Mountain
In its grassy hollow set.	Passed beyond the starry dome.

Saviour, Lord, uplift our longing
E'en when peace about us lies,
To the hope of Thy returning,
To our Home beyond the skies.

CHRIST IN THE APOCALYPSE (6)

by JOHN B. D. PAGE

SEVEN AUTOGRAPHS (ii)

Reading : Revelation 3.1-22.

Sardis :

In His autograph of the letter addressed to this church, the Lord Jesus styles Himself as

"He that hath the seven Spirits of God,"

which is the first part of a compound title (3.1). It takes us back to the designation used of the third Person of the Trinity in the opening salutation of the book, "from the seven Spirits which are before the throne" (1.4). "Seven Spirits," a phrase found in both references, is suggestive of the plenitude of the Holy Spirit. In chapter 1, the location of the Holy Spirit is said to be "before the throne," but in chapter 3 Christ is in the possession of the Holy Spirit in His fulness, symbolized by the "seven Spirits."

Without a word of commendation, the Lord censures this church immediately by saying, "I know . . . that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead," which means that this church had a reputation for correct theology and conduct but it was dead spiritually. Therefore, a church, whose creeds were correct and from whom spiritual life had departed, was in need of a fresh infilling of the Holy Spirit, and so the autograph was appropriate for the occasion.

The remainder of the autograph reads

"and (He that hath) the seven stars."

In a church, which is dead spiritually, man has probably usurped authority, and so this part of the title, which is similar to that for the church at Ephesus, was a reminder of the Lord's authority over this church. Here, there may be a warning to us. If we become dead spiritually, like the church at Sardis, then Christ is displaced as Lord in our lives and some thing or some activity is substituted in His rightful place.

Philadelphia :

This autograph, which is the longest, consists of three titles, the last of which is a quotation from Isaiah.

The Lord introduces Himself (3.7) as

"He that is holy"

which is not a quotation of, but an oblique reference to, Leviticus 11.44, where Jehovah says "I am holy." In keeping with the other autographs, the personal pronoun is in the *third* person singular in this title, whilst the personal pronoun is in the *first* person singular in Jehovah's statement of His personal holiness. In the 11th chapter of Leviticus, the context consists of a list of "clean" meats fit for human consumption followed by those classified as "unclean," which were forbidden for food. The reason for these dietary laws is then given: ". . . ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy, for I am holy," so the Lord told the Israelites. The Divine requirement of Israel was holiness as it is of believers today. Under the law, it was outward holiness by keeping certain dietary laws but, under grace, it is inward holiness. Not a symbolical holiness, as demanded of Israel, but a spiritual holiness is required of believers. Whether under the law or under grace, the Divine

standard is the same, as expressed in the words, "I am holy" (Lev. 11.44, cp. 1 Pet. 1.15f).

The Apocalyptic autograph "He that is holy" is not only a tacit claim to identify with Jehovah, "the Holy One of Israel," an oft repeated title in Isaiah, but it is a declaration of the absolute holiness of the glorified Christ.

The holiness of the Lord Jesus, which is an equally important attribute as His Deity, was not attained by Him, for at no given point in either eternity or time was He not holy. He is eternally and intrinsically holy. In becoming flesh, He was not deprived of His holiness. Unlike all other humans, He was the Seed of the woman which was conceived of the Holy Spirit, and so the Divine Embryo was said to be "that holy thing" (Luke 1.35), which remains an unprecedented statement in medical history. In the days of His flesh, His absolute holiness distinguished Him from all other human beings (Acts 3.14). In the hour of death, being inherently holy, death had no claim upon His body and so His corpse did not experience corruption (Acts 2.27). In His present sphere of glory and exaltation, He is still holy, as He made it known by His title to the Philadelphian assembly.

The next designation in this composite autograph is

"He that is true"

which signifies One Who is not insincere but sincere, not unreal but real, not spurious but genuine. Here is a Man, in Whom there is sincerity, reality and genuineness, and such virtues are found only in One Who is holy and untainted by sin. Also, He alone is the One in Whom the truth resides inherently, for He said, "I am . . . the truth" (John 14.6), and so it is impossible for Him to tell a lie.

For the remainder of the title in the autograph, Christ applied to Himself a quotation from Isaiah 22.22,

"He that hath the key of David, He that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth and no man openeth."

Initially, these words concerned Eliakim who superseded Shebna, David's treasurer, and Christ used them as an appellation of Himself. By implication, He may be contrasting the faithfulness of Himself to the unfaithfulness of Shebna. Also, by depicting Himself as the Key-holder of a local assembly, Christ indicated His sovereign right to open and shut as He pleased.

Laodicea :

This church was free from spiritual corruption like that at Thyatira but it was "lukewarm" and self-complacent spiritually, having yielded itself to the materialism of this world, and so a heartless indifference was displayed towards Christ. In His autograph, which is a three-fold title, Christ revealed Himself in moral, and surprisingly not judicial, attributes to the church at Laodicea.

In describing Himself as

"The Amen"

(3.14), the Lord Jesus includes the definite article, differentiating the word from its normal use as an adverb and making it another descriptive title of Himself. There may be an allusion to "the God of the Amen" in the Old Testament (Isa. 65.16, RV, mgn.).

The word implies divine certainty. "All the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, . . ." (II Cor. 1.20), and so every promise is guaranteed in Christ.

By this Self-description, Christ claims not merely identification with, but personification of, "The Amen." Strikingly, this title appears in the last of the seven letters, and so Christ says, in effect, "Amen" to every word uttered, and He is the Personal Guarantor of these letters. When other people are unstable and changeable, then certainty and immutability are found in Christ, "The Amen."

Next, Christ presents Himself as

"the Faithful and True Witness,"

and this title is apparently taken from what Johanan, Jezaniah and other delegates said to Jeremiah, "The Lord be a True and Faithful Witness between us . . ." (Jer. 42.5). There was apostasy in Judah when these men, who were representative of a remnant, said to Jeremiah that they desired to know "the way wherein we may walk and the thing that we may do," adding that the Lord may be a Witness between them. With a similar spiritual state in the apathetic assembly of the Laodiceans, Christ appropriately applied to Himself this title "the Faithful and True Witness," for He was an invisible Witness of their insensibility and indifference to spiritual things. In Christendom today, as it was in the Laodicean church, there is an attitude

abroad to accommodate any view presented, irrespective of whether it is scriptural, and to compromise on fundamental doctrines. We need to remember that Christ, although unseen, is still that "Faithful and True Witness" of our belief and conduct.

In approaching the last part of the Lord's designation,

"The Beginning of creation,"

it will have been noticed that, for His autographs in the last two letters, the Lord Jesus has not adopted any phrases from the earlier vision of Himself (ch. 1) as He did in the first five letters.

A Pauline title of Christ is "the Beginning" (Col. 1.18), which is the same word used here by John, and in both cases it conveys the thought that Christ Himself is the Beginning, that is to say, He is the Origin of, or the Active Cause for, the existence of a being and thing .

This Apocalyptic title may have a two-fold significance. If the material creation was in the Divine Speaker's mind, then all beings in the heavens and on the earth, both invisible and visible, owe their existence to Christ (Col. 1.16), for "all things were made by Him" (John 1.3).

If the new creation of this age of grace is in view, which is more likely, then Christ is the Originator of it too. In consequence of the death and resurrection of Christ, a man, who is in Christ, is a new creature, and his whole being is vitalized by Christ (II Cor. 5.15,17).

The work of the new creation is not restricted to believers individually, but it extends to them collectively, for the Church consists of both Jews and Gentiles, who are new creatures in Christ. Initially, there was antagonism between them, due principally to inbred Jewish exclusivism, but Christ died "that He might create in Himself of twain one new man" (Eph. 2.15, RV. cp. 3.6, RV). Such unity between two basically hostile groups, which was a burning issue in the early days of this church age, is not the work of man but the creative act of Christ.

In these last days of the church age there is much talk about church unity between the denominations of Christendom, otherwise known as the Ecumenical Movement, and it is certainly not of God because Biblical principles are often sacrificed upon the altar of convenience to obtain inter-denominational unity. Their objective of a world

church appears to be Satan's counterfeit of the true church, and it is depicted in scripture as a harlot (Rev. 17). Therefore, in these apostate days, we need to "hold fast the form of sound doctrine" and without fear to "preach the word" (II Tim. 1.13, 4.2).

ZECHARIAH

by E. R. BOWER (continued)

Chap 11.1-3. Alfred Edersheim (Sketches of Jewish Social Life) records, "a remarkable passage in the Talmud, which, remembering that the time to which it refers was in all probability the very year in which our Lord died on the Cross, reads like an unwilling confirmation of the Gospel narrative: (i.e. the rending of the vail of the Temple. Matt. 27.50-52; Mark 15.38; Luke 23.45). Forty years before the destruction of the Temple, its doors opened of their own accord. Jochanan, the son of Saccai rebuked them, saying, 'O Temple, why openest thou of thine own accord? Ah! I perceive that the end is at hand: for it is written (Zech. 11.1), 'Open thy doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour thy cedars.' " In passing, another Talmudic passage records that when Jochanan ben Saccai was dying he shed tears because he was "about to be led before the King of kings . . . whose sentence of death killeth or ever . . . there are before me two ways, one to Paradise and the other to Hell, and I know not which of the two ways I shall have to go . . . whether to Paradise or to Hell: how then, shall I not shed tears?" Commentators have difficulty with these verses. Invasion? Natural disaster? Some other visitation? Does the passage from the Talmud throw light upon their meaning? Did Jochanan have 1 Kings 6 in his mind? Cf. Is. 14.8; 37.24; Jer. 25.34-38. Fire would speak of warfare or of judgment. The fall of the cedars occasions the howling of the fir and the oak; of shepherd and young lion. See Amos. 2.9 for a similar metaphor. See also Is. 2; Ezek. 15; 17.22-24; 19; The 'pride of Jordan' is translated as 'swelling of Jordan' in Jer. 12.5; 49.29; 50.44, and it is thought to refer to the thickets upon Jordan's banks which was a

natural cover for lions. Cf. Jer. 12.7-11. One thing is clear. This is the day of visitation. "Their glory is spoiled"—see Hos. 4.1-11; Hag. 2.3-9; Ps. 29.

vv.4-6. Again, the commentators have difficulty with the remainder of this section 10.1—11.17, but it has been suggested that vv. 4-17 has three divisions (1) Israel's last opportunity (4-6); (2) The Good Shepherd rejected (7-14); and (3) the worthless shepherd (15-17). The prophet speaks of what he has been told to do; he acts out a parable. The flock needed a leader, a shepherd to lead and to feed them. Those who, within the nation, were anointed as shepherds were, in fact, leading the nation astray. We see a similar state of affairs in the Gospel narrative, e.g. John 11.47-52; 18-14. The nation would reap that which it had sown, and this time there would be no deliverance. Even a casual reading of Israel's history (during Roman times for instance) will make one aware of the prevalent bribery and corruption. Our Lord's double cleansing of the Temple illustrates these verses.

vv.7-8. "I will feed"—I fed; "poor of the flock"—the traders; "Beauty"—grace or favour; "Bands"—union. Who was it that Zechariah loathed? The sheep? The shepherds? The latter is the more likely because they were 'cut off.' And the 'three'? Authorities, priests, prophets? See Jer. 2.8,26; 18.18; and cf. Hos. 5.7 with context. In chap. 4 we read of the two "anointed ones," and it was noted that there appears to be some correspondence with Rev. 11.4-5. The two witnesses of Rev. 11 prophesied for 1260 days, and v.7 reads, "and when they had completed their testimony . . ." Daniel 12.7 refers to 1260 days or "a time, times, and a half;" three and a half years. However v.11 speaks of 1290 days—a difference of one month. Rev. 13.5 also refers to 42 months as the time given to the beast out of the sea to exercise power over the earth. Cf. Zech. 11.9 with Rev. 13.10. Just one month, and after a further month and a half, "Blessed is he that waiteth . . ." Cf. Rev. 20.6 and Dan. 12 with Rev. 20. See also Ps. 69.4; John 15.25. Some translate 'cut off' as 'destroyed.'

v.9. See Jer. 15.1-2; Is. 9.20. The shepherd rejects those who rejected him.

vv.10-11. Still acting out the parable or allegory, the prophet breaks the staff, symbol of the covenant of grace

and favour. "One thing I have desired of the Lord . . . to behold the beauty of the Lord . . . for . ." (Ps.27.45) "and let the beauty of the Lord be seen in us" (Ps.90.17). See Is.24.5 for the broken covenant as seen by God and Jer. 14.21 and 31.31-34; Heb. 8.1-13; Ref. 2 Sam.23.1-5; Ps.89. 1-4, 27-29; Jud. 2.2.1-15.

vv.12-13. In view of Matt.27.1-10 these verses must refer to the Good Shepherd who gave His life for the sheep (John 10.1-30). Matthew records that which was 'spoken' by Jeremiah—an oral tradition confirmed by Zechariah. Note the irony of, "O, the magnificence of the price" or, 'the lordly price.'

v.14 The staff 'Bands' is broken—as a result of vv.12-13? Note 'them.' Refs: Is.11.10-16; Jer. 3.18; Ezek.37.15-28; Hos.1.11; Note, Ezek.37.24. "In that day"—Is.11.11. The rejection of one Shepherd made void (for the time being) the covenant of union.

vv. 15.17. The prophet now enacts or impersonates the other character in the parable, that of the 'foolish' shepherd; the 'idol' shepherd; the accepted as opposed to the rejected; the bad as against the good. "Cut off"—perishing; "young one"—the straying; "broken"—wounded; "standeth still"—the weak. See Ezek. 34; Jer. 23.1-6. Is this foolish shepherd the antichrist as averred by some? Refs: 2 Thess. 2; Dan. 7; Matt. 24.4,24, etc., John 10.12-13; Rev.13

AN APOLOGY AND AN APPEAL

In the last issue (No. 196) of A.T. we encountered a problem which may have resulted in some of our readers receiving a magazine which had pages out of sequence. This was due to circumstances beyond our control and we trust it will not happen again. Please accept our sincere apology.

Perhaps some of our readers have a lot of back issues of A.T. If you have finished with these we would be grateful to receive them, as many of them are now out of print. Please send them to William Neill at the address on the back cover.

FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTALS

by J. B. HEWITT, Chesterfield

(31) GLIMPSES OF THE SPIRIT IN JOHN

There are over eighteen references in John's gospel to the Holy Spirit. The first is by John the Baptist when he bear witness to Jesus when the people kept asking him questions about himself. He pointed men to the Greater than he, "for He was before me" (1.15). From chapter three we have pictures of the progress of doctrine which ought to find its counterpart in personal experience. Most of the references have to do directly with the approaching departure of Christ. The Lord dispels their fear of a threatening future without Him in their company (ch. 14-16). The dependence of the believer on the Spirit by no means ceases in conversion. The work thus commenced shall be carried forward to a final and glorious completion.

The Anointer. (Ch. 1. 32-34). John saw the Spirit come down from heaven like a dove, and remaining on Him (v. 32) a detail not in the other Gospels. The Spirit a permanent endowment to Christ. The descent of the Spirit brought conviction and John knew that this One was the Messiah. (Psa. 2.2; Isa. 42.1-4). The Spirit bestowed upon Him power for service (Acts 10.38). Everything He did from first to last, He did in the power of the indwelling Spirit (John 3.34). It gave Him power in His personal conflict with Satan. He was "filled by the Spirit," and "led by the Spirit (Luke 4.1-2; 14).

The Spirit gave Him His power in His personal ministry (Luke 4.18). His word was with power (Luke 4.36). It gave Him power for personal sacrifice (Heb. 9.14). The Lord Jesus baptizes with the Holy Spirit (John 1.33). The figure of baptism stresses abundant supply.

The Regenerator. (Ch. 3.5-8). Only the Spirit of God can radically change men. John records this experience as nothing less than a totally new birth. This is the Spirit's first gracious and Divine act—the breathing of spiritual life in the soul. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth" (6.63). The

Spirit's work as a Quickener must ever precede His work as Sanctifier and a Comforter.

Those upon whom the Spirit comes are "born from above" and "anew" (3.3, 5-8). Two levels of living are open to man; the natural level, and that which is above nature, though not alien to it; "flesh" and "spirit." The Lord suggested to the cultured Nicodemus, that which is born of human nature remains by nature human (v.6).

Man born of the Spirit is a new creation. Only that which is born of the Spirit can see or enter the realm that is above nature, and lie by supernatural energies in the kingdom of God.

John has nothing to say about "gifts" and "signs" and "miracles" of the Spirit, except the greatest miracle of all, a man reborn, (2 Cor. 5.17; Gal. 6.15; 1 Pet. 1.23; Titus 3.5).

Regeneration is a work standing alone and distinct from all the other operations of the Spirit. Do not confuse it with conversion, adoption, justification and sanctification. Yet it forms the basis of them all. Only those who are Heaven born, are Heaven bound.

The Indweller. (Ch. 4.14). The Scriptures indicate clearly that the Holy Spirit is given to all believers immediately and unconditionally (Gal. 3.2-3; Gal. 4.6; Eph. 1.13-14; 1 Cor. 3.16). The Lord made contact with this woman to give her living water. What a revelation of God and His grace, and the Holy Spirit the living source of refreshment for the heart. Here is a divine source of joy, a spring, a continual source of supply. The Spirit is the power of eternal life. The personality of the Spirit comes later in ch. 14-16. Along with the gift of eternal life the Holy Spirit Himself is given to us. The heart satisfied with Christ expresses itself in worship which is truly spiritual. The "true worshippers" cannot worship except with the innermost occupation of their heart (Phil. 3.3).

The word used here is *Pneuma*, without the article, it is not the Holy Spirit who is meant. Christian worship is not formal but it is not the less real because it is spiritual. The principles of worship, in spirit and in truth.

The Refresher. (Ch. 7.37). Jesus invited all those whom the formal feast did not satisfy. The thirsty ones are invited to drink. Not until Jesus was glorified historically, was the Spirit given. Jesus was clearly identifying Himself with the

messianic fulfilment of the prophetic ritual (Isa. 44.3; 55.1; Zech. 13.1).

The refreshment and renewal is by the inflowing Spirit. John may have Ezek. 47 in view, a pictorial forecast of the fulness of millennial blessing. We are meant to be a source of renewal and refreshment to others. It was only after Calvary (v.39), that the Spirit could come upon the church and thereafter enter the heart of each believer (Acts 2.38; Rom. 8.16; Eph. 1.13). We are meant to be rivers of blessing, not channels, to saved and unsaved. The Spirit is given, He waits for us to use Him in holy living, in active service, in living worship, and in life-long service. When He is in control blessing will flow through us.

The Counsellor. (Ch. 14.15-18; 25-27). The Lord prophesied the coming of the Holy Spirit. He spoke of Him as the "parakletos," which R.S.V. translates as Counsellor. It has a legal application and points to the Spirit as our Friend, especially our Friend at court. He is a Helper who takes the place of the Lord Jesus; "with them" as their Guide and Comforter, but also "in them" as the Indweller.

In having the Spirit they will continue to have Christ in them. It was natural that Barnabas, being full of the Spirit, should be called by his colleagues "son of paraclesis" (son of encouragement, or son of exhortation). (Acts 4.36).

The three prepositions used in v. 16,17 among, alongside and in you, marks a change of dispensation, pointing to the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

As a Teacher (ch. 14.26). Being the Holy Spirit His work would be in harmony with the holiness of God. Coming in Christ's name, He would be His Representative. As such He would act in harmony with the teaching and purpose of Christ. He would "teach them all things"—the Epistles, "and bring all things to their remembrance" the gospels, "shew you things to come" (16.13)—the Revelation. The Holy Spirit is the Inspirer, and also the Interpreter and Illuminator of the Word. He gave the authenticity of the Gospels and became the sufficiency of the Apostles as Witnesses of all the Lord did and taught.

There are no authoritative writings for the Christian after the New Testament.

The Convicter. (Ch. 16.4-11). This fourth promise elaborates the Spirit's ministry towards the world. An intellectual

ministry of conviction, a reproving, exposing ministry. The world's great sin is unbelief. Sin is lawlessness (1 John 3.4 R.V.). Unbelief is the rejection of the Son of God who came in Grace, who came unto His own (Israel) (John 1.11). They cast Him out of the Vineyard (Matt. 21.33-46).

Of Righteousness, proved by Scripture, "none righteous" (Rom. 3.10). They crucified the Righteous One (Acts 3.14), but God raised Him, and Heaven received Him (3.21). Righteousness the world rejected is now enthroned. Christ is absent, Righteousness is gone. Thus the Spirit vindicates the character, claims and conquest of Christ. He defeated the Prince of this world at Calvary (John 16.11). The Cross judges all sinners because of their association with the world and its prince.

The Glorifier of Christ. (Ch. 16.13-14). As the Spirit of Truth it is clearly stated, He will not speak on His own authority, but what He hears that will He speak. Here is the Spirit's firm relation to Christ. He will not glorify Himself, but exalt Christ, encourage saints and explain the Scriptures to us.

He is an Ambassador to represent (v.7); a Reprover to convict (v.8); a Guide to direct (v.13); a Servant to help (v.13); a Teacher to instruct (v.14), and a Friend to reveal Christ to us (v.15).

The Spirit continually unfolds the meaning of what Christ has said and done.

The Equipper for Service (Ch. 20.21-23). The gift of the Spirit here is in the context of the departure of Christ. This time the disciples are to share His own commission, received from the Father.

Peace for their personal enjoyment (v.19), now peace as the introduction to their mission (v.21). Verses 22 and 23 are difficult. First the commission then the power to carry it out, "receive ye the Holy Ghost." This gift is the power of the new life proceeding from the Person of the Risen Christ. In creation man and man alone enjoyed the breath of the Lord God. Only in this Gospel does the Lord Jesus stand before us as the Risen Man and Lord God (v.28).

He is the life-giving spirit, He breathes on the disciples. Now they have life more abundantly. The Lord as Head of a new family, confers resurrection life upon the members of it. (Gal. 2.20b). The Spirit of God always accompanies the

life that Christ gives. The commission is for the whole Church and not to Apostles only. After Pentecost the remission of sins comes to believing souls through the Gospel (Acts 2.38). What does the ministry of the Spirit of God bring to my heart today? He is the Companion of the lonely; the Guide of the anxious; the Instructor of the learner; the Comforter of the bereaved and the Witness of the commissioned servant. As the SPIRIT—He Searches; Presents Christ; Inspires the Scriptures; Reveals truth; Instructs the mind; Thrills the soul with power and joy.

A TRIAD OF TRUTH

by J. G. GOOD

Forty days elapsed between our Lord Jesus rising from among the dead and ascending back to the right hand of the Father. During this post resurrection period, He only appeared to His own, the last view the world had of the Saviour was on the Cross of Calvary, There are ten appearances of our Lord recorded for us in the New Testament, these are as follows;

1. To Mary Magdalene, (Mark 16.9, John 20.11)
2. To the women returning from the tomb with the message from the angels, (Matt. 23.8)
3. To Peter, (Luke 24.34, 1 Cor. 15.5)
4. To the disciples on the road to Emmaus, (Mark 16.12, Luke 24.13)
5. To the disciples minus Thomas, (Mark 16.14, Luke 24.36, John 20.19)
6. The appearance to the disciples Thomas being present, John 20.26, 1 Cor. 15.5)
7. To the seven disciples by the sea of Galilee, (John 21)
8. To the apostles and above five hundred brethren at once, (Matt. 28.16; Mark 16.15)
9. To James, (1 Cor. 15.7)
10. The Lord's ascension from Olivet, (Mark 16.19; Luke 24.44; Acts 1.3).

The fore-going is by way of an introduction to the portion of Scripture under consideration, namely John's gospel Chs. 20 and 21. Here we have three of the post resurrection appearances mentioned. Firstly in chapter 20.19, where the Church is in view, therefore the associated bless-

ings are Spiritual. Secondly, in chapter 20.26, where the nation of Israel figures, and here it is the Physical that is emphasised. Thirdly in chapter 21.14 where the Millenium is pictured, and we have the Material character of the blessings predicted.

Therefore the scene set for us in chapter 21, is definitely dispensational in character. The location is Galilee not Bethany, it is associated with Israel's earthly blessing during the Millenium period. There is a contrasting passage in Luke 5, one of the points that differ being the 'net brake.' Does not this suggest that no human agency can control the tremendous blessing of the Gospel age? Here in this passage, the opposite is the case, verse 11, Millenial blessing to the world, will be directed through the nation of Israel. The names mentioned among the seven to whom the Lord appeared are indicative of future blessing for Israel, Simon Peter, Thomas, and Nathanael.

There are three key figures in this chapter, the central being, our Lord Jesus; Simon Peter is connected with the nation of Israel in his ministry; and John the representative of the Church, the apostle who carries us on until the coming of the Lord. The chapter before us may be Dispensational and Prophetical in its interpretation, but the lessons to be learned are Devotional and Practical in their application. The threefold division which follows has this aspect of the chapter in view.

The Problem of Leadership—Exposed (verses 1-14).

'I go a fishing.' Without exception leadership in the New Testament is always viewed in the collective aspect, to prevent this very same danger. The difficulty of singular leadership is that of the individual using his own ideas and influencing others to accept his verdict. 'In the multitude of counsellors there is wisdom' (Proverbs 24.6). The Personality Cult presents a grave situation among the assemblies of God's people, let us recognise that this is not in the best interests of His people and definitely not according to God's word.

Experimental Loss Received

'And that night they caught nothing' (verse 3), to move without Divine direction will result in a feeling of loss, poverty of life, and a grieving of the Spirit.

Exacting Lessons Re-iterated

'Cast your net on the right side of the ship' (verse 6), this was a break with tradition, the net apparently was cast on the left side of the ship, but they acted in obedience to the Lord's command. There was a feeling of desperation, having confessed that they had 'No food,' they accepted the offered remedy.

The Primacy of Love—Expressed (verses 15-19)

Love seems to be the pivot upon which the questions of Leadership and Lordship rest. There was no doubt regarding Peter's love for his Lord, he failed to be controlled and regulated by this love. There must be a substitution of 'I' for 'My.'

Energy of Love—Required

Love must be manifested in our lives, as affecting others, Peter's threefold denial, called for a threefold confession, 'Thou Knowest that I love Thee.' This love is selfless, sacrificial, and sincere.

Enigma of Life—Revealed

'When thou shalt be old' (verse 18), He alone can reveal the things hard to accept and understand, here is a comforting thought, that all is in His permissive will and for His glory, (verse 19).

The Principles of Lordship—Expounded (verses 20-25).

All must be subservient to Him, as individuals with freedom and personal liberty this choice must be made.

Exercise of Liberty—Respected

'Lord, what shall this man do,' we cannot determine the role of others, nor can we take from the individual believer his or her right of personal liberty. 'Hast thou faith, have it to yourself before God' (Romans 14.22).

Evidence of Loyalty—Requested

'Follow thou Me,' our Lord Jesus desires the obedience and loyalty of the individual and not the popular mass movement of the fishing adventure. There is a clause in the last verse of this chapter which is very interesting and important, 'many other things which Jesus DID.' Is our love expressed merely in words, or is it manifested in our DOING?

Teach me, Lord, on earth to show,
By my love, how much I owe!

WHITHER ARE WE DRIFTING ?

by REGINALD WEBB, Norwich

There is no doubt that we live in a very changeable world, and over the past few years nothing remains the same for long, but when we come to the word of God, principles laid down therein are the same for all time, and do not change with the whims and fancies of men and women today.

The scripture says "Jesus Christ the same yesterday today and forever," Heb. 13.8, and this surely goes for His word. In Proverbs 22.28, we read "Remove not the ancient landmark which thy fathers have set." That which has been a guide for so long, let's not do away with it. We hear so many people say, we must move with the times, let's alter this, let's do what others are doing, let's do away with this and that, but what is put in its place? You remember the Israelites wanted to be like the other nations when they asked Samuel for a king to judge them, the Lord said to Samuel they have not rejected you they have rejected me. 1 Sam. 8. 6,7. Let us not seek change for change sake but, let us keep to the old paths and the truths laid down in scripture.

There seems a great reluctance these days in some quarters to stand up for what we believe. I was reading "Gems from Tozer" the other day and Dr. Tozer says, "A new Decalogue has been adopted by the neo-Christians of our day, the first word of which reads "Thou shalt not disagree" and a new set of Beatitudes too, which begins "Blessed are they that tolerate everything, for they shall not be made accountable for anything." It's far easier to swim with the tide, it's more difficult to go against it. I am concerned for the young people of our assemblies today as no one seems to tell them what we believe, and why we meet as we do.

It's been a great joy to me over the years in assembly fellowship to spend the first part of the Lord's Day around His table. What a precious time it is when in quietness and reverence we worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness (Psalm 96.9), and to carry out His wish "This do ye in remembrance of Me (Luke 22.19). As we sit and gaze at the spread table what do we see? just bread and wine? or do we see beyond the emblems the Lord Himself suffering upon the cross? I am often reminded of the hymn we love to sing,

If now, with eyes defiled and dim,
We see the signs but see not Him,
Oh, may His love the scales displace,
And bid us see Him face to face.

Some people have said why do we have the breaking of bread every week, surely once a month would be enough, we could then have a family service instead. God forbid that we should give way to such a thing, or even think of cutting down the time. Let us hold fast to this great privilege and give the Lord His rightful place. "That in all things He might have the preeminence (Col. 1.18).

In my younger days we had many great men of God, giants in the faith, who spent much of their time teaching the young, but where are such people today. With all the pressures of the world today and the many false doctrines which lure many from the truth we need to get down to the study of the scriptures and the Holy Spirit has promised to lead us into all truth.

How easy it is to let things creep into the assembly which we know that once would not have been tolerated. It's much harder to remove them once they have established themselves. The Apostle John writing to the church at Sardis in Revelation 3.2, said "Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain that are ready to die" Paul writing to young Timothy could say "Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus (2 Tim. 1.13) and also "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured" (2 Tim. 3.14). We need to be watchful and to hold fast to the truth and to make sure that it is not taken from us. The enemy has always been very busy causing havoc amongst the people of God and seeking to rob God of His portion.

I am reminded of a little incident in the life of Abraham, when in Gen. 15 he had been told to "look toward heaven and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them, and the Lord said so shall thy seed be" and he believed the Lord. He was then told to set up the altar and take a heifer, goat, ram, turtle dove and young pigeon, this he did and in verse 11 we read" and when the fowls came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away. How lovely the thought that Abraham was prepared to stand guard over what was

God's. We need to guard the Lord's things, we need to set our watch and strengthen the things which remain, otherwise the fowls of the air will come and rob the Lord of his portion.

IN IMMANUEL'S LAND

by JIM JARDINE, Brazil

Amongst the strongest and most penetrating of human sentiments is that of a patriot exiled from his native soil. Some of the most beautiful folk music of many countries has been written under the influence of such feeling. It is a mixture of longing and sadness coupled with a desire to be home. This longing is something that every Christian should feel for we are truly 'pilgrims and strangers' in this world. We may have patriotic feelings for our earthly nation but we should never forget that our first loyalty belongs to that other country which we can only now discern spiritually but which one day will become a glorious reality. The Apostle Paul in Philippians 3.20 says "for our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ."

It's interesting to note that the Word of God has relatively little to say about heaven. Indeed it has been suggested rather facetiously that more information can be found in our hymn books than in the Bible! As G. B. Fyfe has pointed out, the reason for this 'is probably because the conditions governing life on the new earth and, even more so, life in heaven itself, will be so different from what is experienced now that our finite minds have not the capacity to comprehend them, nor has human language the power to describe in detail the wondrous things God has in store for His redeemed in the timeless state' ('Treasury of Bible Doctrine' page 434).

The four passages of scripture that deal directly with the eternal state are 2 Peter 3.13, 1 Corinthians 15.28, Revelation 21. 1-4 and Ephesians 3.21. There are other verses in the Word of God that show us something of conditions in eternity although they are primarily about other subjects.

As we think of the heavenly city, the New Jerusalem, we would remember that it will be the eternal habitation of the saved—it is reserved for those who are described as 'His people' (Rev. 21.3). Only those who have accepted

the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord here on this earth and while an opportunity is given will ever enter that city. The "fearful and unbelieving" shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone" (Rev. 21.8). We cannot avoid this solemn reality. 'A heaven to be gained and a hell to be shunned' might seem a rather old fashioned message in a technological age but it must ever form part of our Gospel if we are to remain true to God and to the revelation that He has given to us.

The New Jerusalem will be a place of complete happiness (Rev. 21.4), abundance (Rev. 21.6), justice (2 Peter 3.13), rest (Rev. 14.3), glory (2 Cor. 4.17, Col. 3.4), worship (Rev. 19.1) and service (Rev. 22.3). There we will meet again our loved ones who have gone on before. The separation may be a difficult one now but we do not sorrow as others who have no hope (1 Thess. 4.13) for we have the certainty that they will rise again and will be there with us. This separation has been caused by death but in the New Jerusalem "there shall be no more death" (Rev. 21.4). It's a place where we shall live in our resurrection bodies (1 Cor. 15.44) and never again shall we feel hungry, thirsty, tired and depressed in spirit. It's a place where God will "be all and in all" (1 Cor. 15.28).

Yet as we consider the marvels of the celestial city we thrill at the thought that above all of the wonders that we have mentioned is the fact that we shall see our blessed Saviour. Who can describe the joy of that moment? To look on the blessed head that was crowned with thorns and to contemplate those hands and feet that were pierced with nails and pinned to a cross for my sins will be unspeakable glory.

"The Bride eyes not her garment,
But her dear Bridegroom's face;
I will not gaze at glory,
But on the King of grace.
Not at the crown he giveth,
But on His pierced hand;
The Lamb is all the glory
Of Immanuel's land." (Mrs. A. R. Cousins)

As if that were not enough we read in 1 John 3.2 "it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear, **we shall be like Him**; for we shall see Him as he is." With Christ and like Christ—there can surely be no greater blessing in heaven and earth than those

which await the believer on that glad day!

The English language has provided us with a beautiful word to describe the death of a saint. It is the word 'home-call.' There are two truths embedded in that word. The first is that in this world we do not have a permanent dwelling place. We are here as travellers and so we mustn't become tied down by material cares or worldly interests, but, like Abraham we must await that "city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11.10).

We would recognize too that one day we will receive our call. It may be by 'death's dark vale' or it may be (blessed hope!) by the coming of the Lord Jesus to the air to receive His own. By whatever means it comes it is the gateway to glory and so we do not need to have doubts or fears.

Dear brethren and sisters, what a stupendous future is ours! Let's ever look up and while we wait let's pray and work earnestly that as many as possible may know the joys of eternal glory.

"With Christ in my heart, and His Word in my hand,
I travel in haste through an enemy's land;
The road may be rough, but it cannot be long,
So I journey on singing the conquerer's song."

—(H. F. Lyte)

A FORM OF GODLINESS

by D. N. MARTIN

When the magicians of Pharaoh's court, whom the Holy Spirit reveals to us by the apostle Paul in 2 Timothy 3 as being Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses and Aaron, it was by imitating, as far as they were able, whatever God's servants did. We do not find they attributed God's servant's actions to any false or evil energy, but sought to neutralize their power upon the conscience, by doing exactly the same things. What Moses and Aaron did, they could do, so that, after all there was no great difference. One was as good as the other. A miracle is a miracle. If Moses and Aaron wrought miracles to get the slaves out of Egypt, Jannes and Jambres could do the same to keep them there, so where was the difference?

From all this we learn the most solemn truth that the most Satanic resistance to the testimony of God in the world is offered by those who, though they imitate the

effects of the truth, have but 'A form of godliness' and deny the power thereof. People of this class can do the same things, adopt the same habits and forms, use the same phraseology, profess the same opinions as others. If the true believer, constrained by the love of Christ, feeds the hungry, clothes the naked, visits the sick, distributes the scriptures, distributes tracts, supports the gospel, engages in prayer, sings praises, preaches the gospel, the formalist can do everyone of these things, and this, it must be observed, is the special character of the resistance offered to the truth 'in these last days'—this is the spirit of Jannes and Jambres. How necessary to understand this!

How important to remember that as these magicians withstood Moses and Aaron so do those self-loving, world seeking, pleasure-hunting professors, "resist the truth!" They would not be without 'a form of godliness,' BUT, while adopting "the form" because it is customary, they hate "the power," because it involves self-denial. The power of godliness involves recognition of God's claims, the implanting of His Kingdom in the mind, and the consequent exhibition in the whole life and character; but the formalist knows nothing of this. 'The power' of godliness could never harmonise with any of those hideous features set forth in 2 Timothy 3, 1-5. But 'the form' while it covers them over, leaves them completely unsubdued; and this the formalist likes, he does not want his lusts subdued, or his pleasures interfered with, his passions curbed, his affections governed, his mind purified. He wants just enough 'religion' as will enable him 'to make the best of both worlds.'

In marking the forms of Satan's opposition to the truth of God, we see his method has ever been, first to oppose it by open violence; and then if that fails, to corrupt it by producing a counterfeit, hence he sought first to slay Moses and having failed to accomplish his purpose, he sought to imitate the work of Moses. Thus to has it been in reference to the truth committed to the Church of God. Satan's early efforts showed themselves in the wrath of the chief priests and elders, the judgement hall, the prison, the sword, but in 2 Timothy 3 we find no such agency. Open violence has given way to the far more wily and dangerous instrumentality of a powerless form, an empty profession, a human counterfeit. The enemy instead of appearing with a sword of persecution in his hand,

walks about with the cloak of profession on his shoulders. He professes and imitates that which he once opposed and persecuted; and, by doing so, gains the most appalling advantages, for the time being.

The fearful forms of moral evil which, from age to age, have stained the page of human history, instead of being found only where we might naturally look for them, amid the caves and dens of human darkness, are to be found carefully arranged beneath the drapery of a cold, powerless, uninfluential profession; and this is one of Satan's grand master-pieces. That man should love himself a fallen, corrupt creature, covetous, boastful, proud, arrogant being is natural; but that he should be all these things beneath the fair covering of 'a form of godliness,' marks the energy of Satan in his resistance to the truth in 'the last days.' That man should stand forth in the bold exhibition of those hideous vices, lusts and passions, which are the result of departure from the source of infinite holiness and purity, is only what might be expected. Will anyone say these things have no voice for a day of powerless profession? Most certainly it has! It should speak to each conscience in living power, it should challenge each mind, with impressive solemnity. It should lead each one to enquire seriously whether they are testifying for the truth, by walking in the power of godliness, or hindering it, and neutralising its action, of having only the form. The effect of the power of godliness will be seen by our "continuing in the things which we have learned." None will continue, except those who are taught of God; those who by the Spirit of God have drunk in the divine principle, at the pure fountain of inspiration. Blessed be God, there are many such throughout the various sections of the professing Church. There are many here and there, whose hearts beat fast with genuine attachment to His Person and whose spirits are cheered by 'that blessed hope' of seeing Him as He is, and of being eternally conformed to His image. It is encouraging to think of such things. It is an unspeakable mercy to have fellowship with those who can give a reason of the hope that is in them and of the position they occupy. May the Lord add to that number daily. May the power of godliness spread far and wide in these last days, so that a bright and well sustained testimony may be raised to the Name of Him who alone is worthy. Amen.

“AND IS IT SO, I SHALL BE LIKE THY SON?”

JOHN NELSON DARBY (1800—1882)

Leap Castle lies today in ruins, its burnt-out ivy covered shell now a haven for the wild birds. Nevertheless, its commanding situation together with its impressive keep tower overlooking the valley to the Slieve Bloom mountains tell of a past glory. It was originally built in the 14th century as a fortification to guard the pass into Munster and was at one time the home of the Darby famiy in King's county (Offaly), Ireland. But why did John Nelson Darby, as a young man of no meagre intellect and education turn his back on such splendour and wealth? What was it that induced him to leave it all to become virtually a homeless traveller? The answer to this quest is to be found in some lines written by himself in his middle years of life,

“’Tis the treasure I've found in His love
That has made me a pilgrim below.”

He had weighed things wisely and concluded with Paul that “the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.” (2 Cor. 4.18). He had found other treasure—satisfying treasure, treasure out-wearing the years of time and undiminishing in eternity.

John Nelson Darby, the youngest son of John Darby, a well-to-do land owner and merchant of Markley, Sussex, England and of Leap Castle, Ireland was born at his father's London house in Westminster on November 18th, 1800. His middle name “Nelson” was received from his god-father the great Lord Nelson under whom an uncle Admiral, Sir Henry Darby, K.C.B., had served at the Battle of the Nile. Darby's mother died when he was only a boy. He received his early education at Westminster School and at the age of 15 entered Trinity College, Dublin, where he graduated as Classical Gold Medallist at the age of 19. In due course, he entered the legal profession and was called to the Irish Chancery Bar. A promising professional career stretched out before him and many had high hopes that he would rise to its highest honours. But God was calling him, and so after deep spiritual exercise, he abandoned his legal profession and stepped out on a life of spiritual service. First he entered the established church and was ordained deacon in 1825, serving for a time as curate of the large and stragglng parish of Calary in Co. Wicklow. In this, he gave himself unreservedly to the work, miistering physically and spiritually to the needs of the poor of that desolate bog-land parish.

Darby soon discerned an unparalleled apathy within the estab-

lished church where very few cared for the souls of men. He looked at the dissenting churches around him and detected in them a cold exclusiveness which he felt to be contrary to the spirit of Christ. Thus bewildered, he turned to God and to His word for he felt that there he should find clear guidance as to his path in life. He soon became convinced that his position within the established church was no longer tenable and he resigned from his parochial charge. At that same time others in and around the city of Dublin were likewise searching the scriptures and the Spirit of God opened up to their hearts the great truth, as expressed later by Henry Groves, of, "the oneness of the church of God, involving a fellowship large enough to embrace all saints and narrow enough to exclude the world." Prayerfully, they followed the path that God had revealed through His word and in the latter part of 1829, Darby with three others gathered for the first time to observe the Lord's Supper. A room in Fitzwilliam Square in the city of Dublin was their first place of meeting but the Lord Himself was their gathering centre, the Word of God was their guide, and the Spirit of God presided in their gatherings. Those were precious days.

Darby, though he had resigned the curacy, had not resigned the ministry of God's word. He regarded the whole world as his parish and travelled widely throughout Great Britain, Ireland, France, Germany, Switzerland, Holland, Italy, Canada, America and Australia carrying the gospel and teaching the church of God great New Testament truths. The secret of his ministry was a deep devotion to Christ Jesus his Lord and under his ministry, thousands separated themselves from the established church and gathered simply to the name of the Lord Jesus.

Darby's manner of life was marked by simplicity, sincerity and severity. Recognizing that this world could not be mended, he lived apart from its ways and was known to say, "the world goes its own way and I am not of it." He had not respect of persons and loved all who were spiritually minded and devoted to Christ, irrespective of their rank or name. He was generous to those in need, sympathetic to the afflicted, patient with the ignorant and kind to all. For the cause of Christ, he sacrificed much and in life bore many afflictions and heartbreaks. In these he committed his cause to God and though misunderstood by many on earth, he was happy in knowing that he was understood in heaven.

John Nelson Darby served his Lord throughout life faithfully and devotedly—a powerful personality, a spiritual giant, a mystic engrossed in the heavenlies. On April 29th, 1882, he fell asleep in Christ and was laid to rest in Wimborne Road Cemetery, Bournemouth, where the spot is marked by a simple tombstone bearing his epitaph,

JOHN NELSON DARBY
"AS UNKNOWN AND WELL KNOWN"
DEPARTED TO BE WITH CHRIST,
29th APRIL, 1882.
AGE 81.

II COR. V. 21

LORD LET ME WAIT FOR THEE ALONE,
MY LIFE BE ONLY THIS—

TO SERVE THEE HERE ON EARTH UNKNOWN,
THEN SHARE THY HEAVENLY BLISS. J.N.D.

John Nelson Darby (J.N.D.) is probably best known for his writings, and for his translations of Holy Scripture. His "New Translation" of the Bible from the original languages into English bears the marks of true scholarship and spirituality. He also translated the Bible into French and German. His "Synopsis of the Books of the Bible" is a masterly summary of the teachings of both Old and New Testaments. The varied writings of J.N.D. are gathered together in 34 volumes of "Collected Writings" and several volumes of "Letters" and represent a written ministry during more than fifty years of busy service. His tracts and pamphlets are far-seeing, almost prophetic in character, as, for example, his "Progress of Democratic Power and its effect on the Moral State of England"!

Darby, however, was also a prolific hymn writer and a volume of "Spiritual Songs" has preserved his hymns to us as a rich legacy. J.N.D.'s hymns, like his writings, are scholarly and spiritual, born out of deep devotion to Christ. Beautiful verse gives expression to great spiritual truths. For personal meditation and adoration, or for collective worship, here is a rare treasure indeed. Of his hymns in common usage today, the following are, perhaps, the best known:—

"And is it so, I shall be like Thy Son?"

"Hark, ten thousand voices crying"

"I'm waiting for Thee, Lord"

"Rest of the saints above"

"Rise my soul, thy God directs thee"

"This world is a wilderness wide"

His hymn entitled, "The Hope of Day" is, perhaps, one of his best loved and was written in 1872.

"And is it so, I shall be like Thy Son,

Is this the grace which He for me has won?

Father of glory! Thought beyond all thought,

In glory to His own blest likeness brought!

O Jesus, Lord, who loved me like to Thee?

Fruit of Thy work! With Thee, too, there to see

Thy glory, Lord, while endless ages roll,

Myself the price and travail of Thy soul.

Yet it must be! Thy love had not its rest
 Were thy redeemed not with Thee fully blest—
 That love that gives not as the world, but shares
 All it possesses with its loved co-heirs!
 Nor I alone, Thy loved ones all, complete,
 In glory around Thee with joy shall meet;
 All like Thee, for Thy glory like Thee, Lord!
 Object supreme of all, by all adored!
 The heart is satisfied, can ask no more;
 All thought of self is now for ever o'er;
 Christ, its unmingled object, fills the heart
 In blest adoring love—its endless part."

Darby here transports our spirits to an eternal day—a day when aspiration and anticipation give way to realization—a day when self with all its ugliness recedes, and for ever we be like God's Son. Then every heart will know its perfect rest—the heart of the Son as satisfied with the fruit of His soul's dark travail, the heart of the saint as resplendent in the likeness of his Saviour, and the heart of the Father as beholding each one reflecting perfectly the image of His beloved Son.

ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY

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ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY

Contents

CHRIST IN THE APOCALYPSE

by J. B. D. Page

SWANWICK AGAIN!

by A. M. S. Gooding

THE HEIGHTS OF THE HILLS ARE HIS

by A. Naismith

ZECHARIAH

by E. R. Bower

FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTALS

by J. B. Hewitt

NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARY—REVIEW

JESUS HIMSELF

by E. Robinson

HYMNS AND THEIR WRITERS

by J. Strahan

KENOSIS

(Philippians 2)

In this likeminded to Him be;
Who in the form of Deity,
Thought it not robbery to be
True God, in perfect equity:
But made Himself of no repute,
Took servant form, so absolute
He dispossessed Himself; became
Like very man, such was His aim.
Self humbled His Own dignity
To Calvary's malignity.
Obedient even to Cross-death,
Fulfilled God's Will, in His last breath.
Wherefore His God, extremely high
Exalted Christ above the sky,
Pronounced on Him that honoured Name
Above all Titles, marked by fame :
That every knee, Heaven, Earth and Hell,
Shall bow, and every tongue shall tell,
That Jesus Christ is Lord! His God,
The Father's glory, spread abroad.
Shall universally declare,
That Christ, Who hung in deep despair,
To Nations, Peoples, everywhere,
This Christ is Sovereign Lord, and Heir !

—JOHN CAMPBELL, LARKHALL

CHRIST IN THE APOCALYPSE (7)

by JOHN B. D. PAGE

THE LAMB IN HEAVEN (i)

Reading : Revelation 4 1-3.

“In chapters 4-5,” says Prof. Heading in his commentary on Revelation, *From Now to Eternity*, “we see within heaven itself.” No doubt, these two chapters provide an unparalleled description of heaven in figurative language together with Christ as the Lamb, the Object of heavenly worship.

Briefly, in these two chapters John saw a door opened in heaven and he heard a voice calling to him “Come up hither.” Looking intently into heaven, he beheld a throne with its Divine Occupant and four cherubic beings around the throne who were encircled by twenty-four elders, seated and arrayed in white. In front of heaven’s throne, there were seven lamps burning brightly and what seemed to be a crystal clear sea of glass (4.1-11).

With rapt attention, the seer then gazed upon the Lamb, Whom he saw standing in the midst of the four cherubic beings and the twenty-four elders around the throne, whilst this celestial company prostrated themselves in worship to the Lamb. Holding their golden vials filled with burning incense, the elders sang to the accompaniment of their harps a song of praise to the Lamb. Then myriads of angels rendered their paean of praise to the Lamb, and there followed a doxology to Him from all other beings in heaven, on earth and under the earth (5.6-14).

Although many of the Lord’s people enter into the worship of these two chapters, some are perplexed by their symbolical language like that of other chapters in the book. Obviously, the setting is not on earth but in heaven, not the atmospheric or sidereal heavens which were the works of creation but “heaven itself,” which is said to be “the presence of God” (Heb. 9.24). Therefore this third heaven should not be thought of as a part of creation and a physical location, because God Himself is uncreated and essentially Spirit (John 4.24). Yet this highest heaven is actual and real, for

the Lord Jesus has ascended into it. Of this heaven, the highest of three heavens, John had a glimpse in a vision.

When an assembly elder was asked unexpectedly by a teenage youth, 'What would heaven be like?' he was nonplussed and, after a pause, he replied, 'I don't know.' Admittedly, with our finite minds, we are able to relate persons and places to only that which is material and tangible, and it is difficult to describe heaven, which is in the realm of the spiritual, although it is our ultimate destiny and home.

In recording his vision of heaven, the God of heaven and the glorified Christ in heaven, John uses symbolism, drawn from the temple and its ritualism as we shall discover later, for describing that which is celestial and spiritual. To the unrenewed mind, such things are foolishness, but the spiritually minded have the spiritual faculty to interpret and understand spiritual things (I Cor. 2.14f, Col. 1.9).

Before looking into these celestial mysteries, we may recall that Christ is depicted in chapter 1 as the High Priest, although there He is not seen in heaven.

Complementary to this priestly aspect of Him, He is presented in the 5th chapter as "the Lamb." Priesthood, of course, is incomplete without a sacrifice. Although sacrifice means suffering for the victim as it did for Christ upon the cross, such sacrificial sufferings belong to the past in the Apocalypse. In Revelation, Christ, as the Lamb, is seen not suffering but glorified, not humbled but exalted. The seer sees Him not as He *was* upon the cross, the Lamb of God bearing the sin of the world, but "the Lamb" as He *is* now in the midst of the throne in heaven.

A perusal of chapters 4 and 5 and subsequent chapters soon reveals the judicial power vested in the glorified Lamb, which He will use after the rapture of the Church. However, our purpose is to dwell upon not this prophetic aspect but the manifested glory of the Lamb. For an understanding of the celestial setting of the Lamb's exaltation, the fact should not be ignored that the temple and almost every piece of its furniture is mentioned in this book besides distinct allusions to the ritualism of its services. Furthermore, the word "temple" occurs sixteen times, which is considerably more than its occurrences in many other books. In chapter 7.15 the millennial temple is in view, whilst chapter 11.1f

refers to the temple of the tribulation, and in the remaining fourteen references the heavenly temple is seen. Of the two Greek words translated "temple," *naos* is the one used, meaning 'sanctuary,' as distinct from the temple building and the courts. For John, this meant that he peered into the heavenly sanctuary during this and other visions, and the sanctuary atmosphere of the book should be sensed by its readers.

For understanding the under-lying imagery associated with the heavenly temple and the Lamb, we need to realise what was happening in the temple at Jerusalem when Christ died upon the cross, with which John was acquainted.

For centuries, the *hour* of Christ's death was foretold by the daily observance of the evening sacrifice (Ex. 29. 38-42, Num. 28.3-8). Likewise, the *day* of His death was foretold in the annual feast of passover (Lev. 23 : 5). The *year*, in which Christ would die, was foretold in prophecy (Dan. 9.25f.).

According to the gospel record, not only was Daniel's prophecy fulfilled in respect of the year of Christ's death, but it was on the day for the feast of passover "at the ninth hour" (i.e. 3.00 p.m.) when "Jesus gave up the ghost" (Mark 14.12 and 15.34,37). The ninth hour was, of course, the time of the evening sacrifice, which was not without significance.

At the ninth hour as the evening sacrifice was being observed in the temple, Christ cried triumphantly "It is finished" (John 19.30), after which He bowed His head in death with His last words addressed to His Father in heaven upon His lips. His victorious cry was an implicit announcement that the work of salvation was then effected and complete. Strikingly, the outreach of salvation is related twice to the ninth hour early in the history of the Church. It was "at the hour of prayer being the ninth hour" when a paralytic *Jew* was not only healed but saved (Acts 3 : 1-8). Later, again "at the ninth hour" a *Gentile* was saved (Acts 10.1-3, 30-35). These scriptures show clearly how the evening sacrifice was the occasion first for the accomplishment of the work of salvation upon the cross and then for its subsequent outworking in two sinners, representative of believing Jews and believing Gentiles to constitute the Church (Eph. 2.15f.).

Obviously, John was familiar with these facts and the importance of the evening sacrifice in the Divine reckoning. With several allusions to the evening sacrifice in the Revelation, as we shall find later, it was undoubtedly in John's thinking and it appears to be the background of this Apocalyptic title, "the Lamb," applied to Christ. Therefore, we need to acquaint ourselves with the procedure and ritualism of the evening sacrifice.

Briefly, for the observance of the "continual burnt offering" as both the morning and evening sacrifices were called (Ex. 29.42), lots were cast for selecting priests to perform the various parts of the service (Luke 1.9, cp. Prov. 16.33). One of the priests, chosen by the casting of lots, cleansed and prepared the altar in the inner court in readiness to receive the slain lamb. Another priest slew the lamb, using a golden bowl to catch its blood which he poured out at the base of the altar, and there may be an allusion to it in chapter 6.9. In the temple, a different priest dressed and lit the lamps of the golden lampstand and cleansed the golden altar (Ex. 30.7f). With these preparations finished, another priest entered the holy place for the burning of incense upon the golden altar, as Zecharias did, and this part of the service was known as "the time of incense" whilst the temple courts outside were filled with worshippers for half an hour of silent prayer (Luke 1.8-10 cp. Rev. 8.1). When this priest withdrew from the solitude of the holy place, other priests conducted audible prayer for the worshippers assembled outside in the courts for half an hour. Hence, these two half-hour sessions of prayer, first silent then audible, were known as "the hour of prayer" (Acts 3.1). Then came the climax of the service when the slain lamb with a meal offering added to it and a drink offering poured upon it (Ex. 29.38-41; Num. 28.3-8) was consumed by fire upon the altar in the inner court. With priests and Levites singing the set psalm for the day, the service ended. This brief resume of what transpired in the temple when the Lamb of God died as a sacrifice upon the cross may clarify some allusions to the evening sacrifice and elucidate some symbolical terms in the Apocalypse, but the setting is, of course, the heavenly temple.

Turning now to chapter 4 : 1, we read that John, looking heavenwards saw "a door was open in heaven." To under-

stand this statement, we need to recall that when Christ died upon the cross, the veil of the temple was rent from the top to the bottom. But the priest, who stood beside the golden altar with burning incense upon it as part of the evening sacrifice, could not look into the holy of holies through the rent veil, because there was a closed door behind the veil, similar to the gold covered pair of olive wood doors behind the veil in Solomon's temple (1 Kings 6.31f, cp. II Chron. 3.14). Having in mind this temple scene and the death of the Lamb of God, John now looked up towards heaven and he saw the door of the heavenly sanctuary open in contrast to the closed door behind the rent veil in the earthly temple.

As the seer gazed heavenwards, he did not see a veil. The purpose of the veil was a God-ordained barrier between the holy place, into which the priests entered, and the holy of holies where God dwelt (Ex. 26.33). This was under the law. The rending of the veil at the death of Christ signified that the veil was no longer a barrier between God and man but a means of access under grace (Heb. 10. 19-22), and the barrier could never be re-imposed either on earth or in heaven. In consequence, John looked beyond the rent veil through the open door into the celestial sanctuary.

"And the first voice which I heard was as it were a trumpet talking with me," says the seer. This trumpet-like voice, which he had already heard (1.10-13), he heard again. It was, undoubtedly, the voice of the Son of Man, arrayed in His High Priestly garments, Whom the seer could not see in the heavenly sanctuary. John heard His clarion call, "Come up hither," which meant that he would be elevated to a higher plane without entering heaven itself. From this vantage point, he would be able to behold the heavenly temple together with its celestial beings and the activities of worship from a distance. Knowing that Solomon's temple, with which he was fully acquainted from the scriptures, was a "pattern"—a word which means not a 'plan' but a 'model,' of which the reality is in heaven (II Chron. 28.11f, 19, cp. Ex. 25.9)—he peered into the true temple, which the Lord had built and not man (cp. Heb. 8.2 and 9.8).

As John looked through the open door of the heavenly holy of holies, he saw "a throne was set in heaven" (4.3). A perusal of Revelation reveals that the central feature of the book is not the Cross but the Throne. This is evident from the word "throne" occurring forty times, which is unequalled in any other Old or New Testament book. The earthly counterpart of this throne was found certainly not in a palace or in the second temple. For example, if the priest, who witnessed the rending of the veil when Christ died, had attempted to open the door behind the rent veil, although he would not have dared to do so, he would have found the holy of holies void and dark, because there was no ark of the covenant and no shekinah glory in the second temple. Therefore, the counterpart on earth must be in the first temple, built by Solomon.

In the holy of holies of Solomon's temple, there was the ark of the covenant, having been the only piece of furniture transferred from the tabernacle into the temple, and the shekinah glory was upon the mercy seat (I Kings 8.6, 10). Returning to John's vision of a throne in heaven, there appears to be an obvious similarity between the throne in the heavenly temple and the ark in the earthly one. The connection between the two is found in the Old Testament, of which John had an immense knowledge. According to I Chronicles 28.2, David had a heartfelt desire to build a house of rest for "the ark of the covenant of the Lord and (or, even) the footstool of God." If the ark symbolized the footstool of God, as stated here, then the mercy seat upon the ark was pictorial of the throne of God, which is implied in Psalm 99.1, "the Lord reigneth; . . . He sitteth between the cherubim." Here, the psalmist saw Jehovah reigning and His throne is the mercy seat, upon which He is seated between the two cherubim. Later in the psalm, the psalmist calls upon the people to "worship at His footstool" (v. 5), which is an oblique reference to the ark of the covenant. Although John refers specifically to the ark later in Revelation when he saw "the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in His temple the ark of the covenant" (11.19), he beheld the mercy seat in chapter 4.3 as emblematic of the throne of God, as the Old Testament saints understood its significance.

(To be continued).

SWANWICK AGAIN !

Of course the Swanwick Conference of some brethren takes place year by year, but my attention has just been drawn to an advertisement in a recent issue of the Christian Herald. It reads thus :

Women will attend the Brethren Swanwick

Under that heading it adds

“For the first time in history, women will be allowed to attend and take part in this year’s Swanwick Conference of Brethren.” The advertiser seems to think that is important. He should realise that women have been attending conferences for years, but only in those where disobedience to the word of God is the order of the day do they take part. The Scripture forbids it. He knows, of course, that women attend and take part, even a leading part in the seminars of the Christian Brethren Research Fellowship.

The theme of the Conference is

“Change without decay—a church to meet the needs of the hour” — We remember “The Leaven of Swanwick” and warn again—Beware!

The Speakers will include : Dr. Alistair Noble, Education Officer for B.B.C. Scotland and Keswick Speaker Alan Nute — the names of the women who will take part are not mentioned.

The Conference will discuss community involvement, worship and communicating the Gospel.

The date of the conference will be 27th to 29th September. We notice that details can be obtained from Alan Batchelor, 15 Barncroft, Berkhamstead, Herts ((Berkhampstead is also the home of the Secretary of the Christian Brethren Research Fellowship).

If a report of this conference is obtainable I shall review it. I would be very glad to receive unedited tapes of the whole conference if anyone can obtain them.

It would be advantageous, if a report were published, to put the names of those who ask questions and those who answer—Men and women should be prepared to stand by the things they say and not remain anonymous.—The Editor.

‘THE HEIGHTS OF THE HILLS ARE HIS’

by A. NAISMITH

(iii) MOUNT SINAI

Sinai has been for centuries the subject of topographical controversy. Which of the summits in the range of mountains rising from the wilderness of Sinai was the mount from which amid thunders and lightnings, fires and earthquakes, issued the Law of Jehovah? The question has for long been under dispute, but the mass of evidence is in favour of that peak now known as Jebel Musa. ‘The claims of the different mountains of the Sinaitic peninsula to be that from which the law was delivered to Israel have been carefully analysed by one who knows the topographical details better, perhaps, than any other Englishman Col. Sir Charles Wilson, who gives his decision in favour of Jebel Musa, or Moses’ Mount, —a decision which must be accepted as final. It has been shown in detail by this author that all the requirements of the case as described in the Bible are met in their minutest details, if we accept Jebel Musa as the Mount of the Law. In this view the late Professor Palmer concurred.’ This eminence is 7,363 feet high, with a precipitous cliff just under 7,000 feet at its Northern end, and slopes down into a wide valley where Israel’s multitudes might easily have found camping space with their numerous flocks and herds, and from which the summit, except when enveloped in cloud or mist, would have been distinctly visible and the voice of Jehovah clearly heard in the thunder. Dr. F. B. Meyer describes this mountain as ‘a granite mass, deeply cleft with fissures,’ resembling in appearance a huge altar. He also affirms that ‘all that transpired on its summit would have been easily visible to the furthest limits of the camp of two million souls pitched beneath.’

In the book of Deuteronomy, which means ‘the second statement of the law,’ the place where God unfolded His precepts is, with one exception (Deut. 32.2) consistently designated ‘Horeb,’ which is, at its first mention in Ex. 3.1, called ‘the mountain of God.’ The probable explanation of the difference is that Horeb denotes the whole range of hills while Sinai was the chief summit and the mountain on

which Jehovah communicated the Law to Moses.

During the third month after Israel's deliverance from Egypt, the people reached the desert of Sinai (Ex. 19.1) from which place Kadesh-Barnea on the border of Canaan could be reached in eleven days by the Mount Seir route. The wilderness lay at the foot of Sinai and in such close proximity to it that the people could without difficulty approach and touch the mountain. This Jehovah forbade them to do during the days of His awesome presence there (Ex. 19.12). It was upon Mount Sinai that God's holy law was given, His covenant with Israel ratified, His sovereignty of Israel's King recognised and the Levitical hierarchy and ceremonial established. Except for one reference in Judges, one in Nehemiah, and a few in the Psalms, no mention is made of Mount Sinai in the Old Testament Scriptures after the Pentateuch, in which it receives frequent mention. In the New Testament narrative Stephen refers to it in Acts 7.38, and in the New Testament doctrine Paul and the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews use it as a figure of the law of Moses which emanated from its summit and of Judaism. (Gal. 4.24-25; Heb. 12.18-20). The only subsequent visit to that mountain-range recorded in Scripture is that of Elijah when Jezebel's threats put his life in jeopardy. Sinai is thus almost entirely associated with the giving of the Law. It is, in a special sense,

The Mount of Transition

A new epoch began in the story of God's relationships with men in Ex. 19. Prior to that, the nation which God had chosen in Abraham had enjoyed the favour of God's unconditional promises in fulfilment of His gracious purposes in blessing. The covenant at Sinai inaugurated the era of Law, which succeeded the dispensation of Promise that had commenced with Jehovah's covenant with Abraham. Israel's redemption by blood, emancipation from Egyptian serfdom, and separation to Jehovah as His own chosen possession, were acts of Divine grace. At Sinai the nation entered into a covenant with Jehovah based on their acceptance of His righteous precepts and their willingness to fulfil His just requirements as the condition of future prosperity both temporal and spiritual. When Moses, the mediator of the Sinaitic covenant, presented to Israel the words of Jehovah making obedience to His Law essential to blessing, the

people unanimously signified their acceptance of the covenant with the words, 'All that Jehovah hath spoken we will do' (Ex. 19.8). It was a transition from the period of the Theophanies when Jehovah revealed Himself to the pilgrim patriarchs as occasion arose, to a permanent revelation of His requirements and provisions in the moral and ceremonial Law

"One might have sought and found Thee presently
At some fair oak, or bush, or cave, or well."
"Is my God this way?" "No!" they would reply,
"He is to Sinai gone, as we heard tell.
List, ye may hear great Aaron's bell."

George Herbert

Four times in Exodus (24.12; 31.8; 32.16; 34.1) and four times in Deuteronomy (4.13; 9.10; 10.2-4; 5.22) the writing of the Law on Sinai is attributed directly to Jehovah. Both the first tables of stone containing the ten commandments which were hurled to the ground by Moses at the foot of Sinai and the second tables of stone which were later deposited in the Ark of the covenant were written with the finger of God.' Thus Mount Sinai was also

The Mount of Transcription

The written commands of God were communicated to Moses while Sinai was enveloped in thick cloud, mist and smoke, and presented the appearance of a volcano in eruption. The voice of Omnipotence was heard preparing the nation of Israel for the vision of the writing of Omniscience.

"God from the Mount of Sinai, whose grey top
Did tremble, He descending, did Himself
In thunder, lightning, and loud trumpet's sound,
Ordain them laws—part, such as appertain
To evil justice: part, religious rites
Of Sacrifice." (John Milton in 'Paradise Lost')

'God has spoken' by prophets, and in His Son (Heb. 1.1-2). God has also written, from time to time, and every time He writes, it is to impress His laws on the hearts and minds of His creature man. On the summit of the mountain He communicated in writing His Law of Righteousness. On the alabaster wall of Babylon's royal palace, in the sight of a rebel monarch, He wrote His Law of Retribution. He stooped to inscribe on the earth, His footstool, His Law of Redemption, foreshadowed in John 8.6,8, and finalised

on the Cross on Golgotha's hill, 'that He might redeem them that are under the law;' and now He writes on the hearts of all who believe and accept His redeeming grace the Law of Regeneration (Heb. 10.16,17). The terms of God's first manuscript have never been abrogated or modified, for His righteousness is ever perfect and His standard can never be lowered. The Decalogue is the supreme witness to God's Majesty and holiness. Four of its enactments have become the basis for laws governing the civilised nations of the world today. Besides defining God's righteous commandments, God's holy law reveals man's sinful state and condemns it. By convincing man of his impotence to fulfil the Divine requirements, the law opens the way for the communication of God's matchless grace in His Son Jesus Christ. For the believer in Christ who is 'not under law but under grace' God's moral law is still a standard by which to test his life, but not the regulator to control it. The first four commandments of the law reveal man's duty to God, the remaining six his duty to his fellow-man. Failure in our duty to God is always followed by failure in our duty to our neighbour. 'Love is the fulfilling of the law.' Man's love to God is expressed in a due regard for the unique honour due to His Person and reverence due to His name and His day. Man's love to his neighbour is expressed in a due regard for the honour to which parents are entitled from their children and for the sanctity of his neighbour's life, property and honour. Every breach of any part of God's law is a violation of the whole.

Sinai was also

The Mount of Transmission

Moses was the mediator of the old covenant: the Lord Jesus is the Mediator of the new. Jehovah descended upon the mountain in fire to communicate His law. Fire is symbolic of His holiness and judgement: 'our God is a consuming fire.' An earthquake shook the mountain so that it trembled in the presence of its Creator (Ps. 68.8). The law, too, that was transmitted was a fiery law (Deut. 33.2). It was to demonstrate the perverseness of the human heart and to burn in upon the mind of man, as a brand, the knowledge of sin. Holy, just and good in itself, it was to condemn all that is unholy, unrighteous and wicked in us. Clouds, fire, smoke and mysterious voices were the con-

comitants of the transmission of God's law to the people of Israel. Dr. F. B Meyer helpfully enumerates the lessons to be learnt about God from the phenomena associated with the giving of the law.

(i) **The Majesty of God** was displayed in the thunders and lightnings, the brooding cloud, the trumpet peal and the tropical showers.

(ii) **The Spirituality of God** could be learnt from His invisibility while He gave utterance to His decrees.

(iii) **The Holiness of God** is evidenced by the meticulous instructions given to the people not to touch the mountain on pain of death, but to observe absolute purity and cleanliness of heart, person and dress.

(iv) **The Royalty of God** is manifested in His legislation, His edicts, His precepts. The laws of the Theocracy were accepted by Israel (Deut. 5.22).

On Sinai God employed two orders of beings, His creatures, to transmit His law to His people. It came through the disposition and ordination of angels, spiritual beings who serve in the presence of God (Acts 7.53; Gal. 3.19), and through the mediation of Moses, a human being who could communicate the Law to his fellow-men (Ex. 20.19; 21; 25.1; John 1.17; Gal. 3.19).

Descending from the mountain top, from the awesome solitude of the Divine presence, after receiving the first tables of stone, Moses saw a sight which kindled within him righteous indignation and moved him to hurl from his hands the stony tablets on which God's commandments were engraved. His people had sinned grievously, and Sinai became

The Mount of Transgression

While Jehovah was communicating to Moses the first of His edicts on the summit of Sinai—'Thou shalt have no other gods before me'—followed by the second forbidding idolatry, Aaron, the brother of the mediator, was fashioning an idol, a golden calf, at the foot of the mountain for the people to worship, and telling them—'these be thy gods, O Israel' (Ex. 31.1-4). Moses, the mediator between God and the people, became the advocate and interceded on their behalf with God. 'Oh, this people have sinned a great sin,' he cried; 'yet now, if Thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book.' The law

Moses was sent to transmit to the people had been broken. It condemned their sin; and their transgression exposed them to the wrath of a holy God.

“Oh! as we ponder on that scene appalling,
When God from Sinai spoke His holy law,
Like Moses on our faces humbly falling,
We feel and own our guilt with trembling awe,
But soon we hear a voice from Calvary, calling
Our eyes to see what Moses never saw.”

At the Divine command Moses returned again to the summit of Sinai (Ex. 34.1-4) to receive from Jehovah the re-written law of commandments in place of the broken tablets. While there, natural fears forgotten, natural pleasures foregone, and natural appetites forsaken, Moses had a vision of the Lord of glory with Whom he communed. The vision made his countenance radiant so that, as he was about to descend with the second tables of stone, it is recorded that ‘Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone.’ For him Sinai had become

The Mount of Transfiguration

The radiance was a reflection of that Divine glory upon which he had gazed at the top of the mountain.

“The Prophet-leader came from out the cloud,
From long hours spent in communing with God,
Came forth and stretched his wonder-working rod,
And spake clear words to all the listening crowd.

“They gazed and looked, and lo, on brow and face,
A glory and a brightness not of earth,
The eye lit up with fire of heavenly birth,
The whole man bright with beams of God’s great grace.

“They looked and saw the glory, and they shrank
From that dread vision dazzling man’s frail sight;
They could not bear that full excess of light:
Far better veil of cloud, or marsh-mist dank.

“And so o’er face and brow he drew the veil;
They did not see the glory pass away;
And yet that heavenly brightness might not stay.
It vanished quickly, like a twice-told tale.”

EDWARD HAYES PLUMPTRE.

For the Christian in this age of grace, redeemed by the blood of Christ from the curse of a broken law, there is the possibility of such a transfiguration and radiance of

face and life. We can formulate our request for this radiance in the words of the prayer of Moses the man of God (Ps. 90.17)—‘And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us!’ In like manner we too may be transfigured, ‘not as Moses—but we all, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord’ (2 Cor. 3.18). The metamorphosis takes place by constantly gazing on the effulgent moral glory of Him Who now sits beyond the clouds, Who magnified the whole law and made it honourable, and by mirroring back His radiance of grace and character. Nor need we veil this beauty before the world, for it will not fade if we live in constant communion with our Lord.

ZECHARIAH

by E. R. BOWER (continued)

THE SECOND BURDEN. (12.1 — 14.21).

(a) Israel's future. (12.1 - 13.9)

vv. 1-3. “All the tribes of Israel” (9.1) are included in this Word of the Lord. See Is. 42. 5-7; Amos 4.13 and contexts. The theme of this section is dominated by the words, “In that day,” and again we remind ourselves of today's events in the Middle East which indicate that “that day” is not too far distant, and Jerusalem is very much “a cup of trembling” (or, poison—margin), and a “burdensome stone” for all the peoples of the earth to a greater extent than ever before. Our thoughts turn, almost inevitably, to Matt. 21.42-44. See Dan. 2.34,44,45. Yet, in spite of the nations, Jerusalem will remain.

vv. 4-5. “I will open My eyes on the house of Judah” would show that Judah was now praying toward the House of God (see v.10) and Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the first Temple was being answered (1 Kings 8.29). “Judah will be caught up in the siege of Jerusalem” (v.2. N.E.B.), and God will see (as He did, 2 Kings 13.4-5; 14.26; for instance) the affliction of His people, and respond to their prayers. What the Lord did at Samaria (2 Kings

7.18), He will do at Jerusalem, and Judah will take their cue and their courage from the example set by Jerusalem. See 2 Kings 9.16 and compare the events of chaps. 18 and 19 with the events of "that day."

vv.6-7. Renewed hope sets alight the fighting spirit of the 'clans' of Judah, and the invading nations are shattered. Jerusalem remains safe, but Judah will be saved first so that Jerusalem will not take credit for Judah's salvation; the first is last.

vv. 8-9. The ancient prophecies come to pass (Lev. 26. 3-12; Jos. 23. 8-11; Joel 3.10; 2 Sam. 22.30; Ps. 18). David was addressed as an "angel of God" (1 Sam. 29.9; 2 Sam. 14.17,20; 19.27). "In that day" will be the destruction of all who come against Jerusalem.

vv. 10-14. A commentator writes, "These are verses of almost unprecedented difficulty," but let us here consider the 'easy' things. God is going to pour out His spirit of grace and supplications—that which had been long foretold (Jer. 32. 36-41; Ezek. 11.17-20; Joel 2.28-30; Acts 2. 16-21). Cf. this spirit of grace and "seeking for grace" with v.1 Jerusalem, where our Lord was crucified (Rev. 11.8) will yet look upon "Me"—the Lord (v.1)—the pierced One. See Luke 2.33 ("thine own soul ALSO"); John 19.25-37; Rev. 1.7; Ps. 22.16). Some read, "they shall look on Him" (as John 19.37), but it is still God who speaks, whether Jehovah of Zech. 12.14 or God manifest in flesh (John 10.30; Matt. 1.23).

Having seen and recognised the Pierced One, the mourning "as for his only son . . . in bitterness for his first-born." "Only son" is elsewhere translated as "darling" (Ps. 22.20; 35.17); both in Messianic context.

Cf. the refs. also at Gen. 22.2; Jer. 6.26; Amos. 8.10. It will be remembered that the title 'first-born' was a familiar one for Israel (Ex. 4.22; Ps. 89.27—also Messianic) so that there can be little doubt that "in that day" realisation will come to Israel, Judah and Jerusalem. In Acts 2.37 — the 'that day,' unfulfilled and incomplete—the One whom they had pierced was revealed as Lord and Christ and "when they heard this, they were pricked (pierced through) in their heart." This was a foretaste of 'that day.' "A great mourning"—a beating of the breast—cf. Luke 23.48) as for the death of Josiah (2 Chron. 35.24) which

event became "an ordinance for Israel." The land shall mourn family by family (or, clan by clan), each with its own individual sorrow; the royal line and the priestly line; the line of Nathan son of David and Bathsheba, of which line came Zerubbabel and Joseph (as was supposed), father of our Lord. Luke 3.31; the line of Shimei, but why he is mentioned is not clear. He was the son of Gershon, son of Levi, and it was of his line that Asaph came. Asaph, Henan and Ethan/Jeduthun were the leaders of the Tabernacle choirs in Solomon's time, and each in different ways was seer, counsellor psalmist and musician. It is the psalms of Asaph that begin the Levitical third book of the Psalter, and the psalms of Henan and Jeduthun which close it. The LXX (A.V. margin) has 'Simeon'—Levi's brother. It is as if each family comes to its own realisation as grace is given to them. Cf. 2 Chron. 6.29.

Chap. 13.1-2. Still in "that day," a fountain is opened for the house of David and for Jerusalem. It was David who first spoke of this fountain (Ps. 36.8-9). See Prov. 13.14; 14.27). "They have forsaken Me the fountain of living waters" (Jer. 2.13; 17.13) Cf. Ezek. 47; Zech. 14.8; Rev. 7.17.). For 'uncleanness' (but see margin) refer to Lev. 20.21 and context. Refs. Ezek. 9.9-12; Joel 3.18; Hos. 2.1-23; 6.10;—note refs. to 'that day'); Hos. 23; Zech. 13.9. "Fountain is frequently associated with blood and with uncleanness, but the fountain here is a cleansing fountain and reminds us of the hymn, "Blessed be the fountain of blood—To a world of sinners revealed." Even the names of their idols will be washed away (Hos. 2.17): the "idols shall He utterly abolish" (Is 2.18); false prophets and the unclean spirit (the only mention in the O.T.) will pass out of the land—what a Fountain! An unclean spirit can do so much harm e.g. 1 Kings 12. 19-23, but this Fountain will dismiss the unclean spirit, e.g. Luke 4. 33-36. The cry of "Unclean, unclean" will no longer be heard (Lev. 13.46). The repentance of 12. 1-14 brings the cleansing of 13. 1-2.

vv. 3-6. There will still be the false prophet in that day, but these will have no place among the people of God for the law of Deut. 13 will be applied with vigour, except that stoning appears to give place to a thrusting through. (cf. Deut. 13.15) A sense of shame appears among the prophets as they disown their false profession—"I am not a prophet,

but a bondman from my youth." In context, these false prophets were the "idol shepherds" who, when challenged with the scars upon the back (Lit. 'between your arms') prevaricated and put the scars down to a brawl in the house of their friends. The scars may have been the result of frenzied self-flagellation as in idolatrous rites (1 Kings 18.28). This is not the usually accepted view of v.6, which is generally referred to the suffering of our Lord, and indeed, if we consider 12.10 "they shall look . . . they shall mourn . . ." the personal pronouns give credence to their reference to our blessed Lord, Jesus Christ. It does seem however that vv. 6-7 are of the two types of shepherd—the 'idol' and the True. Whatever view we may accept for v.6, there can be no doubt when we come to

v. 7. for our Lord quoted this verse (Matt. 26.31; Mark 14.27). The accent is upon, "MY Shepherd . . . the Man who stands next to Me" and as we wonder at this our thoughts go back to Is. 53.10, "It pleased the Lord to bruise Him, He hath put Him to grief . ." The Hebrew of "My Fellow" is a Levitical word (see, for instance, Lev. 6.2; 18.20; 19.15,17; 24.19; 25.14-15 — 'neighbour') denoting 'equality with.' If we should feel inclined to ask why this sword of justice was unsheathed against God's Fellow the answer is again to be found in Is 53 and Matt. 8.17; 1 Pet. 1.18-21 and many other Scriptures. Our Lord, in quoting this verse, said, "I will smite . . ." "My Shepherd" is seen in John 10 and there, too, the Son of God is seen. "I and My Father are One." Cf. this verse with Is. 40.9-11; 2 Sam. 24.16; 1 Chron. 21.15-16. Israel was indeed scattered and a remnant preserved as the following verses will show. In passing, this is the last mention of a sword in the O.T. Is it the same sword as in the first mention (Gen. 3.22-24; cf. John 14.6. See Rom. 5); the sword that kept "the way of the tree of life" now being told to awake?

vv. 8-9. So great was the "scattering" that Josephus (Wars, 6.9.2-4 and 7.1.1) wrote "Now as soon as the army had no more people to slay or to plunder because there remained none to be the objects of their fury (because they would not have spared any . . .) . . ." to which an expositor of our present verses asks, "We simply ask, What room is there now for a remnant?" Yet through the centuries worse has been seen to come upon the Jew, and the Holocaust is in living memory, and much worse is to come Here, "all

the Land” is in ruin and two thirds of the people will be cut off and die. Cf. 1 Pet. 1.6-7; 4.12-13; Mal. 4.1-6. Tried by fire in very truth. Yet, as they have called time and time again from the depths of their sorrow, so will they cry again—and God will hear that cry and say, “It is My people.” Gone now the day when Israel heard the word, “Ye are not My people” (Hos. 1.9). Recognition of the Pierced One will be followed by true repentance and restoration. (Hos. 2.23).

FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTALS

by J. B. HEWITT, Chesterfield

(32) “SOME EMBLEMS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT”

The Bible is a book of Symbols, Types, Parables, Metaphors, Allegories and Emblems. There are a host of figurative representations of the Spirit, and each emblem sets forth graphic aspects of the identity, nature and ministry of the Holy Spirit. We shall look at seven emblems :

1. The Dove. Gen. 8.8-12; Song of Songs 4.1; 6.9; Matt. 3.16
The Beauty of His Character. The gentleness, cleanliness, swiftness and sharpness of sight, of the dove, makes it a telling emblem of the Spirit.

The first reference to the Holy Spirit in the Bible, represents Him as “moving” (brooding), generating warmth (Gen. 1.2). The same word is rendered “fluttereth” in Deut. 32.11. The two thoughts suggests the Spirit’s action in bringing into life and caring for the life which He produced.

The Dove in Gen. 8.9-12 came after the terrible judgment upon sin. The Spirit came after Calvary (John 7). After the waters of wrath had abated did the dove find a resting place (Matt. 3.16; John 1. 32,33; 3.34). If there had been no Calvary of redemption there would have been no Pentecost of blessing.

The dove gentle in manner, clean in nature, particular in food, constant in love, swift of wing, and beautiful in plumage, speak of the Perfection of the Spirit (Matt. 10.16; Songs 6.9; 5.16; Ps. 55.6; 68.13).

The Spirit’s mission is all about Christ, it centres in Him,

points to Him, enhances and glorifies Him and unfolds Him (see previous study, the Spirit in John).

2. Oil. Ex. 30.22-33; Num. 4.16; Zech. 4.1-7; 1 John 2.27RV **Spirit's Sufficiency for Testimony.** The practice of anointing with oil, or with oil intermingled with certain perfumes were both common and sacred. It suggests the qualifying work of the Spirit. In the O.T. the anointing with oil was for the service of God, either a service rendered by a priest, prophet or a king (Lev. 8.2,10,12; 1 Sam. 10.1; 6; 16.13; Isa. 61.1; Luke 4.18,19). The holy anointing oil made sacred the vessels of the Tabernacle. Aaron and his sons were anointed to minister before God (Ex. 40. 9-15). The Holy Spirit applies the indispensable preparation for the ministry (Acts 1.8).

We are anointed or "commissioned" for service (2 Cor. 1.21) and given an insight into Divine truth (1 John 2.27). This takes place at conversion. We need this anointing for the tasks we undertake in the service of God, and for truths we must understand of the ways of God.

The four ingredients of the anointing oil speak of the excellencies of Christ as the Son of Man (Ex. 30. 34-37). The holy oil alone continually lighted the Tabernacle where God was worshipped and where the person and work of Christ were wholly symbolized (Ex. 27.20,21). We need the constant renewal and light of the divine "oil" for service Godward and manward (Zech. 4.2-5). For every fresh task in the will of God may we share the Psalmist's experience. "I shall be anointed with fresh oil" (Ps. 92.10).

3. Fire. Ex. 13.21; Isa. 4.4; Mal. 3.2,3; Acts 2.3-4; Rev. 4.5. **Spirit's Penetrating Quality and Purifying Work.** This astonishing element consumes, melts, warms, and energises. It has the power to change all materials into its own nature. It suggests the Spirit's purifying action, which judges and consumes all impurity. His purging work aims to consume from the heart everything that is out of harmony with His Divine nature (Mal. 3.2,3).

The "flame of fire" in Ex. 3.2 and the bush not consumed is a picture of what Moses was to become, the fire of life and power and zeal is kept, continually alight. When he turned aside he received a revelation of the purpose of God (v. 6-8). The "pillar of cloud" is a symbol of the Spirit's presence in our hearts and Who accompanies us

on the journey of life (Rom. 8.14).

He gives us light through the Word of God. The pillar and the cloud were never taken away (John 14.16). The Spirit's ministry of liberation (2 Cor. 3.17); consecration (Isa 6.5-7); dedication (Isa. 44.4,5); illumination (Psa. 78.14; John 16.13); activation (Ps. 104.12-15; Acts 1.8) and assimilation (Ezek. 1.13; Eph. 4.3). The Baptism of fire (Matt. 3.11,12) is one of judgment. It is not mentioned by John to his disciples (John 1.33), nor by our Lord to His Apostles (Acts 1.3). Our Lord as Saviour baptizes us in the Holy Spirit (John 1.33; 1 Cor. 12.13). Later as Judge a baptism of fire (2 Thess. 1.8,9).

4. Wind. Job 33.4; Ezek. 37.7-10; John 3.3-8.

The Sovereignty of His Activities. The symbol speaks eloquently of the invisibility, the invaluableity and the irresistibility of the Holy Spirit. Invisible in essence yet its effect is substantial (John 3.8). His activity is effecting the new birth. Like the wind which is always blowing so the Spirit is ceaselessly restlessly on the move seeking an entrance into hearts and lives so that they may be regenerated and renewed. The action of the Spirit is heavenly, it is sovereign and infinitely above man "where it listeth."

When the Spirit is received, He is perceived. To know Him is to be led by His hand, swayed by His truth and cheered by His promises. Wind is powerful in its movements "rushing mighty wind" (Acts 2.2). "The Lord the Spirit" (2 Cor. 3.18). In Christian experience we must accept the sovereignty of the Spirit. We want to confine Him and seek to control Him but that is not God's way. The Holy Spirit comes as wind and we cannot tell what issues may arise when we yield to His control.

In the final regathering of Israel a spiritual resurrection will be brought about by the agency of the Spirit of God (Ezek. 37.9,10).

5. Seal. Eph. 1.13; 4.30; 2 Cor. 1.22.

The Finality of His Work. Sealing is the immediate accompaniment of trusting the Lord Jesus (Eph. 1.13,14). Ephesus and Corinth were cities that had considerable commerce in timber in Paul's day. When a merchant purchased timber he put his special mark upon the logs, and later he could identify the property by the seal he had put upon it. Seal is a mark of ownership (Hag. 2.23). Among the Jews, the

seal was a token of the completion of a transaction, the price was paid and the seal placed on the contract making it definite (Jer. 32.9-10).

The seal is a mark of ownership, as when a farmer brands his cattle. (Hag. 2.23). It indicates authority (1 Kings 21.8; S. of S. 4.12). It speaks of secrecy (Dan. 12.9). The seal is the Holy Spirit, marking us out for holiness of life (Eph. 1.13,14). These Ephesians heard the Gospel, believed the message and were sealed. The evidence of the finished transaction of Calvary, was the importation of the Holy Spirit Who attested it. A past act—were sealed, a future event—a pledge and foretaste of the inheritance. The sealed cannot be lost (Eph. 4.30), for we were part of Christ (1 Cor. 12.12). A seal was placed on important documents (Esth. 8.8-10). The tomb was sealed to satisfy the chief priests (Matt. 27.62-66).

It marks off tribulation saints (Rev. 7.1-8; the abyss in (Rev. 20.1-3). Daniel's prison was sealed (Dan. 6.17). These speak of authority and security.

6. Water. Isa. 44.1-5; Jer. 50.4,5; Zech. 12.10

Refreshing and Productive Power of The Spirit. "Behold, he smote the Rock, that the waters gushed out." (Psa. 78.20; 1 Cor. 10.4). The smitten Rock, the supplying stream overflowing. From the wounded Saviour, by the Spirit there comes to the saint blessings which satisfy (John 7.37). Water is indispensable for life. If it is so essential in the physical realm, it is yet more so in the spiritual (Job. 14.7-9; Isa. 44.1-5), here God promised to His people refreshment and reiving in their future recovery. On their restoration this promise will have its complete fulfilment. There will be fresh signs of life as they are revived. They will not be ashamed to own their identification with the Lord through the sovereign grace of God (Isa. 35.7).

The Lord Jesus may have had these portions and Ezek. 47.1, when He uttered the words recorded in John 7.37-39. Here the Spirit is represented as the unfailing inner source of streams of service and testimony. This will have a literal fulfilment in the Kingdom.

Note that Jesus stood, cried, and assured as He invited all to come and be satisfied. In verse 37 He proclaimed salvation, in v. 38 He spoke of the Spirit's blessing, and in v. 39 He speaks of the Spirit's coming.

Christ in glory, the Risen and Exalted Saviour gives the Holy Spirit—as waters of blessing, yea rivers of living water. This is our portion today. Waters vivify (Ez. 47); they fruitify (Ps. 1.3); and gladly satisfy (Ps. 46.4). Caleb gave his daughter the upper and nether springs (Josh. 15.19; Judg. 1.15). Some see in this a double blessing of the Spirit given to us by our Lord. The “nether” blessing of His indwelling presence, and the “upper” spring of His enduring power.

7. Dew. Psalm 133.3; Hosea 14.5,6.

The Reality of His Ministry. The descent of the dew in a calm atmosphere is a symbol of the refreshing power of the Spirit (Ex. 16.13,14). (a) Dew is Divine in its source (Gen. 27.28; Job. 38.28). Dew is one of the gifts of God. So the Spirit is the perfect gift of His grace. Just as sunshine and dew are inseparable in the natural realm, so Christ and the Spirit are inseparable in the spiritual realm (John 14.16; 15.26). God delights to bestow upon us the dew of His Spirit.

(b) Dew is beneficial in its service (Psa. 133.3RV.). The copiousness of the dew of Hermon is well known. The vapour, coming in contact with the snowy sides of the mountain, is rapidly congealed, later in the form of dew it penetrates everywhere and saturates everything. The foot of Hermon is clad with orchards and gardens of marvellous fertility. Dwelling together in unity is likened to the precious ointment running down from the head of Aaron to the skirt of his garments, and to the dew from Hermon. Oneness of spirit is to keep the unity of the Spirit.

(c) Rich in its contents (Deut. 33.2). God's Word drops into the heart and imparts its nature in those who allow it to work. If Christ is in the heart He will by the Spirit be a purifier and sanctifier.

The dew moistens everything where it falls; it leaves not one leaf unvisited. Such is the refreshing, renewing and reviving work of the Spirit (Hos. 14.5). Israel in a coming day will make confession, will desire cleansing and will know healing. They will be marked by beauty and stability. We today can experience strength by the Spirit (Eph. 3.16).

The Manna fell upon the dew (Ex. 16.13, 14). It was a mystery to the Israelites as in the sinless humanity of the Son of God (1 Tim. 3.16).

The practical application of these emblems is important. We are to be harmless as doves (Acts 10.38; Heb. 7.26). Like the anointing oil—consecrated to Christ (Acts 13.2; 15.26). The fire—our hearts should burn with devotion to Christ (Luke 24.32). As wind, energised by the Spirit in service for the Lord (1 Cor. 15.58). The seal reminds us that we belong to the Lord (Eph. 1.13; 1 Cor. 6.20). The overflowing river, a blessing to all we come in contact with (John 7.38). Like the dew, refreshing others by a ministry of Christ (Philemon 7).

REVIEW

The second volume of the Ritchie New Testament Commentaries lies before me. In fact it has taken me a long while to get through it—580 pages, a bulky volume indeed, well printed and well bound. It is attractively produced in the same style as the first volume. The present volume under the general title: "What the Bible Teaches" contains two excellent verse by verse expositions of two of the Gospels—Matthew and Mark. Two Gospels viewing the Lord Jesus from opposite angles: "The King" and "The Perfect Servant"—The Lion and the Ox.

Not only are the two Gospels so contrasting in character but the writers chosen by the publishers of these commentaries are of very different types. Both are men of God however and both equally loved by the people of God. John Heading has expounded Matthew, and Harold Paisley has taken up Mark. The first is an outstanding teacher, the second one of the most used assembly evangelists of today. John Heading's writings, his many books have been a great help to the saints for many years. Harold Paisley—One would not attempt to count the number who have been led to Christ in different parts of the world through the preaching of this servant of the Lord. The first is quiet, retiring, almost shy, possessing a holy serenity. The second is warm, outgoing, expansive with a great gospel appeal. The dear brethren both love and exalt the person of the Lord Jesus, they were each suited to the task set before them and have accomplished it well. These writings are calculated to warm the hearts of all true believers to their glorious Lord.

The general editors (T. Wilson and K. Stapley) say in the preface, "The doctrinal standpoint of the commentaries is based upon the acceptance of the verbal and plenary inspiration of the Scriptures so that their inerrant and infallible teachings are the only rule of conscience . . ." We therefore heartily commend this volume to all our readers. If you have the first volume published you will no doubt want to add this one. I would urge **all** young believers to acquire every volume as it becomes available. Don't miss any! They will form a valuable set of commentaries, far more valuable and sound than many that I see on the bookshelves among the saints today—they are by assembly writers and they are sound!

Price £7.95 obtainable from all Booksellers and from the publishers, John Ritchie Ltd., Kilmarnock, Scotland.

—The Editor.

"JESUS HIMSELF"

by **EDWARD ROBINSON, Exmouth**

If in the sovereign grace and mercy of God we have been brought into the circle of the lovers of our Lord Jesus, most of us have at times come under heart-warming ministry concerning the Person of Christ. The exposition of the truth of scripture in general is necessary and affords light and understanding; but that which specifically is concerned with His Person strangely moves the heart with lasting effect. These remarks are prompted by the writer of the third Gospel, Luke, and his account of the ministry of the Lord in His encounter with the two disciples, disappointedly leaving the divine centre, Jerusalem, after the crucifixion of their Lord, on Whom all their hopes had been centred. (24.13-36).

Luke is a delightful writer, having in large measure a particular appreciation of the grace of God and of Christ. In this chapter, he records how the two talked together of all that had happened, manifestly marked by true affection for their Lord, yet with no great intelligence; 'Jesus **Himself** drew near and went with them.' As always, He responds to affection much more readily than to understanding and knowledge, with great skill He draws out from them their thoughts and reasonings. How much time and care He expends upon them, joining them in that long walk and

would have gone further. But they 'constrained Him,' saying 'Abide with us.' His own heart would have been refreshed by their desires, as indeed to-day it would did we but constrain Him, 'and He entered in to stay with them.' We have referred to heart-warming ministry: they have to say 'was not our heart **burning** within us as He spoke to us on the way and opened to us the Scriptures?' They now knew not only the lowly Jesus, full of moral glory, but a Man in the glory of resurrection.

In but few words there is a definition of Christianity which is simple but pregnant with meaning and purpose—'Christianity is Christ.' There are many instances of conversion which bear in themselves the seed of future full commitment to the Person of Christ. Quite often this is instantaneous; the classical instance, of course, being that of the great apostle, Paul. 'And suddenly there shone round about him a light out of heaven,' and a voice, 'I am Jesus Whom thou persecutest.' And Paul's response, 'Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?' 'And straitway in the synagogues he preached Jesus, that He is the Son of God.' (Acts 9.3,20 J.N.D.). Doubtless Paul was a special vessel; nevertheless a model convert, immediately closely attached to his beloved Saviour.

In the preaching of the gospel it is, of course, all important to make clear that the forgiveness of sins can only be known by faith on the basis of the precious blood of Christ. However, it is essential to emphasize the necessity of a personal encounter with the Lord Jesus, involving personal attachment to Himself. If this attachment on the part of the preacher is also clearly conveyed it may well be that it is also transmitted to the hearer, a foundation which will bear much fruit throughout a pathway in days of testing conditions. The gospel is thus a matter of both heart and mind. John, who leaned on Jesus' breast (the place of closest affection), says in his Gospel (1.12), 'As many as received **Him** to them gave He power (the right) to be children of God, even to those who believe on His Name.' How true in John's heart 'Christianity is CHRIST.' He spoke the language of the Song of Songs, 'He is altogether lovely,' and again 'it is the voice of my beloved' (5.2). He had come under the spell of that voice, as others could say 'never man spake like this Man.' (John 7.46).

Blest Lord, Thou spakest; 'twas Thy voice
That led our hearts to Thee;
That drew us to that better choice,
Where grace has set us free.

Thou wouldest that we should rejoice,
And walk by faith below;
Enough that we have heard Thy voice,
And learned Thy love's deep woe.

Oh to come under His own personal ministration—how it would endear Himself to one's heart, accomplishing so much more than that of His most gifted servant.

But Paul brings to the saints at Corinth an Ephesian touch, 'For I have espoused you unto one Man, to present you a chaste virgin to Christ.' (2 Cor. 11.2. JND). The apostle, in his affection for the Lord (and for the saints, which is not unconnected), tells the Corinthians of the objective of his service, to which he was so whole-heartedly devoted. The church, as the bride, is the love-gift of the Father to the Son, which He has purchased with the blood of His own (i.e. of Christ). (Acts 20.28). It was to be the answer to the sufferings of Christ throughout an endless day, and indeed already, on the part of those—'Thy saints the prize and travail of Thy soul.' One could say :

I have heard the voice of Jesus,
Tell me not of aught beside,
I have seen the face of Jesus,
All my soul is satisfied.

HYMNS AND THEIR WRITERS (28), by Jack Strahan, Enniskillen.

"O HAPPY DAY THAT FIXED MY CHOICE"

PHILIP DODDRIDGE (1702—1751)

Philip Doddridge was the 20th child of his parents and was so feeble when he was born that no-one thought he would live. Nevertheless, he survived and grew up to become one of the most godly and revered men of the 18th century. Both his parents were devout believers in the Lord Jesus. His father was an oil-man by trade. His mother was the daughter of a Lutheran clergyman who, under bitter persecution, had fled from Bohemia to England. Young Philip was brought up in the nurture of the Lord, his mother teaching him the Holy Scriptures before he could read. Those early lessons were given at home around

the open fire-place with its surround of blue Dutch tiles, portraying many bible characters and scenes.

Philip's father and mother died when he was young and at 13 he entered a private school at St. Alban's. There the local minister, Dr. Samuel Clark, a non-conformist, took a deep interest in the lad and acted as a second father to him. When only a boy, he felt called of God to enter the Christian ministry but as an orphan lad without means he saw no possibility of his hope ever being fulfilled. At 16 years of age, the Duchess of Bedford made an approach to him offering to pay for all his education provided he would enter the ministry of the Church of England, but Philip declined that generous offer of the Duchess and threw in his lot with the Dissenters. He sought the Lord's guidance and help through fervent prayer and one day while on his bended knees, a communication reached him from Dr. Clark offering to assist him in his training. In later life, Doddridge often praised God for this "so seasonable an interposition of Divine Providence." He entered Jennings' Non-conformist Academy at Kibworth, Leicestershire, and finished his studies at Hinckley. When at Hinckley, Doddridge preached his first sermon as a young man of 20 years of age, taking as his text, 1 Cor. 16 v. 22, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maran-atha." God blessed that first message and two souls were converted to God as the result. Very shortly afterwards, he accepted his first charge at Kibworth and there he remained for the next seven years.

In 1729, Doddridge received a call to Castle Hill Meeting in Northampton but was reluctant to move away from his flock at Kibworth to the larger responsibility in Northampton. However, God through some very striking circumstances soon made the pathway clear to him and thus convinced that he should follow the Divine leading, he moved to Northampton and there he spent the remaining years of his life. His ministry at Northampton was his real life's work and through his efforts an Academy was opened, where over the subsequent years, some 200 students prepared themselves for the dissenting ministry with much attention being given to sermon preparation, "May I remember that I am not here to acquire a reputation but to dispense the gospel which my Redeemer brought from heaven and sealed with His blood."

Doddridge was wise and kind; he was filled with unaffected goodness and had wide sympathies. In that city he made many friends and through these friendships won many of them for Christ. James Stonhouse, a young doctor of academic brilliance and limitless energies, had just then come to Northampton. This very attentive and popular young doctor was an avowed atheist. Doddridge courted his friendship and that strangely-assorted pair

were thereafter often linked together in enterprising work in Northampton. They were the means of establishing a hospital in that town, something almost unknown in those days outside of the city of London. One day, a lady in her final illness summoned both Dr. Doddridge and Dr. Stonhouse to her bed-side and requested that Doddridge should preach her funeral sermon and that Stonhouse would attend. Though Stonhouse had never before been in a place of worship, he consented to go. He kept his promise and through that message God spoke to his unbelieving heart. As a result he renounced his infidelity and was converted to Christ. Writing to a friend afterwards of that great event, Stonhouse stated in his letter that, "the blessed instrument employed by God for effecting this great work was Dr. Doddridge."

Another incident in the historic ministry of Dr. Doddridge in Northampton is full of interest. An Irishman named O'Connell was convicted of a capital offence and condemned to die. Dr. Doddridge at great trouble and expense thoroughly investigated his case and was convinced of O'Connell's innocence. Judgment, however, had been given and a reprieve could not be granted. On the day of his execution, O'Connell made a final request—that the cart carrying him to the gallows might stop for a few moments at Dr. Doddridge's door. His request was granted. In that solemn moment, he knelt on the minister's doorstep and in the presence of a great crowd was heard to say, Dr. Doddridge, every hair of my head thanks you; every throb of my heart thanks you; every drop of my blood thanks you; for you did your best to save me!"

Dr. Philip Doddridge held a very close friendship throughout life with Dr. Issac Watts, though Watts was by 30 years his senior, and stemming from that friendship came an outstanding literary work, "The Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul," judged by many as the most useful book of the 18th century. It was translated into many languages and the reading of it reached and transformed the sinful heart of the young William Wilberforce who later became the emancipator of the slaves. Doddridge's other famous literary work, "The Family Expositor" was the product of many years devotion and toil and is a commentary on the entire New Testament. In recognition of Doddridge's literary ability and contributions, the University of Aberdeen bestowed on him an honorary doctorate.

Doddridge, as a minister of the gospel, was greatly used of God. He was a text preacher and to impress his text upon the hearts of his hearers, he composed an appropriate hymn to accompany his message. The first stanza of the hymn was given to introduce the subject, then the sermon was preached and at the close the complete hymn was sung by the congregation.

In this way most of Dr. Doddridge's hymns came to be written. They were not published in his life-time but circulated widely in manuscript form. After Doddridge's death in 1751, Job Orton, his life-long friend and biographer collected his hymns and published them in 1755 as "Hymns founded on Various Texts in the Holy Scriptures, by the late Philip Doddridge, D.D." That 1755 collection contained 375 hymns. In 1839 a great-grandson, John Doddridge, re-edited the hymns from the original manuscripts and this work contained 22 additional hymns. Dr. James Hamilton wrote of Doddridge's hymns "at once beautiful and buoyant, these sacred strains are destined to convey the devout emotions of Doddridge to every shore where his Master is loved and where his mother-tongue is spoken."

Doddridge's hymns in common usage today appear in various church hymnals but at least three are familiar to believers in assembly gatherings — "O happy day that fixed my choice," "Grace 'tis a charming sound," and "O God of Bethel, by Whose hand." This last mentioned was David Livingstone's favourite hymn and he was often cheered by it during his lonely wanderings in central Africa; when at last his remains were brought to Westminster Abbey, it was the hymn chosen to be sung beside his grave.

The hymn, "O happy day that fixed my choice" is a great favourite of many and was chosen by Queen Victoria for one of her children who was about to publicly confess her vows to God.

"O happy day that fixed my choice
 On Thee, my Saviour and my God :
 Well may this glowing heart rejoice,
 And tell its raptures all abroad.
 O happy bond, that seals my vows
 To Him who merits all my love :
 Let cheerful anthems fill His house,
 While to that sacred shrine I move.
 'Tis done, the great transaction's done ;
 I am my Lord's, and He is mine :
 He drew me, and I followed on,
 Charmed to confess the voice divine.
 Now rest, my long-divided heart,
 Fixed on this blissful centre, rest :
 With ashes who would grudge to part,
 When called on angels' bread to feast?
 High heaven, that heard the solemn vow,
 That vow renewed shall daily hear :
 Till in life's latest hour I bow,
 And bless in death a bond so dear."

Dr. Doddridge entitled this hymn, "Rejoicing in our Covenant Engagements with God." The words epitomise the whole life-experience of the author. As a boy in his early teens he had made a covenant with God; from year to year he had reviewed it, asking God's pardon for failure to keep it as faithfully as he desired, and "in life's latest hour," in the final stages of consumption in Lisbon on October 26th, 1751, when his wife noticed his lips moving and asked if he wanted anything he replied, "No, I am only renewing my covenant engagements with God."

"Blessed is the man" says James Montgomery, "that can take the words of this hymn and make them his own from personal experience." These words have often been on our lips down here and it may be that in a future day, when the fulness of our salvation bursts upon our consciousness and we gaze into the face of our loving Redeemer that the language of our hearts will be

"O happy day that fixed my choice,
On Thee, my Saviour and my God!"

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ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY



Contents

CHRIST IN THE APOCALYPSE

by J. B. D. Page

FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTALS

by J. B. Hewitt

HEMLOCK by J. Glenville

THE HEIGHTS OF THE HILLS ARE HIS

by A. Naismith

ZECHARIAH by E. R. Bower

THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

by E. Robinson

HE CARETH FOR YOU

by S. T. Dawson

OUTLINES by N. McDonald

THE SERVICE OF THE SISTERS

by J. E. Todd

STUDIES IN JOHN'S GOSPEL

by Wm. Hoste

HYMNS AND THEIR WRITERS

by J. Strahan

HALLELUJAH !

Oh hallelujah, Jesus loves us,
Can't explain the reason why;
Only know that in his mercy,
He came down once from on high.
Jesus loves us,—Jesus loves us,
For He did not pass us by.

Oh hallelujah, Jesus loves us,
This the bible maketh plain;
We believe, and we are saved,
Praise the Lord, we're "Bornagain."
Jesus loves us—Jesus loves us,
For our sins He once was slain.

Oh hallelujah, Jesus loves us,
We keep singing day by day;
No more fear of judgment pending;
All our past is washed away.
Jesus loves us—Jesus loves us,
His shed blood our debt did pay.

Oh hallelujah, Jesus loves us,
'Tis through Christ, that all is well;
Bright our future, bold assurance,
Set for heaven, saved from hell.
Jesus loves us,—Jesus loves us,
Thus his cross, the tidings tell.

—Gordon R. Pennock, Belfast.

878747.

Tune : Glory, Glory everlasting,

Be to Him who bore the cross, etc.

CHRIST IN THE APOCALYPSE (8)

by JOHN B. D. PAGE

THE LAMB IN HEAVEN (ii)

Reading : Revelation 4.4-11.

“Round about the throne . . . were four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment . . .” (4.4). These twenty-four seated elders, arrayed in white and encircling the throne, have been the subject of much speculation concerning their identity. Their number is the same as for the courses of priests, into which David divided the priesthood (1 Chron. 24 : 1-18) and, of course, Zecharias, the father of John the Baptist, belonged to Abia, the eighth course of priests (Luke 1.5, cp. 1 Chron. 24.10). In Zecharias’ day, there was an elder over each course, and so John appears to be alluding to these elders in his vision. This view is put forward by Dr. H. A. Ironside in his comment upon this verse : “When the twenty-four elders met in the temple precincts in Jerusalem, the whole priestly house was represented. The elders in heaven represent the whole heavenly priesthood. In vision they were seen—not as a multitudinous host of millions of saved worshippers, but just twenty-four elders, symbolizing the entire company.”

The “white raiment,” worn by the elders, was not dull but a dazzling white, as the Greek denotes. The same word for “white” is used to describe the clothing of Christ at His transfiguration and that of the angel who rolled back the stone from the sepulchre at the resurrection of Christ. For both the transfigured Christ and the angel, their respective garments are described as “white as snow” (Mark 9.3, Matt. 28.3). Hence, the brilliant white raiment of the elder-priests conveys the thought of their glorified state in heaven. The priests on earth wore linen garments (Ex. 28. 40-42), but the whiteness of their garments is not the thought. Remarkably, the word “linen” is from a root which means ‘separate,’ referring to the distinct threads in the coarse texture of the linen, and thus appropriately signi-

fying the path of separation and holiness to be trodden by the priests. The same requirements are scriptural for believer-priests during their sojourn in the world with the prospect of glory in a coming day. Before leaving this subject of priestly raiment, it may be noted that the priests of Baal, known as **chemarim** (Heb.), were attired in black robes, and they were appointed by man (II Kings 23.5; Hos. 10.5; Zeph. 1.4); whilst the Levitical priests, known as **kohen** (Heb.), were chosen by God and were attired in white linen. White, of course, and not black is associated with the Lord.

These twenty-four elder-priests were seated, but no seats were provided for the priests in the temple or the tabernacle before it, because their work was never finished. Admittedly, "Eli the priest sat upon a seat by a post of the temple" (i.e. the tabernacle) (I Sam. 1.9), but his wrongful action marked the beginning of the decline of the Levitical priesthood. The twenty-four elder-priests were seated in the heavenly temple, indicating their finished work on earth (cp. II Tim. 4.7)

Resplendent with glory, these elders had "on their heads crowns of gold," which were not rulers' diadems but garlands like those presented in the games of ancient Greece. Their garlands of gold were a mark of approval for work done on earth and given as rewards by Christ seated upon His judgment seat (II Cor. 5.10, I Cor. 9.24f). There can be no crowned elders in heaven until after the rapture of the Church, and so the scene described in these verses must be subsequent to that glorious event.

John now saw "seven lamps . . . burning before the throne" (4.5). From his elevated position, the lamps would have been at eye level, and so his attention was focused upon the brilliant light emanating from the seven lamps and not upon the lampstand itself.

The seven lamps, all aglow, were undoubtedly heaven's counterpart of the golden lampstand in the temple, which consisted of a central shaft, from which there were six branches with lamps on their extremities like that in the tabernacle. Although there were ten of these golden lampstands in Solomon's temple, five along each side of the holy place (I Kings 7.48f), there was only one in the second temple, according to Josephus, a fact with which John

was familiar, and apparently only one in the heavenly sanctuary, as seen by the seer.

Still in the heavenly heights, the seer saw "a sea of glass like unto a crystal" (4.6). To many, this is a perplexing verse but, when it is realised that the under-lying imagery is that of the temple, the "sea of glass" may be understood. In Solomon's temple, there stood on the south side of the porch "a molten sea," which was an enormous bowl-shaped vessel made of brass, measuring 30 cubits (i.e. about 60ft.) in circumference, and 10 cubits (i.e. about 20 ft. in diameter. In height, it was 5 cubits (i.e. about 10 ft.) excluding its brass pedestal of 12 oxen, which were arranged in groups of three, facing the four cardinal points of the compass, upon whose backs the vessel rested. When full, it held 3,000 baths (i.e. about 22,500 gallons) of water (II Chron. 4. 2-5,10). Little wonder, the inspired chronicler called this vessel and its vast quantity of water "a molten sea."

The enormous size of this vessel and its pedestal may be appreciated when we realise that a priest, standing beside it, would have been dwarfed and unable to see the water inside. If the same priest had been afforded the facility of a platform to enable him to view this huge vessel at water level, then, as he cast his eye across the water, he would have seen nothing of the vessel itself but only the water, appearing as a miniature sea. This may help us to understand John's vision of "a sea of glass like unto a crystal."

As John looked across the heavenly counterpart at water level he saw nothing of the vessel itself but just its contents, which resembled a sea of crystal clear water without a ripple and as smooth as glass.

Positionally, John says this sea of glass was "before the throne," and so he relates its location to the throne as he did the seven lamps earlier. To John, the throne was the focal point in the heavenly sanctuary as the mercy seat was in the first earthly temple. Initially, he saw the throne in the celestial holy of holies, next he viewed the seven lamps burning brightly in the heavenly holy place, and then he saw the sea of glass like unto a crystal in the court of the temple of heaven, all of which denotes withdrawal from within to without.

From the temple court, John returned in his vision to the inner sanctuary where he saw "in the midst of the

throne, and round about the throne, four living creatures" (4.6, RV), of which the first was like a lion, the second like a calf, the third had a face as a man, and the fourth like a flying eagle. Each of these four living creatures had six wings, and they said unceasingly day and night "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty" (ch. 4.6-8). These mysterious beings had the features of cherubim and also of seraphim with their six wings, similar to those seen in visions by Ezekiel (1.4-28) and Isaiah (6.1-3).

As the seer saw four cherubic beings around the throne in heaven, so we should expect their counterparts in the earthly temple, not in that of John's day because the holy of holies was void and dark but in that built by Solomon.

In the holy of holies of Solomon's temple, the whole of which was overlaid with gold like the rest of the building, there stood two cherubim with outstretched wings, made of olive wood and covered with gold. The tips of their outer wings touched the two side walls of this inner sanctuary and the tips of their inner wings met, under which the ark and the mercy seat with its two cherubim stood (I Kings 6.23-28 and 8.6f).

There is a resemblance between these cherubim with the with the mercy seat in the midst and the four cherubic beings around the throne in heaven. With the Divine Presence, symbolized by the shekinah glory upon the mercy seat, the atmosphere of this innermost chamber in the temple was holiness. No man was permitted to appear before a holy God in the holy of holies except the high priest once a year when he wore white linen and a gold plate upon his forehead engraved with the words "Holiness unto the Lord" (Ex. 28.36).

The heavenly sanctuary was permeated with the presence of a thrice holy God, and the heavens rang with the continual cherubic cry, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty," which were the seraphic words that Isaiah had heard (Isa. 6.3). The four living creatures paid homage to the Divine Occupant of the throne and rendered glory, honour and thanks to Him, whilst the twenty-four elders prostrated themselves in worship before Him, casting their crowns before the throne, and gave glory, honour and power to Him for His creatorial work (4.9-11).

(To be continued)

FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTALS

by J. B. HEWITT, Chesterfield

(33) THE BAPTISM IN THE SPIRIT

The Baptism **in** the Spirit is mentioned in the Scriptures only seven times. In the four Gospels it is viewed **PROPHETICALLY**, as being yet in prospect. (Matt. 3.11; Mark 1.8; Luke 3.16; John 1.33). In Acts 1.5, it is viewed as imminent. These passages have a future point of time in view.

In Acts 2.1-4; 11.15-17, the baptism is viewed **HISTORICALLY**. The sole reference in the Epistles in 1 Cor. 12.13 views the baptism as **DOCTRINAL** and points backward to Pentecost. Pentecost was the necessary complement of Calvary. This Baptism was an historical act, never to be repeated. Some confuse the words "baptism" and "filling," they are opposite in meaning. It has been said, "The baptism is the historical event; the filling is the human experience." It is fitting that the Spirit came to Jerusalem, the place of the Lord's rejection and crucifixion. Pentecost was celebrated fifty days after the feast of first fruits (Lev. 23. 15-19), and refers to believers in relation to the Risen Lord. The Church was being formed as the Body of Christ upon earth—the Day of the Spirit had begun.

The descent of the Spirit in Acts 2, is heavenly in origin, divine in character, powerful in manifestation, and wonderful in effect. This event is **HISTORICAL** (Acts 2.1). It is as historical as Bethlehem when Christ was born, and as Calvary when He died. The Day of Pentecost must follow fifty days after "Christ our passover was sacrificed for us." See the type in Lev. 23. 15,16. So we look back to Jerusalem and the day of Pentecost when the Spirit came and formed the Church.

It is **UNIQUE**. It never happened before and has never occurred again. Believers were baptized in the element of the Spirit by the Risen Lord Himself. Thus the Church was inaugurated as the spiritual body of Christ (1 Cor. 12.13).

It is **COLLECTIVE** or **CORPORATE** (1 Cor. 12.13 R.V.). It is not individual or to be prayed for, as Pente-

costalist error suggests. Paul states clearly that this is the baptism by the Lord in the Spirit into the mystical body of Christ, into one body. Both are in the past tense and the collective sense. Not one Christian is left out; all who are called by God's grace are brought into the membership of this body, immersed in the Spirit.

At Pentecost God's sovereign purpose and man's essential preparation came to maturity, and immediately there followed a spontaneous Divine intervention (Acts 2.2).

It is **UNIVERSAL**. Paul is referring to an initial and a universal experience in which every Christian has shared. This is illustrated in relation to sin in Rom. 5.12, the solidarity of the human race in sin, for **ALL** have sinned in Adam. In 1 Cor. 10 all of Israel was baptized in the cloud and in the sea. Both were historical and never repeated. The baptism unto Moses as leader was corporate and national. The "baptism in the Spirit" is the doctrinal explanation of Acts 1.5.

It is **SUDDEN AND FINAL**. The suddenness of the of the coming of the Spirit (v. 2) was a corporate experience, "the rushing mighty wind." It was visible (v. 3 "like fire" and audible—"sound of wind." In verse 2 it is general, in verse 3 special. It has to do with our position in Christ before God and **NOT** our moral or spiritual condition like the Corinthians.

The distinction between the "baptism" and "filling" is of vital importance. By the baptism we are put into the element, we are in the Spirit. By the filling, the element is put into us, the Spirit is in us. Immediately a man becomes a Christian the Holy Spirit takes up residence within him (Rom. 8.9; 1 Cor. 6.19). This is the indwelling of the Spirit and is permanent.

The filling with the Spirit is repeated and in Eph. 5. 18-20, is associated with "psalms, hymns, spiritual songs and thanks." Today, we have the abiding significance of the Spirit's presence and power: (a) the abundance of the Spirit's gifts (Rom. 12.3-8; Eph. 4.11-16; 1 Cor. 12.5-11); (b) the admittance and enjoyment of the Spirit's blessings (Eph. 1.3); (c) the assurance of the Spirit's help (1.8; Rom. 8.26). These are the inheritance of every saint.

At Pentecost heavenly power was given (Acts 2.1-3),

received (v.3-5), used and manifested (v.5-11). What a transformation was wrought in these disciples—they were Spirit-controlled men. They received entirely new insight into the significance of O.T. Scriptures (2.11). The verses in Joel 2. 28-32, do not refer to the Church, but to the future of judgment, these are the sixth seal of Rev. 6.12,13.

Speaking in Tongues

There is much confusion in the minds of many believers regarding speaking with tongues.

The Pentecostal group of churches holds that speaking with tongues is the necessary accompaniment and evidence of the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

There are only four passages in the N.T. where this is found and it is significant that three of these are in the Acts: 2.1-4; 10.44-46; 19.1-7 and 1 Cor. 12.10 and chapter 14. In each incident the “sign” character of the gift of tongues is emphasized (1 Cor. 14.22; Heb. 2.4).

(1) Notice that the gift on the day of Pentecost was characterised by intelligibility (Acts 2.7,8); whereas in 1 Cor. 14.2, the characteristic was unintelligibility.

The languages these disciples spoke were not “unknown” tongues. There were existing languages understood by the people who gathered, no interpreter was needed. The Greek word translated “tongue” is *dialektos*,” the same as our word “dialect,” translated “language” in verse 6.

This gift was given to convince the crowds that they were in the presence of the supernatural. Neither the disciples nor Peter preached the evangel in other tongues. Peter preaching in his own language with which the majority present would be familiar. Tongues were evidential of the wonderful works of God, rather than evangelistic in purpose.

(2) Caesarea has Gentiles in view. The gift of tongues was rendered necessary by the reluctance of Peter to take the Gospel to Gentiles (v.45,47).

God demonstrated to Peter that the SAME Spirit had been given to the Gentiles as to Jewish believers at Pentecost in Acts 2. Note Peter’s words in Acts 11.15-17. There is no “tarrying meetings.” The Spirit was neither prayed for nor sought. It was bestowed on the assembled company here, and in Ephesus, NOT on selected or specially prepared individuals.

(3) At Ephesus the Jewish disciples of John had heard

nothing of the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 19.1-11). Here is an indication of the progressive nature in God's ways with His people. The old, once in order is now replaced and superseded by the dispensation of the Spirit.

There are significant omissions of tongue-speaking in the book of Acts. There is no mention of the 3,000 converted at Pentecost; nor the 5,000 later; nor of the great company of priests.

The majority of those converted came to faith in Christ but did not speak in tongues.

(4) The gift of tongues dispensed by the Spirit in 1 Cor. 12.10; is discouraged in chapter 14 unless interpretation follows, v.4,5,9,27,28.

The bestowal of the gift is temporary and selective, only certain spoke with tongues. They were for a sign to them that believe not (v. 22), it could bring reproach and shame (v. 23).

Tongues and prophecies edified in an interim period, and were discontinued when the holy canon of Scripture was complete (1 Cor. 13.8,9).

I have met many godly, gifted missionaries to whom this gift would have been most useful on the foreign field. Some spent years in learning the language of the people.

Any gift that produces confusion rather than order, is evidence that it is spurious, for God is not the author of confusion (1 Cor. 14.33).

After visiting a brother in hospital, a few days prior to his homecall, John Glenville penned the following :

HOMECALL

That radiant smile, reflecting beck'ning glory,
Like brilliant sunshine 'thwart the dark'ning cloud,
That radiant smile—it told its own sweet story
Of joy unspeakable, of trust unbowed.
That handshake true, so firm and yet so tender,
Telling of faith triumphant over all,
That handshake—heralding the untold splendour
Awaiting but the Master's loving call.

—John Glenville.

'THE HEIGHTS OF THE HILLS ARE HIS'

by A. NAISMITH

(iv) MOUNT ZION

Mount Zion, spelt with a 'Z' in the Authorized Version of the Old Testament, and with an 'S' in the A.V. of the N.T., is associated with Mount Moriah geographically, because of its proximity to it, with Mount Olivet eschatologically because of its place in Messiah's coming Kingdom, and, by contrast, with Mount Sinai spiritually and dispensationally because of its significance for the elect of God. It is described in Ps. 48.2 as 'beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth.'

Zion was one of the hills on which the city of Jerusalem was built. Opinions differ as to the topography of this mountain but, while there are those who would identify it with a hill on the S.W. of the city and others who favour an eminence on the N.W., the site now generally claimed for Zion is the highest summit of a ridge of hills on the East side of Jerusalem running due South from Mount Moriah. Ophel, meaning 'High place,' is an alternative name for this hill. Originally a Jebusite fortress, it was captured by David who called it 'the city of David' (2 Sam. 5.6-7; 1 Chron. 11.4-5). With the Valley of Gihon on the West, the Valley of Hinnom on the South and Moriah's summit on which stood the Temple of Jehovah on the North, it could only be assailed from the North West. Thus the mountain was splendidly adapted to be the site of a magnificent citadel and was almost impregnable. It is sometimes called 'the hill of the Lord,' sometimes God's 'holy hill of Zion,' and often referred to as Jehovah's dwelling-place. In some passages in the Psalms Zion is synonymous with 'the city of David,' and occasionally, with Mount Moriah, it connotes the site of the Temple. Its meaning is at times widened to embrace the whole city of Jerusalem and even the Jewish nation.

The name 'Zion' has had a variety of interpretations. The meanings, 'parched place' and 'dry rock,' given by some authorities certainly indicate a rugged eminence not subjected to the skill of the farmer or embellished by the art

of the builder. Dr. W. Graham Scroggie renders it 'conspicuousness,' and this meaning accords with its lofty situation and distinguished position. Dr. Young says the name signifies 'fortress,' and with this the Westminster Dictionary of the Bible is in agreement, giving the meaning as 'citadel.' In these various significations we may possibly trace the several stages in its development: first as a parched, barren, rocky hill at the time of its capture by David, then the splendidly conspicuous site of Judah's royal city, and later the well-nigh impregnable citadel that became the wonder and terror of surrounding nations. The name occurs six times in the historical books of the O.T., 37 times in the Psalter, once in Solomon's writings, about 80 times in the writings of Isaiah and Jeremiah, the pre-exilic prophets, not once in the books of Ezekiel and Daniel the prophets of the captivity, and about 30 times in the Minor Prophets.

In connection with Mount Zion several well-known figures of speech are used, namely :

i. **Simile** in Ps. 125.1. 'They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abideth for ever.' While in nearly every particular there are vast differences between the human soul and Zion's citadel, they are alike in one characteristic, viz., **endurance**.

ii. **Personification** in Ps. 48.11; Is. 49.14; 69.8, where Zion is spoken of as rejoicing, arguing with God and travailing in childbirth.

iii. **Apostrophe** in Is. 52.1, when the prophet addresses inanimate Zion as if it possessed the potentiality of pulsating with vital energy—'Awake, awake: put on strength, O Zion.'

iv. **Metonymy** in Zech. 2.7, in which the reference is to the people who should have the characteristics of Zion's inhabitants, set apart for God and separated from evil.

v. **Synodoche** in Ps. 87.2, where the part is used to connote the whole. 'The Lord loveth the gates of Zion' is an affirmation of Jehovah's special affection for His people dwelling within the gates of the city built on that hill.

vi. **Metaphor** in Ps. 50.2, where Zion is called 'the perfection of beauty,' a precious gem brillinat with Divine radiance.

In Scripture Mount Zion is viewed in the past, in the present and in the future, and there are at least two aspects of each time phase. In the past it is viewed literally and

figuratively. The Zion of the present is spiritual as well as material, and in the future there will be a celestial as well as a terrestrial Zion.

1. The Zion of the Past

Mount Zion found no place in history before the reign of King David. The Jebusites in whose possession it was were so confident that such a fortified eminence could defy capture that, addressing the would-be conqueror in scornful tones, they said, 'Except thou take away the lame and the blind, thou canst not come up hither.' Like the ancient castles built on towering steep rocks, it seemed to be unassailable. But David did subjugate the Jebusites, captured their citadel and made the hill the site of his capital, the city of David, enhancing with artificial strength the natural fortifications. David's first concern after he discomfited his enemies, the Philistines, was to find a suitable place for the Ark of Jehovah. From Kirjath-jearim they transported it on a new cart as far as the threshing-floor of Nachom or Chidon, when the oxen drawing the cart stumbled and Uzza, one of the drivers, laid his hand on the ark to steady it. For this act, no doubt well-intended, God punished him by death. For the next three months the presence of the ark in place of the Philistinian expedient and appointed the priests and Levites to carry it on their shoulders to a tent he had specially prepared for it on Mount Zion (2 Sam. 6.17). The ark remained there until the completion of Solomon's temple when it was moved into its more permanent sanctuary on Mount Moriah (2 Chron. 3.1; 5.2-10), the hill to the north of Zion. That is the Zion of the past, the Zion of Ps. 132, the first of the final trio of 'Songs of Ascents.'

Thus on Mount Zion stood fortified towers, emblem of strength, royal palaces, emblem of dominion, and a sanctuary containing the ark, the habitation on earth of the Almighty, emblem of holiness. 'Walk about Zion, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof; mark ye well her bulwarks; consider her palaces, that ye may tell it to the generation following' (Ps. 48.12-13). The citadel, palaces and sanctuary are no longer to be seen on the literal mountain, for the temporal Zion now lies in the dust. In the midst of taunting foes the broken line that once was Zion's zone stands in ruins, as in the days of Nehemiah. Yet figuratively, from the reign of King David until the captivity, it

was the emblem of God's presence among the people of His choice (Ps. 50.2; 76.2; 28.68). Like the literal Zion, the nation of Israel lies in ruins, bereft of its pristine glory and no longer 'the joy of the whole earth' but the centre of strife.

2. The Zion of the Present

As Micah the Morasthite predicted during the reign of good King Hezekiah, the material Zion has become a ploughed field (Jer. 26.18; Mic. 3.12). In describing his visit to Mount Zion in **The Land and the Book**, Dr. Thomson writes, 'that such a place should become a common wheat-field where, generation after generation, the husbandman should quietly gather rich harvests was, indeed, a most daring prediction, but it has long since been most literally fulfilled. As such, with the cutting off of Israel, it passes from Divine recognition for the time being, and its place in the Divine plan is taken by the spiritual Zion, the Zion of Ps. 133, on which the Divine blessing falls as He waters it with the dew of heaven. The coming of the Holy Spirit, symbolized by the dew, is the source of power and blessing to the spiritual Zion, which is 'the general assembly and church of the firstborn.' The opening word of Ps. 133, 'Behold!' is, as Dr. Bullinger says, the word of the Spirit, just as 'yea' is the word of the Father and 'verily' the word of the Son. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, describing the awesome terrors of Sinai, assures those believers in Jesus that they had not come to that mountain that fumed forth the righteous requirements of the Law and the fearful penalties of transgression and disobedience (Heb. 12.18-21). That was the Old Covenant that has been superseded. Now we are 'not under law but under grace,' not trembling with fear under the Old Covenant but rejoicing in the unconditional provisions of the New Covenant of Christ's blood. 'Ye are come unto Mount Sion' (Heb. 12.22). This is the spiritual Zion of the present. Like the Zion of old, it is the place of strong defence, of Divine dominion and of God's habitation by His Spirit.

3. The Zion of the Future

Ps. 134, the last of the Songs of Ascents, envisages the arrival in the Temple of the watch appointed for the night at the close of a day of worship. The first two verses contain the song of the retiring congregation as they salute

the Levites, priests and sentry whose night watch has just commenced. The watchmen reply in the last verse, 'The Lord that made heaven and earth shall bless thee out of Zion.' It is the psalm that anticipates the blessing of the coming Millennial day when the Sun of Righteousness will rise with healing on His wings. Then Zion will be the centre from which Israel, and through Israel the whole habitable earth, will be blessed in that day when the purpose of God to head up all things in Christ will be fulfilled and He sets His King upon His holy hill of Zion (Ps. 2.6). As Joel predicted, deliverance will come in Zion, and again the holy mountain will be the literal dwelling-place of Jehovah on earth.

But, before the terrestrial Zion is restored to its exalted position and becomes again 'the city of the great King,' the Lamb of God, the Redeemer, will stand with a blameless, guileless company of His redeemed, the firstfruits to God and the Lamb, on the celestial Mount Zion (Rev. 14.1). These will form a part of the true Israel of God and be eternally associated with the King in His heavenly kingdom. How reassuring, then, and full of promise are the words, 'Ye are come to Mount Sion'!

ZECHARIAH

by **E. R. BOWER** (continued)

THE DAY OF THE LORD. (14.1-21).

vv. 1-2. "A day is coming for the Lord" is the unusual but more accurate rendering. See v. 1; Joel 1.15; Rev. 11 1-13. Jerusalem is in Gentile hands and the spoil is being shared among the conquerors (Joel 13.2-3) and now there is but a sixth of the (Jewish?) population left, and they will be permitted to remain. Does this remnant equate the 144,000 of Rev. 7.1-8, and 14.1, or the worshippers of Rev. 11.1 who appear to be protected in occupied Jerusalem during the days of the two witnesses?

v.3. "Then . . ." cf. the earthquake here with that of Rev. 11.13. In recent times the world has watched the siege of a city by a force which appeared implacable and merci-

less. It has been witness to scene of otherwise unbelievable horrors. These scene will be as nothing compared to the horror which faces Jerusalem in "that day" and, let us face it, the Church should see in the history now taking place before their eyes in the Middle East—and indeed throughout the world—the darkening clouds of coming doom. Jerusalem encircled, and our Lord warned that ". . . when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed by armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains . . ." (Luke 21.20-21). "Then shall Jehovah go forth, and fight."

vv. 4-5. As a result of a violent and unprecedented seismic upheaval, great changes will take place in the area of Jerusalem and the prophet reminds his readers of how the people fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah (circa mid-eighth cent. B.C.). This is the hour of Israel's need, especially of Jerusalem. As God came down upon Sinai and the mountains quaked "greatly," (Ex. 19. 11,18), so now He will appear upon the Mount of Olives—that sacred mount from which our Lord ascended after His resurrection (Acts 1.12), and the mount will split in two from east to west. Do these earth-shaking events appear impossible? Scientists today are waiting for the "Big Quake." We might remind ourselves of the fact that the northern section of the Great Rift Valley which extends southward from the Taurus Mountains of Asia Minor passes through Israel and then extends via the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aquba, the Red Sea through Africa to the east coast near Safala in Mozambique. It has been suggested that the cause of this 5,000 mile rift in the earth's crust was caused by "the two sides having been upraised by being thrust against the block of material beneath the floor of the valley." Another view stresses the impossibility of this relative to the Dead Sea, Red Sea and other areas in Africa. Whatever the cause, the fact is that what has happened before can, and will, happen again. The earthquake in the days of Uzziah (here, and Amos 1.1) must have been very severe for it to have remained in the public memory for so long. Josephus (Ant. 9.10.4—but not apparently in all copies of his history) speaks of an earthquake on the day that Uzziah sinned by offering incense (2 Chron. 27. 16-21). The Temple was damaged and there was a landslip of "half the

mountain top.” (cf. Ezek. 38. 16-23). “My mountains” (margin) — the mountains of Israel — an often used phrase. See Ezek. 38 and 39. In these mountains, the newly opened valley will be a place of refuge, and then, “the Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with Thee.” Note the change of pronoun. The prophet was waiting, as all true Israel, for that long-promised moment, and he was excited at the prospect. Are we? “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave Himself for us . . .” (Tit. 2. 11-14). “And all the saints with Thee.” The very thought thrills us; a thrill of expectation, for before “that day” our Lord will come FOR us. Refs: Deut. 33.2; Dan. 7.9-10; Hab. 3.3-5; Jude 14; Rev. 19.11-16.

v. 6. Probably the best commentary upon this “uncertain” verse is Joel 2.2,10, 30-32; Acts 2.19-20; Is. 13.9-13; Matt. 24.29-30; Is. 60.19-20; Rev. 21.25; 22.5.

v. 7. This day is unique. “The day shall be one” (margin) i.e. one single day. A day of murk; then, suddenly, when darkness is expected, it is light. Again it is Isaiah (60.1.2, 19,20) who thrills us, “Arise, shine (or, be enlightened) for thy Light has come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.” Refs. Is. 58.8-12; 60.12,19.20.

v. 8. Oh, what a day when the living waters flow! See Ezek. 47.1-11; Joel 3.18; Rev. 22.1-2. Jerusalem’s water will flow from INSIDE the city and not, as of old from outside. It will flow from the Temple itself, and we pause to reflect that the waters seen by Ezekiel flowed from the House eastwards, passing to the south side of the altar and through the south side of the outer gate. Then the stream crossed the outer court of the Temple. Worshippers entered the outer court by way of the north gate or southgate and left by the gate opposite that at which they had entered. Did the worshippers of necessity pass through the waters, for there is no west gate?

v. 9. “King of kings and Lord of lords—Allelulia: for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth” (Rev. 19.6,16). The daily prayer of Israel is at last a reality, “Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord.” (Deut. 6.4) but not for Israel only; it is for all the earth.

vv. 10-11. Here is a further result of the great earthquake, and a picture is of a plain like the Arabah forty miles long running north-east to south-west and apparently levelling

off some of the mountains of Judah. Is this plain the very great valley of v.4? for there the valley runs east and west, and the mountains move north and south with Jerusalem raised high upon the northern slopes of the valley or plain—a grand vista. Refs. Ezek 40.2; Ps. 48 (2); Is. 14.13; Mic. 4.1; Ps. 104.5-9. Jerusalem abides still (v.11 margin). Is. 22.3.

vv. 12-15. The final plague. Anyone who has seen an account of the first atom bomb upon Hiroshima will see in v. 12 a scene highly reminiscent. The 'plague' is accompanied by an unprecedented panic. This is a scene of terrible horror and suffering, but Judah, in a way which is not made clear, escapes the plague and goes out to join in the rout of their enemies, and to collect the booty. Israel has had its holocaust, but that was as nothing compared with the events of this chapter. See Hag. 2.21-22. This plague and ensuing panic are from the Lord, Jehovah. This does not necessarily mean that He will not turn the intentions and inventions of the nations against themselves. See, for instance, Ps. 9.16; 1 King. 12.15; Rev. 17.17; and cf. Is. 10. Mankind will reap the terrible harvest of that which they have sown., for it is the "Most High" who rules in the kingdoms of men. (Dan. 4.17). "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." (2 Pet. 3.10). (To be continued)

THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

by EDWARD ROBINSON, Exmouth

It would seem that in the understanding of this feature of the truth we could never reach finality. Indeed one feels that, if there is to be increase of understanding in the eternal state, it could be only on this line. However, there is little doubt that in so writing (Col. 1.9-15), Paul has in mind the present 'learning time.' He writes (v. 10), 'That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the **knowledge of God.**' The study of the Scriptures of truth must always be profitable but this kind of knowledge goes deeper than the mental acquisition of understanding of truth. Of necessity it must involve a very close walk and relationship with God Himself and much prayerful waiting upon the Holy Spirit. These

first six verses in Colossians 1 suggest that this is no mere academic exercise but truth in the soul having very practical results and fruit.

v. 9. Here, Paul asserting his apostolic authority, but associating with him Timothy, 'the brother' (a dignified title) speaks of the faith and love (a delightful combination, as grace and truth) marking the Colossians. Good material to whom to expound such truths. They pray that the Colossians may be filled with the full knowledge of God's will, wisdom and spiritual understanding.

v. 10. Further, that they may walk worthily of the Lord, fruitful and increasing in the knowledge of God. Here is a state suited to the beginning of increase of the highest order.

v. 11. Strengthened with God's glorious power, able to endure (contrary to nature) long-suffering with joyfulness.

v. 12. Expressing appreciation of the Father's work in fitting us to share 'the inheritance of the saints in light.'

v. 13. The Father has delivered us from the thralldom of darkness, translating us (as of a foretaste of the rapture) into the kingdom of the Son of His love.

v. 14. **In Whom** (the Son, and not just by), we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

v. 15. The glory of Christ, image of the invisible God, now seen in the Person of the Son, firstborn of all creation.

Here then, is set forth before us One of Whom our knowledge is to increase, God. And in order to make this mystery possible, He has been declared by One, Himself God, the Son in incarnation. He could say 'he that has seen Me has seen the Father.' Again, another example of how comprehensive a single verse of Scripture can be, 'and without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness (piety), God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.' (1 Tim. 3.16). Familiarity sometimes dulls the sensitivities concerning so stupendous a statement, '**God manifest in flesh.**' 'And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth.' (John 1.14). How favoured we are to have such truths committed to us and how well worthy of the closest study in order to be in the gain of such ministry from the word of God.

We have then, in the Son of God a full and perfect delineation, here in Manhood, of all that God is. In Him we may learn all that is possible to be known at the present moment of time. It is clear that increase of the inner knowledge of God requires more than the study of the letter of Scripture. Of necessity it involves personal, constant communion with divine Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is a whole-time pre-occupation, a committal of heart and soul in meditation. Paul expresses something of this desire, saying, 'that I may know Him (Christ) and the **power** of His resurrection.' (Phil. 3.10). He goes on to acknowledge that his desire was not yet fulfilled but that he was moving forward to reach it. So may our object in our spiritual life be to devote ourselves to this increase in the knowledge of God until we are called into His presence eternally.

HE CARETH FOR YOU

by **SAMUEL T. DAWSON, Banbridge**

In his first epistle Peter mentions a number of things which are "of God." For our private meditation these are as follows:—

Foreknowledge of God	1.2.
Power of God	1.5.
Word of God	1.23.
Chosen of God	2.4.
People of God	2.10.
Will of God	2.15.
Sight of God	3.4.
Will of God	3.17.
Longsuffering of God	3.20.
Right hand of God	3.22.
Will of God	4.2,19.
Grace of God	4.10.
Oracles of God	4.11.
House of God	4.17.
Flock of God	5.2.
Mighty hand of God	5.6.
Grace of God	5.12.

In 5.7 we are introduced to His care. This is something very sweet and precious to the saints, and while we must admit that the words "of God" are absent, yet all will

agree that God Himself is the source of this care. The qualification for being in the good of this care at the end of v. 7, is to carry out the injunction at the beginning of this verse, 'casting all your care upon Him.' This word 'casting' is the same as that used in Luke 19.35 where we read of the disciples casting their garments upon the colt which the Saviour had requested them to bring. How often we take our cares to our fellows instead of simply casting the care upon Him, just as the garments were cast upon the colt.

A lovely illustration of this is found in John 20. There Mary comes to the sepulchre while it is yet dark and seeth the stone rolled away. After telling the others, they come and go, and in verse 11 Mary is left alone, weeping, 'and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre.' There she sees two angels who enquire "why weepest thou?" They hear her unburden her heart to them as she says, "They have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid Him."

They have no reply for her, but the One she supposed to be the gardener, not only wanted to know why she was weeping, but whom she was seeking. This gave Mary another opportunity of making known her deep anxiety. We see that the Lord has the only answer that will satisfy her heart. In verse 9 we are told that they knew not the scripture that He must rise again from the dead. To know where the supposed gardener had laid Him would have pleased her much.

As the Lord looked on her, and He alone knew the depths of her agony of soul, He spoke one word to her and that was enough to dispel all the wondering and anxiety. While angels showed an interest they could not bring the relief that the Lord had brought to her. His presence meant everything and that she appreciates. One word from each to the other (v. 16), changed the whole situation. So with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego long ago—being in the trial **for** God was one thing, being in it **with** God was more. So it should be with us all.

The lesson for us is that when circumstances change, call God into them by casting upon Him your care, as though you cast a garment on the colt, and leave it all with Him, for 'He careth for you!'

Outlines

by NELSON McDONALD (Scotland)

(1) THE WORD OF GOD

A. The Preciousness of the Word. 1 Sam. 3.1,7,21; Jos. 1.8.

- (i) It convicts. Heb. 4.12.
- (ii) It converts. Ps. 19.7. We cannot make improvements in the Word of God, but it can make improvements in us.
- (iii) It cleanses. John 15.3; Ps. 119.9.
- (iv) It consecrates. John 17.17.
- (v) It corrects. 2 Tim. 3.16.
- (vi) It controls. Ps. 119.11; 40.8; 37.31.
- (vii) It confirms. Ps. 119.28; John 8.31; Ecc. 12.11.
- (viii) It cheers. Ps. 119.162; Jer. 15.16.
- (ix) It councils. Ps. 119.130; Luke 4.17; 24.32.
- (x) It comforts. Ps. 119.50; 1 Thess. 4.18; 2 Thess. 2.17.
- (xi) It compensates. Ps. 119.72,127; 19.10,11.

B. The Purity of the Word. Ps. 119.140.

- (i) A Fire to Melt. Jer. 23.29.
- (ii) A Scalpel to Pierce. Heb. 4.12.
- (iii) It Cuts to Harden. Acts 5.33; 7.54; Heb. 3.7,15.

C. The Power of the Word. Ps. 29.4; Heb. 11.3.

- (i) It is able to make wise unto salvation. 2 Tim. 3.15.
- (ii) It is able to save. James 1.21; 1 Pet. 1.23,25.
- (iii) It is able to build up. Acts 20.32.
- (iv) It is able to judge. John 12.48; 2 Kings 22.13; Hosea 6.5.

D. The Perpetuity of the Word. Matt. 24.35; Luke 16.17; Isa. 40.8.

It is the living Word for it takes its character from God Ps. 42.2; 84.2. It could be in your hands, your head, your home, but to profit by it, it must be in our hearts. Ps. 119.11.

Moses had it in his hand (Ex. 32.15), the lawyer had it in his head (Luke 10.27), multitudes have it in their homes, but it does not profit them.

E. The Pondering of the Word. 2 Tim. 4.2.

It is not enough to read the word, there must be meditation on the word—chewing the cud. Ps. 119.15,23,48, 78,97,99,148.

F. The Preaching of the Word. 2 Tim. 4.2.

Our responsibility—Mk. 16.15,16; 1 Cor. 9.16,17.

Our privilege—Rom. 1.14-16; Acts 8.4, 8.35.

THE SERVICE OF THE SISTERS

by J. E. TODD

The principle that a little example is worth a lot of instruction is used in the book of the Acts of the Apostles. Here is a gallery of pen-portraits of early Christians. Worthy examples of the Christian faith, 'Whose faith follow' (Heb. 13.7). Such men as Peter, John, Barnabas, Stephen, Philip, Cornelius, Paul, Silas, Timothy and Apollos. Also such women as Tabitha, Lydia and Priscilla. Their testimony of faithfulness to the Lord and service to His church sets a shining example for all christian sisters.

Tabitha, the Social Worker (9 : 36-42)

It is to be feared that in our society the good work of the 'official' social workers is outweighed by the increasing lack of 'good-neighbourliness' due to housewives being too busy with their careers and jobs. The need for the good work of practical concern and help for others is as great today as in Tabitha's day. And what better sphere for the christian sister to begin to practise 'social care' than in her own local assembly and neighbourhood? The need is great, the avenues innumerable and the scope limitless. Tabitha's particular talents and circumstances opened up for her an avenue of service in making garments for widows. Widows in those days were in great material need (no pensions), to provide clothing was a practical way of meeting that need. Good works are a sphere of christian service for which sisters are well equipped by character, talents and circumstances. Perhaps one of the greatest needs in our society is to visit the elderly who live alone. A regular visit to lend a listening ear, advice on pensions and rent rebates (and decimal currency still!), a little shopping and baking, the value of this work far outweighing the time

spent. The avenues of such service are innumerable and opportunities to comfort saints and introduce the word of the Gospel abound. If there is a will to be a Tabitha, a little thought as to ones talents, circumstances and opportunities will open up an endless vista of service.

Would your good works in your assembly and neighbourhood be so sorely missed that tears would be shed at your departure (v. 39)? The real miracle of this passage is not so much that Peter raised the dead, but that one life could so affect so many other lives for good that God Himself considered it worthwhile to prolong that life!

Lydia, the Businesswoman (16 : 11-15 and 40)

The Roman Empire was such that travel was widespread by road and sea, therefore trade flourished. Business was not a male preserve, businesswomen were an essential part of the Roman world. Lydia was one of these, a dealer in the high quality purple-dyed cloth for which her native city of Thyatira was famous. Her present centre of operation was the Roman city of Philippi in the province of Macedonia, where she had a house. It appears that Philippi was without a Jewish synagogue. Was this because there was not the necessary quorum of ten Jewish men, or had the Jews been expelled from this Roman city as they had from Rome itself (Acts 18.2)? However, Lydia was a 'God-fearer,' a Gentile who had come to believe in the true and living God. She met for prayer with likeminded women by the river Gangas. At the preaching of Paul she was converted to Christ. But she not only opened her heart, she opened her home. It was her home, not her business, which proved to be useful to the Lord. The home is the particular sphere of a woman's influence and its importance is great in the purposes of God. Lydia opened her home to Paul and his fellow evangelists and also the newly formed church (v. 40). The ways in which a Christian sister can use her home for the purposes of the kingdom of God are endless.

The local church is not the only unit used by God, he also uses the family. The men of God in the scriptures were the products of godly families. Paul said of Timothy, 'The unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also' (2 Tim. 1.5). The influence of the woman in the home is paramount. Also the backbone of

the local church is the godly families within it. In the home and the family the christian sister has another limitless sphere of service.

Priscilla the Teacher (18 : 1-3, 24-28).

Priscilla is often mentioned with her husband Aquila as co-workers with Paul (Acts 18. 2, 18 and 26, Rom. 16.3, 1 Cor. 16.19, 2 Tim. 4.19). Two people working independently can do two peoples' work, but a husband and wife team, like Aquila and Priscilla, can do much more. Priscilla's particular talent was teaching by personal witness. Priscilla and her husband (her name is mentioned first in R.V.) took aside Apollos, the eloquent preacher, and taught him the way of God more accurately. Perhaps as much, or even more, Christian teaching is imparted by personal conversation and personal example than by preaching from the pulpit. Indeed preaching is only talking about Christianity, Christianity itself is a life lived in communion with the Lord. A sister who is well established in the knowledge and practise of the scriptures has an avenue of service in personally witnessing to the whole counsel of God by life and lip. 'The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed' (Titus 2. 3-5). Such a person was Priscilla.

As by the law of averages the sisters make up half of every local church, and often more in practice, their participation in the work of God and His gospel is vital. Paul said, 'Those women which laboured with me in the gospel' (Phil. 4.3). These three sisters portrayed in the book of Acts set a practical example. Tabitha of good works, Lydia of hospitality and Priscilla of personal witness. 'Whose faith follow' (Heb. 13.7).

NOTE—Again we remind our readers that John Glenville's new address is printed in the panel on the rear cover.

STUDIES IN JOHN'S GOSPEL

(Christ, the Interpreter of the Father)

by WM. HOSTE

Chapter 1—IN THE WORLD

"No man hath seen God at any time, the Only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (John 1.18).

The word here translated "declared" is often used in Greek writings of the interpretation* of things sacred, and divine—oracles, visions, dreams, and is that from which our word "exegesis" is derived.

The exegesis of a passage is its interpretation, as distinct from its application. The Lord Jesus interprets the Father; the Holy Ghost applies the truth to our souls through the Word, and we interpret it, for better or worse, in our lives, that "if any obey not the Word, they may be won without the word," like worldly husbands by godly wives (1 Pet. 3.1). A Christ-like life is the soundest of arguments; while an inconsistent life nullifies all arguments.

"No man hath seen God at any time." There were *Theopanies* in the Old Testament, that is, appearances of God, under the temporary disguise of human form, as to Abraham, Jacob, Joshua, and Daniel. But God as such was never seen. "God is Spirit," dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, nor can see, to whom be honour and power everlasting" (1 Tim. 6.16). Why cannot I see God? querulously asked the sceptic. "Are you sure you could bear to see Him?" was the reply. "You cannot look at the sun, but God is greater than the sun." Israel "saw the glory of Jehovah;" indeed, it is said, "They saw the God of Israel," but to avoid misconception Moses impressed on them that though the Lord spake unto them out of the midst of the fire, and they heard the voice of the words, "they saw no *similtude*" (Deut. 4.12). Let them take heed not to corrupt themselves by making graven images to represent what they had never seen (v. 15), and so fall where the heathen fell, of whom we read, "When

* To interpret from one language to another, is "hermeneuein" (John v. 38).

they knew God, they glorified Him not as God . . . but changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image, made like to corruptible man and to birds and four-footed beasts and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up . . . to dishonour their own bodies between themselves" (Rom. 1.23). They degraded God; He let them degrade themselves. If the witness of creation to the eternal power and Godhead of the Creator suffices to condemn the heathen, who make idols of the Deity, what must be the responsibility of those who, in the full blaze of Christianity, represent God in image, picture, and painted window?

Moses himself desired to see God. "I beseech Thee shew me Thy glory," but instead, God shewed him His "goodness," for He said, "Thou canst not see My face, for there shall no man see Me and live." Moses had to rest content to see His "back parts," the "goodness" of God, as revealed in His Name. "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth . . . and that will by no means clear the guilty" (Exod. 33 and 34). But the key to all this was withheld, and can only be found in a crucified and risen Saviour. There was then a lesser glory which could be seen; a higher, which was inaccessible to the creature. But "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4.6).

There can be little question that the appearance of Jehovah in Old Testament times in human form, or under the semblance of fire as in the bush, or in the Shekinah, were through the same glorious Person. Jehovah of the old Testament is Jesus of the New. He was "the brightness of His glory," before He became "the express image (Greek, *character*, impress) of His Person"; the *appearance* of the Invisible God before He became His image (Greek, *eikon*).

The first mention of the glory of Jehovah is in Exod. 16. Two gifts were bestowed on Israel, "at even" and "in the morning," and with a different purpose. "At even, then *ye shall know* that the Lord hath brought you out of the land of Egypt" (v. 6). This came true in the gift of the quails—natural food, material mercies, providentially supplied, easily understood, and very cheering in the wilderness

journey. Provision by the way is intended to assure our hearts, that the Lord has put us in the way. But there was something else. "In the morning then *ye shall see* the glory of the Lord" (v. 7). This was fulfilled next day, when "upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing as the hoar frost." They called it "manna," "for they wist not what it was," and, alas! soon tired of it (Num. 11.6). This was a higher thing than the quails, it was a heavenly nourishment: "He gave them bread from heaven to eat;" "Man did eat angels' food." As the old corn of the land they fed on later, is a symbol of Christ in resurrection glory, so is this of Jesus in humiliation, "the Bread of God which cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world" (John 6.33). But He was unrecognised, misunderstood, and hated. "The world knew Him not." "His own received Him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the children of God, even to them that believe on His Name" (John 1.12). All such, the apostle linked with himself, when he testified, "The Word was made flesh and tabernacled among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (v. 14). This glory was not, as I judge, the glory manifested on the Transfiguration Mount, but the *moral* glory of His Person.

One grand purpose of the Incarnation was to reveal the Father, and who could do this but He who had eternal knowledge of Him, being Himself the eternal Son—the Word who was "in the beginning"—and eternally in relation to Him? Who but a Divine Being could accurately know a Divine Person? for "no man knoweth the Father save the Son, and to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." Who is qualified to interpret the Father, save He who is "in the bosom of the Father?" No created being—cherubim, seraphim, archangel, or angel—could take that place, save He who is "the only begotten Son." He only could learn the secrets of the Father's heart, and interpret them to us. Would we learn "the secret of the Lord," then we too must lean upon His breast, like the beloved disciple. Would we know the Father? then we must trace the pathway of Him who, while He walked the earth, was yet in heaven (chap. 3.14), considering His ways, His works, and words, for all were the reflection of the Father's will. "The Son can do nothing

of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do" (John 5.19). "As I hear I judge" (John 5.30). "My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me" (John 7.16). "He that hath seen ME hath seen the Father" (John 14.7). Not that they were the same, but that His every act, was the fulfilment of the Father's purpose, every word the echo of His command, every step the effect of His leading, and all His ways the unfolding of God's great heart of love.

HYMNS AND THEIR WRITERS (29), by Jack Strahan, Enniskillen.

"THOU ART THE EVERLASTING WORD"

JOSIAH CONDER (1789—1855)

This hymn was written in the early 19th century by a Congregational layman whose name was Josiah Conder. He was the fourth son of Thomas Conder, engraver and bookseller, and was born at Falcon Street, Aldersgate, London, on September 17th, 1789. Both his parents were staunch non-conformists and young Josiah grew up in the atmosphere of a God-fearing home. When only five years of age, he lost the sight of his right eye following vaccination against smallpox and his parents, fearing for a possible harmful effect on the other eye, sent Josiah to Hackney for medical care. While he was there, he received schooling. His attending physician acted as his instructor and soon discerned in his young student a potential for a promising literary career.

In early life, Josiah began to exercise his talent and by the age of 10 he was contributing essays to the 'Monthly Precentor.' For these he was awarded two silver medals. At the age of 15, he joined his father in the family metropolitan book-store and from then on he followed a strenuous literary career to become famous in later life, not only as an author, but also as editor and publisher. In his 21st year he produced, in conjunction with some other like-minded young friends, a volume of poems, "The Associate Minstrels." At the age of 25, he accepted the editorship of the "Electric Review" and a little later that also of a weekly newspaper, "The Patriot." Both these editorships he carried for over 20 years and, "during this period," his biographer says, "he was in close association with the best literary people of that day, and was occupied with the publication of many works of his own, both in poetry and prose, mostly on religious topics." Besides his exhausting literary labours, Conder was a

lay preacher and gave himself much to this work. His was a busy life; nevertheless, it was full for God. He passed away at St. John's Wood, London, on December 27th, 1855, in the 67th year of his life.

Josiah Conder's writings have become a rich heritage to succeeding generations. Endowed as he was with an outstanding natural ability, he developed this to the full by a lifetime's close contact with many of the literary giants of his day. Added to this was a deep spirituality and so from his pen have come some of the finest works, combining both literary and spiritual worth. His works cover a period of over 50 years and are very wide ranging in their scope. His prose works are very diverse in their subject matter as may be detected from such titles as, "A Life of Bunyan," "Epistle to the Hebrews" (a translation) or "The Modern Traveller." This latter was the product of seven years' work and was published in thirty volumes, truly an outstanding feat for one who had himself never travelled abroad.

As a hymn writer, Josiah Conder has a place of honour and ranks among the best of the early 19th century. His hymns were written amid the changing experiences, toils and trials of a busy life. At the time of his death, he had collected all his own hymns into one volume. This collection, though ready for the press, was revised and published posthumously by his son, E. R. Conder, M.A., and entitled, "Hymns of Praise, Prayer and Devout Meditation." In its preface, his son says that his father's hymns were, transcripts of personal experience and add to the proof so often given that God tunes the heart by trial and sorrow, not only to patience but to praise." Of Conder's hymns, William Garrett Horder comments that, "The popularity of Conder's hymns may be gathered from the fact that at the present time more of them are in common usage in Great Britain and America than those of any other writer of the Congregational Body, Watts and Doddridge alone excepted . . . His finest hymns are marked by much elevation of thought expressed in language combining both force and beauty. They generally excel in unity, and in some the gradual unfolding of the leading idea is masterly."

Conder's hymns are the product of a deeply spiritual mind and scriptural accuracy is the hallmark throughout. Probably nowhere is this more evident than in his majestic hymn on the Person of the Lord Jesus, "Thou art the Everlasting Word." John Nelson Darby is reported to have said that he would rather have been the writer of this one hymn than to have been the one writer of all other hymns. While today Conder's hymns are confined almost entirely to the Congregational collections, this of all his compositions has found a worthy place in many other present day hymnals.

"Thou art the Everlasting Word,
The Father's only Son,
God manifestly seen and heard,
And heaven's beloved One.

Worthy O Lamb of God, art Thou!
That every knee to Thee should bow.

In Thee, most perfectly expressed,
The Father's glories shine,
Of the full Deity possessed,
Eternally Divine !

True image of the Infinite,
Whose essence is concealed;
Brightness of uncreated light,
The heart of God revealed.

But the high myst'ries of His name
An angel's grasp transcend;
The Father only (glorious claim!)
The Son can comprehend.

Yet loving Thee, on whom His love
Ineffable doth rest,
Thy members all, in Thee, above,
As one with Thee are blest.

Throughout the universe of bliss,
The centre Thou, and Sun,
Th' eternal theme of praise is this,
To heaven's beloved One."

Conder's subject matter in his hymn is great. Like the Ark of the Covenant, it must be closely guarded and conveyed only in terms which are God-given. With becoming reverence and language, Conder deigns to speak of Him who, from all others apart, is at once, "The Son of the Father" (II John v.3), "The Image of the Invisible God" (Col. 1.15) and "The Lamb of God" (John 1.29). Many and beautiful are the titles of Our Lord which tell of His relationships to His creation or to His creature, but these portrayed by Conder tell of His relationship to God. Such titles are transcendent, inexhaustible and to human hearts incomprehensible. In their fulness they are appreciated by God alone and yet ours is the privilege to contemplate their content. Here we have been brought by Conder to high and hallowed ground and in the presence of such eternal mysteries and sublimities, the heart leaves off all further enquiry and bows in adoring worship.

"I've come to know Thee, Lord
And what shall be the ending?
I've touched the fringe of Who Thou art
And that is joy transcending.
I'm standing on a rippling shore,
Love's ocean depths are all before."

"For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."
(Col. 2.9).

An article by T. Earnest Wilson, "Addressing God in Prayer and Worship" has been reprinted from the January/February, 1984 issue of Assembly Testimony. This is available from—

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Contents

STUDIES IN JOHN'S GOSPEL

by Wm. Hoste

OUTLINES

by N. McDonald

ZECHARIAH

by E. R. Bower

THE THREE ROADS

by T. Ayre

FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTALS

by J. B. Hewitt

CHRIST IN THE APOCALYPSE

by J. B. D. Page

THE COMPENSATING GRACE OF GOD

by H. St. John

HYMNS AND THEIR WRITERS

by J. Strahan

LET US COME BOLDLY

(Heb. 4.16)

'O God, with grief we lament our state,
Because of our great need we wait,
Before Thy throne :
Praying that Thou wilt intervene,
And let Thy power and grace be seen,
Comfort Thine own.'

* * *

'The great High Priest is there,
Our sorrows and our burdens share,
Before Thy face ;
He holds our hands, helps us to stand,
As we traverse this weary land,
Sustained by grace.'

* * *

'Soon will the journey end,
Then will our voices blend,
Before Thy Son;
The mystery of His love revealed,
The blood which has our pardon sealed,
Our victory won.'

* * *

—J. G. Good.

STUDIES IN JOHN'S GOSPEL

(Christ, the Interpreter of the Father)

by WM. HOSTE

Chapter II—IN A SCENE OF SIN

The ministry of John, naturally aroused deep searchings of heart. Who could he be who drew such vast crowds into the wilderness, and of whom all bare witness that he was a prophet? When the Jews sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was, "he confessed and denied not (that is, he did not refuse to answer), but confessed, I am not the Christ" (John 1.19,20). Their further question was a tacit acknowledgement of his greatness. If he were not the Christ, he might be either Elias or the prophet to arise like Moses; he could be no one less. The answer of John was surprising. He made no claim to be anything but "a voice," the herald of Another, "who coming after him was preferred before him," the latchet of whose shoes he was unworthy to unloose. Who could this august personage be? None other than Jehovah—the God of Israel, for the message of the voice was, "Make straight the way of **THE LORD**" (see Isa. 40.3).

Even John had failed to recognise in his cousin, "Jesus," anything more than the holiest of men, of whom he needed to be baptised, rather than Jesus to be baptised of him. But since that memorable moment, when the promised sign was fulfilled, and the Holy Spirit descended like a dove and rested upon Him, he knew Him as the Baptiser in the Holy Spirit—the Son of God. It is important to note the character in which the Lord first presented Himself to Israel, for this must throw a vivid light on the purpose of His mission, and correspond too with the deepest need of men. Some would represent the world specially as a "troubled sea that cannot rest," or as a scene of sorrow, suffering, and death; but Christ saw it under a more serious aspect, which lay at the root of every other woe. It was a place of sin. He came to interpret the heart of God to a world of *sinners*. As He emerged from the hidden ministry of Nazareth into public life, it was in His sacrificial character.

"Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin* of the world." The presence of Jesus as the Lamb of God's providing, revealed the Divine compassion to a sin-stricken world. "The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world" (I John 4.14).

A certain ill-omened school of interpretation represents the Cross as an after-thought, a profound disillusionment of our Lord's early hopes, a dire necessity, arising from the failure of His mission. Nothing could be further from the truth. How that death came to pass, did depend on circumstances, but that it should come to pass was inscribed at the head of the Divine programme, unfolding an eternal purpose. This was the primary conception of the mission of Christ. "He was the Lamb pre-ordained, before the foundation of the world, but manifest in these last times" (I Pet. 1.20), "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13.8). The love of God was thus interpreted as not only toward the faithful patriarchs, "the sons of God" of antediluvian days, nor merely toward the elect of Israel and of the nations, but to the whole race. He presented Himself as "THE LAMB." This was no unfamiliar thought to Israelites. Here was the antitype of centuries of sin offerings, "on Jewish altars slain"—"the Lamb of God," not only for an individual, a family, a people, but for the whole world. It has been seriously objected to this interpretation, that it would be an anachronism to credit John with such a clear conception of the Cross. How could he know what was still in the future? It was not unusual in prophets to have a knowledge of the future, and John was a prophet, and "more than a prophet." But in what sense does the Lamb of God take away the sin of the world? Some refer the phrase to "original sin." Christ in His death so fully met the sin of Adam, that its effects are neutralised for all. Were that so, no infant would die. Others connect it with the millennial earth. But though Satan will be banished, sin will not be taken away, as the final rebellion of Revelation (chap. 20) proves. The true meaning is, that the sin of the world is taken away, not absolutely, but potentially. If that sin is to be taken away, it is He, and He alone, who must do it.

* There is a distinction between "sin" and "sins" in the same context, as in John 8. 21,24, R.V., and 1 John 1. 6-9, but I think here, "sin" includes "sins."

The Taker Away of Sin

John the Baptist had appeared as the forerunner, "to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." He baptised with the baptism of repentance. Those baptised confessed their guilt, and justified God in His sentence on their sin; but how could that sin be taken away? That, no ordinance could achieve. They must wait for Him that was to come. And when He came, it was not as a Preacher, but as a Saviour; not as an Example, but a Sacrifice; not as the Man of God, but as the Lamb of God—the taker away of the world's sin. The question may arise as to how sin was dealt with in the ages before Christ died. Was it on the ground of works, or of law keeping? This is very important, for if God could pass over sin on such grounds then, why should the death of Christ be necessary for forgiveness now? The answer is, there has never been but one ground on which sin could be passed over, namely, the atonement of Christ.

In old time, God dealt with man in various ways during successive periods known as "dispensations." Man was subjected to different tests, the light of conscience, government, law, the actual presence of Christ in Israel, and all this to bring out what was in him, stop his mouth, and shut him up to grace. But from the fall, approach to God by sacrifice was instituted and continued, like a silver thread, throughout the Old Economy. Every sacrifice was a fingerpost to Calvary. The elect of all ages bowed to God, and condemned themselves. Even in the absence of literal sacrifices, the principle held good, "the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise" (Psalm 51.17). To such an one, God could apply the value of the future work of Him, who was ever present to His mind as "the Lamb slain." There are two ways in which a man might let a friend buy goods at his expense at one of the great business palaces of London: He might allow him to run up a bill to his account, himself guaranteeing the store payment by a certain date, or he might open a deposit account and allow the friend to draw on it. The saved of Old Testament time were accepted "on credit," if we may so say: those of to-day are in virtue of the price already paid at Calvary. The *ground* in any case, on which a sinner is forgiven, is not

his acceptance of the work of Christ (that is the necessary act which unites Him to the Saviour), but God's acceptance of that work. All God's holy claims are satisfied, and He has proved it by raising Christ from the dead and giving Him glory.

There are, however, important differences in detail between the past and present dispensations. Then the true ground of justification was not revealed ; now the righteousness of God is declared in the Cross. How could God be just in passing over sin, when the blood of bulls and of goats was powerless to take it away? The word used in Romans 3.25 for "remission," with reference to "the sins that were past," (instead of *aphesis* the usual word) is letting pass" (*Paresis*), a word never used of God's dealing with sins now. The Old Testament Saint knew the blessedness of forgiveness (Psalm 32.1), but not the righteous ground. The real transaction at the Cross revealed a righteous because sufficient ground, for the putting away of sin. Before, grace had flowed its banks all the time of the harvest of this Gospel dispensation. Christ is "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the *world*."

We may compare this, with other similar phrases in John's Gospel, "That was the true Light, which lighteth every man, that cometh into the world" (chap. 1.9). "The Bread of God, is He which cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world" (chap. 6.33). "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me" (chap. 12 32). All such passages must be interpreted in the potential sense. Not all have been actually enlightened, quickened, or drawn; but Christ is the only Light, the universal Bread, the unique Magnet, the world's Taker Away of sin. None can do it, but He alone. "He is the propitiation for our sins (actual effect); and not for ours only, but also for the whole world" (potential efficacy), (1 John 2.2 R.V.). He is sufficient for all, efficient for those who believe. One might point to the parish doctor, or the village blacksmith. This one heals us, that one shoes our horses; but the condition is understood, need experienced, and acceptance of skill in both cases. Where is the eye to turn to the Light, the faith to eat Bread, the will to be drawn, the hand to be laid on the head of the Lamb? This is what John him-

self did, and the five disciples who came to Jesus—Andrew, Peter, Philip Nathaniel, and the anonymous one, whom most believe to be the writer, John, himself. Millions have done so since, “and there’s room for many more.” None have ever ventured on the Lamb of God, but their sins have at once been taken away, and blotted out of the book of God’s remembrance.

Outlines

by NELSON McDONALD (Scotland)

(2) FAILURE

We fail Miserably

- (i) Hearts fail — Gen. 42.28; Ps. 40.12, 73.26.
- (ii) Money fails — Gen. 47.15,16.
- (iii) Eyes fail — Ps. 119.82,123.
- (iv) Spirit fails — Ps. 143.7.
- (v) Soul fails — Song of Sol. 5.6.
- (vi) Strength fails — Ps. 31.10.
- (vii) Truth fails — Isa. 59.15.
- (viii) Refuge fails — Ps. 142.4.
- (ix) Kinsfolk fail — Job 19.14.
- (x) Prophecy fails — 1 Cor. 13.8.
- (xi) Desire fails — Ecc. 12.5.

The Lord Jesus never fails. Heb. 1.12.

- (i) His Promise never fails. Josh. 23.14; 1 Kings 8.56.
In Exodus 6.6-8, there are seven ‘I wills’ with His signature. According to John Bunyan there are 33,000 promises in the Bible.
- (ii) His Provision never fails. 1 Kings 17.14.
- (iii) His Faithfulness never fails. Ps. 89.33; 1 Cor 1.9, 10,13.
- (iv) His Compassion never fails. Lam. 3.22.
- (v) His Love never fails. 1 Cor. 13.8; Jer. 31.3; John 13.1

ZECHARIAH

by **E. R. BOWER** (continued)

vv. 16-19. How often do expositors stress that much of what is written in the prophets, especially the apocalyptic writings, cannot be taken literally. But why? True, that writers of even fifty years ago could hardly envisage the world as we see it today, but today's generation lives in days of many marvellous inventions hitherto unheard of and indeed unthought of. Technology is still advancing and scientists are engaged in a feverish activity, as if they with the environmentalists are anticipating in thought, word and deed, the end time. Even as these notes are being written the media speaks of the "final holocaust." The prophet's next words are, in modern idiom, spine chilling—"Everyone that is left"—that is, the survivors; the remnant. To these survivors an edict goes out from the King, the Lord of hosts. As Israel was in the past enjoined to appear before the Lord three times in the year (Ex. 23.14-19; Deut. 16.36) at the Feasts of Unleavened Bread, Weeks (Firstfruits or Pentecost) and Tabernacles, so now will the nations be called upon to visit Jerusalem yearly at the Feast of Tabernacles in order to give homage to the King of kings. See Deut. 16.13-17 and notice that "the stranger . . . within thy gates" is included. Tabernacles is the feast of the ingathering of the harvest, the last of the set feasts. Historically, Israel has seen (or will see) that the Passover has been slain in the Person of Christ our Passover (1 Cor. 5.7); Pentecost has also come and gone, but Tabernacle is yet to come. All nations will be commanded to keep this feast. See Is. 66.22-23. Neh. 8.13-18 is a beautiful picture of what the Feast of Tabernacles will mean to Israel in "that day." There were three feasts in the seventh month of the ceremonial year—Trumpets (upon the first day of the civil year—Lev. 23.23-25; Num. 29.1-6; Zech. 9.14); Atonement (upon the 10th—Lev. 16.23,26-32; Num. 29. 7-11; Zech. 12.10) and Tabernacles (15th-22nd; Ex. 23.15; Lev. 23.33-43; Num. 29.12-38; Zech. 14.16-19). The Feasts of Passover and Tabernacles are "solemn assemblies," "times of restraint"

(margin). Cf. Neh. 8.18; Deut. 16.8; Hos. 12.9. Tabernacles is not a Wilderness Feast—it is for the Land (Deut. 23.10, 39-43) and was not kept from the days of Joshua until the return from the Captivity (Neh. 8.16,17) cf. Rev. 7.9-10. We may remember the words of our Lord at the "Jew's Feast of Tabernacles" when He cried at the ceremony of the water libation, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink" (John 7). Jerusalem will be the source of the living and life giving waters (Zech. 13.1; Ezek. 47.1-12; Rev. 22.1-2. Note Rev. 21-24 and 22.2, "the leaves of the trees were for the healing of the nations"—"the nations of them which are saved" (Rev. 21.24). Whether the withholding of rain is to be literal or whether it refers to the blessings brought by the rain is uncertain, but certainly in Is. 60.12 the nation that will not serve Israel shall perish.

vv. 20-21. "Bells"—bridles. At long last all the promises from of old will, in "that day" be fulfilled. The nations will see the promises of God for His people fulfilled; a kingdom of priests wholly consecrated to Jehovah their God. From the bowls before the altar to the very horse bridles, everybody and every thing will be "Holiness to the Lord." Every aspect of life, religious and secular will be hallowed. Israel will truly attain to its highest dignity as the Temple of the Lord for not only will there be a Temple "exceeding magnificent" but that Temple will typify the nation. The Canaanite will no more be seen in the House of Jehovah of hosts. It will be recalled that when Abram was called by God to go into the land of Canaan he found that "the Canaanite was then in the land" (Gen. 12.6). It was this land that was promised to Abram and his descendants. It was the land to which Israel had travelled—"This is the land" said God to Moses (Deut 34.4. See Ps. 105.9-15). This was the land from which the Canaanite had to be driven, but, alas, we read (Jud. 3.4-5) that the proving of Israel proved to be too much for them, and they "dwelt among the Canaanites." Some take the meaning of Canaanite as meaning "trader" or "merchant" or "trafficker" (Canaanite/trader—same Hebrew word), and here our thoughts go forward to the two occasions when our Lord cleansed the Temple courts—the first at the beginning of His ministrv (John 2.13-17) when, upon being asked for a sign of His

authority in driving out the merchants and money-changers. He said, "Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up" but "He spake of the Temple of His Body." The second cleansing, at the close of His ministry (Matt. 21. 12-13; Mark 11.15-17; Luke 19.45-46), was the occasion for Him to say, "It is written, My House is the House of Prayer for all nations (Is. 56.7), but ye have made it a den of thieves" (Jer. 7.11). We note the association of Zech. 9.9 with Matt. 21.1-11 — the coming of the King and the cleansing of the Temple. Alas that Israel did not recognise the "day of their visitation." (Luke 19.44).

APPENDIX.

The Temple of the Lord

Much could be said upon this subject, but the following is perhaps more of a thought sequence bringing together various Scriptures and allowing them to speak for themselves.

As we read the history in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah of that remnant of Israel which had come out of the 70 year captivity, and read also the two prophecies by Haggai and Zechariah we note the concern of both historian and prophet for the rebuilding of the Temple, of Jerusalem and of the nation. Indeed it can be said that the history of the Temple is the history of Israel illustrated in stone, and this is of far greater import when we keep in our view that the Tabernacle and the Temple together with its furniture and fittings were "patterns of things in the heavens" (Heb. 9.23). Beyond this, however, is a yet greater truth, and to this the prophets give witness (1 Pet. 1.10). Not the least of these witnesses is the prophet Zechariah who, as we have seen, testified to something beyond his ken and for the latter days and the consummation of the ages. In Zech. 6.15 we read, "And they that are far off shall come and build in the Temple of the Lord, and ye shall know that the Lord of hosts hath sent Me unto you. And this shall come to pass IF ye will diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God," and this IF is the nucleus of the principles which holds true of Temple worship from Tabernacle to Church, and for the people of God in unity or as individuals. Notice that is not "come and build the Temple" but "come and build IN the Temple."

What are the purposes of a temple? When Israel sang the song of their redemption and salvation after being

“baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea” (1 Cor. 10.2) they said, “Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of Thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which Thou hast made for Thee to dwell in, in the Sanctuary, O Lord, which Thy hands have established. The Lord shall reign for ever and ever.” (Ex. 15.17-18), hence the Sanctuary is the **DWELLING PLACE OF GOD** (Ex. 25.8) and the **DESTINY OF HIS PEOPLE**.

The materials of which it is built are from the willing-heart offerings of His people. (Ex. 25.1-9; 1 Cor. 3.1-17).

It is the place where God meets with His people, and where they may hear His voice (Ex. 29.42-44).

It is the place where understanding comes (Ex. 29.46; Ps. 73.17) and where praise can be offered (Ps. 150.1; Ephes. 1.18; 3.21).

It is the place where God Himself wishes to be — “I brought them forth . . . that I may dwell among them.” (Ex. 29.46), and it is this thought that is reiterated again and again throughout the O.T. and thus it is that we can see in the Temple a picture of Israel as God intended them to be. The boast of a degenerate Israel was centred at the Temple in their midst, and when, in the days of Jeremiah, Israel—as represented by Judah—was called upon to repent, they said, “The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, are these.” (Jer. 7.1-6) and it was Micah who had spoken a century before Jeremiah, “. . . they lean upon the Lord, and say, ‘Is not the Lord among us? none evil can come upon us.’” (Mic. 3-12). Note the ‘therefore’ of v. 12. The Temple had become a mere talisman against the result of their own evil way. Israel was the Temple of the Lord, but how they had defiled that Temple, yet God’s purpose for Israel will yet be fulfilled, for He has said, “I . . . will set My Sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. My Tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be My people, and the heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when My Sanctuary shall be in the midst of Jerusalem . . . and I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem . . .” (Zech. 8.1-8). When this takes place then the promises from of old will be fulfilled, “Now therefore, IF ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me . .

a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation." (Ex. 19.5-6). Everybody and everything shall be "Holiness unto the Lord" (Zech. 14.20). Peter thought that that day had arrived for the dispersed Israel (1 Pet. 2.9), but, alas, Israel still awaits the glorious day. Tabernacle and Temple have passed away; Ezekiel's Temple is yet future—a Temple commensurate with Israel's ultimate splendour and glory.

When instructing Moses concerning the Tabernacle, God said, ". . . make Me a Sanctuary . . . according to . . . the pattern of the Tabernacle . . ." (Ex. 25.9,40; 26.30; Acts 7.44; Heb. 8.5; 9.9,23). David, preparing for the Temple which Solomon would build, gave to Solomon . . . the pattern . . . of all that he had by the Spirit . . ." (1 Chron. 28.11-13). John, receiving the Revelation of Jesus Christ" could speak of the "Temple of the Tabernacle of the Testimony in heaven" (15.5 — 16.1). Need we wonder then that Tabernacle and Temple speak of the glories of the heavenlies and of Him who is the Glory of all glories; Him who, with His Father, God, will be the Temple of "that great city, the Holy Jerusalem." (21.22). All the beauties and the glories of that heavenly place were symbolized by the earthly Sanctuaries, and Israel was intended to reflect those same beauties and glories; they were to be "Holiness unto the Lord." Just before the fall of Jerusalem in the days of Jeremiah God saw the Temple as "a den of robbers" (Jer. 7.11—note the IF's of vv 5 and 6) and He referred the people to what He had done at Shiloh (Ps. 78.54-61; 1 Sam. 4.12-22), saying, "See what I did to it for the wickedness of My people . . . I will do unto **this house** as I have done to Shiloh. I will cast YOU out of My sight."

When our Lord visited the Temple He, too, saw it as "a den of thieves" (Matt. 21. 12-14; Mark 11.15-18; Luke 19. 45-47).

John tells us that "the Word was made flesh and dwelt (tabernacled) among us" (1.14) (cf. only other N.T. use of 'tabernacle'—Rev. 7.15; 12.12; 13.6; 21.3). In the epistle to the Hebrews which speaks much of the Tabernacle and its meaning, we read of our Lord (10.5), "sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared Me." (cf Ps. 40.6-8). The writer of the epistle goes on (vv. 9-14), "Then said He, 'Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God . . . by the which will we are sanctified through the offering

of the body of Jesus Christ . . and perfected for ever . . .”

At the first cleansing of the Temple by our Lord (John 2.13-22) He, referring to the “Temple of His Body” said, “Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” It may be also remembered that at our Lord’s baptism by John the Baptist, the Spirit of God descended upon Him and it ‘abode’ and ‘remained’ upon Him. (Matt. 3.16-17; Mark 1.10; John 1.32). As the Hebrew epistle has to do with the Tabernacle, so the letter to the Ephesians has to do with the Body, and our thought travels on to the words (1.22-23), “. . . and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.” Again, we are “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building (each separate building), fitly framed together, groweth into an holy Temple IN the Lord; IN whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God IN the Spirit.” (R.V.). This, “to the intent that now . . might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord . . .” (3.8-12).

Peter (1.2,5) writing primarily for Jewish believers also takes up this thought, “Ye also as lively (living) stones are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices . . wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture, ‘Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone . . .’” (Is. 28.16).

Thus it is that we may apprehend the meaning of the words of Zechariah 6.12-15, “Behold the Man whose Name is The Branch; and He shall branch up from under Him, and He shall build the Temple of the Lord: even He shall build the Temple of the Lord . . and they that are far off shall come and build IN the Temple of the Lord . . .”

“But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ . . . know ye not that you are the Temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile (‘mars’—Weymouth) the Temple of God, Him shall God mar; for the Temple of God is holy, which (Temple) ye are . . . ye are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s.” (1 Cor. 3.1-23; 6.15-20).

“ . . . ye are the Temple of the living God: as God hath said, ‘I will dwell in them, and walk in them . . .’ ” (2 Cor. 6.16; Lev. 26.11-12).

Can we doubt but that the principles governing Israel as the Temple of the living God, apply also to the Church? “IF” “He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.” (1 Cor. 11.29-32).

“Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God.” (Rev. 21.3).

THE THREE ROADS

by **THOMAS AYRE (Larne)**

The Jericho Road (Luke 10)

This dusty, downward, dangerous road, worn smooth by the tramping of countless feet. Generation after generation have travelled this way, young and old, rich and poor, prince and peasant, religious and profane, the women of the streets and the women of the veil. Thoughtless and careless as they press on in their eagerness and haste to reach the delectable city of palm trees, only to find bitter disillusionment in what turns out to be not the city of palm trees, but instead, the city of the curse, disease ridden and crime infested, the very air foul with moral stench, with thorns and thistles everywhere, and blind to the gathering clouds of judgement, soon to burst.

Many unsuspecting travellers going down this road find themselves ambushed by vicious thieves, to be stripped, beaten, robbed and left for dead. Robbed, just as sin robs us of manhood, honour, virtue and character. Losses that are inestimable, and almost irreplaceable.

Is there no-one to care for such? None to take pity? None to hear the feeble cry for help and mercy? Some indeed take a look, and then hurry on. When it seems as if it will be too late, out of the deepening shadows a Stranger

approaches and draws near and with a look of ineffable pity and sorrow, stoops down and ever so carefully pours in the cleansing, healing oil and wine, and then with gentle tender hands, binds up the deep and cruel wounds.

Did the Stranger then pass on and leave him with just a few parting words of comfort telling him to hope for the best? Oh, No! (There are no half measures with the Lord) but with strong, capable hands and with effortless ease, lifts him from the place of death, sets him upon His beast, and bears him safely to the inn, there to find shelter and much needed nourishment, charging the innkeeper to care for him until He would return. Surely such would be counting the hours in expectation of that happy moment.

“And many a man with life out of tune
And battered and scarred by sin,
Is auctioned cheap to the thoughtless crowd
Much like the old violin.
A mess of pottage, a glass of wine, a game
And he travels on.
He’s going once, he’s going twice, he’s going
And almost gone.
But the master comes and the foolish crowd
Never can quite understand
The worth of a soul, and the change
that’s wrought
By the touch of the master’s hand.”

The writer of this brief article can say—“I’m glad He came to where I was and found me on my Jericho road. He brought me to His banqueting house, and His banner over me was love.”

The Emmaus Road (Luke 24)

The road of doubt and uncertainty and faltering hope. There are times when we find ourselves on this dreary, joyless road. It is so dark, with no moon or stars to light our way. The darkness without seems as nothing compared to the darkness within, when the heart is crushed and broken. “We cry in the daytime and God answereth not, and in the night seasons and are not silent.” We can say with one of old, “for the arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit; the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me.” Our tears

have been our meat day and night—the very heavens seem like brass, then the tempter whispers in our ear “there is no help for thee in God.” We found the truth in reality, of words remembered from the past, “There is a grief far beyond tears” and because ours was so deep and unconsolable, the mind benumbed by pain, we couldn’t see that “Someone” was drawing near and going with us. It was only when He spoke, our heart became hushed and still, and the dew of heaven entered into our soul. We looked up and saw with wonder, the dark angry clouds begin to roll quickly away. That glorious Person had turned our darkness into day, the rain was over and gone, the flowers appeared on the earth and the time of the singing of birds had come. We had found again, Him whom our soul loveth, we held Him and would not let Him go.

This Emmaus road leads on to the Light of His Presence, therefore let us not be afraid.

“See! whilst we are sleeping those to whom the King has measured out a cup of sorrow, sweet with His dear love, yet very hard to drink, are waking in his temple, and the eyes that cannot sleep for sorrow or for pain are lifted up to heaven, and sweet low songs, broken by patient tears arise to God. Bless ye the Lord ye servants of His which stand by night within the holy place to give Him worship. Ye are priests to Him, and minister around the altar—Pale yet joyful in the night.” (Voices of Comfort).

“And many a rapturous minstrel
Among those sons of light
Will say of his sweetest music
I learned it in the night
And many a rolling anthem
That fills the Father’s House
Sobbed out its first rehearsal
In the shade of a darkened room.”

The Damascus Road (Acts 9)

As we look along this road, we see approaching, a band of travellers, heading for the city of Damascus, glad soon to be at their journey’s end. One of them we know, having seen him in the forefront of the crowd when a man called Stephen was being stoned to death. He was called Saul of Tarsus, a young proud, haughty Pharisee, the implacable

enemy of an inoffensive class of people called Christians.

He had been commissioned by his nation's high priest, to seek out, imprison and destroy, all whom he found associated with the hated name of Jesus, who claimed to be the Christ.

Not for a moment was he expecting the totally shattering experience soon to be his. Suddenly, it happened; about noonday a light blazed from heaven above the brightness of the sun, leaving him blinded, broken and prostrated in the dust. His companions standing around in a daze. Then he heard the voice and saw the Just One, and from that moment, he, the fanatical Pharisee, became the man with the pierced ear, the willing bond slave of Jesus the Christ.

But this Damascus road meant the renunciation of all that was dear to him as a Jew. His family and friends, his earthly hopes, and cherished ambitions, the loss of his countrymen's esteem and approval (so soon to turn into murderous rage and hatred). Many years afterwards on looking back on this experience, he summed it up in these words "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ."

This road was to stretch on down through the years, via Antioch, Philippi, Thessalonica, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, Jerusalem and Caesarea, each with its tale of beatings, stonings, perils and shipwrecks, ever beckoning him onward to its close, ending at last in Rome, the mighty cosmopolitan centre of Imperial grandeur and corruption. There, this great-hearted, noble-hearted man of God, bearing upon his body the brand marks of his Master, now travel-worn, weary, lonely, bows his head for the last time to the swift and fatal stroke of the executioner's sword—the time for his release had come, he had fought the good fight and kept the faith.

Somewhere his precious dust lies, awaiting the sound of the last trump, the fulfilment of the blessed hope, this bright lodestar for all who belong to the same glorious Lord.

"Does the road wind uphill all the way?

Yes to the very end

Will the day's journey take the whole loneyday?

From morn to night my friend."

Who will go for us? Can you say—Here I am send me!

FOCUS ON FUNDAMENTALS

by J. B. HEWITT, Chesterfield

(34) THE HOLY SPIRIT IN ACTS

The title of the book of Acts could equally well read the "Acts of the Holy Spirit." He is the principal actor in the drama of the expanding Church. No great figure in the Church either spoke or acted other than under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The immense task of the early Church was a world-wide programme of evangelism. The single answer to all the problems encountered by the Church was—the Holy Spirit. The Baptism of the Spirit is to make us **USEFUL**. The Spirit was given not for the disciples enjoyment or excitement, but to enable them to witness to the outside world (1.7,8; 8.5-8). Pentecost was a miracle of communication (2.6-11). All the great figures in Acts were men of the Spirit—Peter (4.8); the seven men of ch. 6.3; Stephen (6.5); Philip (8.29); Paul (9.17; 13.8) and Barnabas (11.24).

The Authority of the Spirit

This is seen in a variety of ways. Prophesying concerning Judas (1.16). His coming upon the disciples implies more than mere testimony but to be useful for God (1.8). True only in the measure our hearts are renewed, possessed and transformed. He spake and separated Paul and Barnabas to the Lord's work. He called, equipped qualified and empowered them (13.2). Seen guarding the believer in his walk of any hindrance to holiness. Restraining His servants from going where they will. He has the right to command and the power to forbid (16.6,7). Warning Paul of danger and persecution in the pathway of service (20.23). Through Agabus predicting the trial and persecution Paul would suffer from the Jews (21.11). Reminding of the condition of an apostate nation (28.25-28).

We must listen to His voice, accept His guidance, keep ourselves pure, accept His restraining power, and be strengthened to suffer in spreading the Gospel .

The Activity of the Spirit

The Spirit gave the disciples power to communicate and witness by giving them utterance (1.8; 2.4, 17,18). Power to Peter to speak boldly under divine compulsion with convicting power which impressed the city authorities (4.13). The disciples entered into a new found courage and boldly proclaimed the message of the Gospel; they were filled (4.31,32). Here indeed is a complete revolution. Once marked by fear, now they have courage which could face the world undaunted and unafraid.

They had power for office and service (6.3,5). Guidance in reaching a soul with the Gospel (8.29). The Spirit illuminated Scripture for them, until the Scripture spoke of Jesus Christ (8.23-35).

At Samaria, the signs and miracles were evidence of the presence and power of the Spirit (8.13). The Spirit confirmed the new converts in their incipient faith (8.15,17; 10.44-46). Stephen was enabled to see Jesus standing on the right hand of God (7.55); to endue Saul with power (9.17); comfort the Church (9.31), and direct in service (10.19).

God selects His servants (6.3), seven deacons who were to help the apostles and to take over the administration of tables. God also directs His servants (8.26,28; 16.6-10). The authority to send is vested in Christ (Matt. 28.18), the energy for going is in the Holy Spirit (Luke 24.49; Acts 1.8). The Spirit's confirmation by judgement on those who resist is illustrated in the temporary blindness of Elymas the magician (13.9,12). The Spirit gave the apostles the boldness to confront men, the eloquence to persuade and the language in which to be understood.

The fellowship of the Spirit is a prominent theme in the Acts. (2.46,47; 8.15,17). The acceptance of Cornelius was plain to Peter (10.44-48). Later Paul's mission to the Gentiles and their admittance to the Church proves the community of the Spirit (15.28). The superintendence of the Spirit within the Church is seen at Antioch (11.23-28; 13.1,2).

The saints were unified in mind and spirit by a glowing experience and by the over-ruling, governing direction of the Spirit. They were able to withstand great pressure from without, and to expand their outreach far beyond Palestine.

The early church had a tremendous consciousness of being divinely led. The leaders were for ever conscious that

they were never left to take decisions alone. Office-bearers should take their office more seriously, and perform it more diligently, if they remembered they are responsible to none other than the Holy Spirit (20.38).

Trace the Holy Spirit in connection with prayer, preaching, fasting, baptism and laying on of hands in the Acts. There is no book in the N.T. in which the Holy Spirit becomes so personally viewed as He does in the book of Acts. There are over fifty references to His Person and Work.

Trace the references to "the Spirit"; "Holy Spirit," "the Holy Spirit," and "Spirit." The Greek prepositions used in connection with the Holy Spirit is both a fascinating and rewarding study. Bishop Wescott says, "the Greek preposition for "IN" — "EN" is found more than 2,700 times in the New Testament." **Some** of these are "DIA"—means through, throughout (Acts 1.2; 11.28; 21.4). "EIS" means into, as when a bird flies into its nest. (Matt. 28.19; Acts 13.9; 1 Cor. 12.13). "EK" means out of (Matt. 1.18,20; John 3.34; Gal. 6.8; 1 John 3.24). "EPI" means upon, resting upon (Matt. 3.16; 12.18; John 1.32,33; Acts 1.8; 2.3,17,18; 10.44). "META" means with, to be associated with a person (John 14.16; 2 Cor. 13.14). "APO" means from. The Spirit coming in His Authority from God to us (John 16.13; Acts 2.17,18; 1 Pet. 1.12). Paul naturally gifted beyond most men and advanced (Gal. 1.14) needs no less that same filling of the Spirit if he is to become leader and spokesman of the Spirit-filled Church as the "uneducated common men" of Acts 4.13.

We need to remember today that while God can make use of cleverness and expertise; cleverness and expertise CAN NEVER make use of God. In the early Church the Spirit's presence made the saints faithful. Though scattered abroad by persecution they preached the Word everywhere (8.4). They were Spirit-filled men. Trace the Spirit guiding and directing the life and activity of Paul (16.6-7, 19-21; 20.22).

It is true that the founders of the Christian church were granted unique endowments for their task. The Holy Spirit is the gift of God to every sinner who has trusted Christ for salvation (2.30). But the Holy Spirit can be grieved by us (Eph. 4.30). How can I relate to the Spirit's activities? I must be willing to listen to Him, to learn from Him, to be led and guided by Him, I must follow and obey, unhesitatingly.

We need to pray daily for Spirit-filled men who can minister to the Church with apostolic zeal, with prophetic insight, with evangelistic fervour, with the compassion of Christ and a passion to see souls blessed and saved. Shall we pray with the Psalmist, "Wilt thou not revive us again; that thy people may rejoice in Thee" (Ps. 85.6).

Young believer, remember there is no command in the Bible for anyone to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. Potentially, the baptism of the Holy Spirit took place for all believers at Pentecost. Experimentally—that is as far as your experience and mine are concerned as believers—the baptism took place the moment we trusted Christ. It is not a SPECIAL experience of emotion because like justification, it is a positional work, an objective work of God, not something that can be seen or felt by us.

CHRIST IN THE APOCALYPSE (9)

by JOHN B. D. PAGE

THE LAMB IN HEAVEN (iii)

Reading : Revelation 5.6-14.

With the four living creatures around the throne and the twenty-four elders encircling them, there "stood a Lamb as it had been slain" in the midst of this august company (5.6), upon Whom the seer's eyes rested with amazement. Like all that John had already seen, the Lamb's position is related to the throne, but the Lamb was not seated upon it. Also, the Lamb is not without the scars of sacrifice, for He still bore the wound marks of the cross. Although He was now seen in the glory and exalted, the efficacy of His vicarious sufferings upon the cross was still evident to the seer.

As John gazed upon the Lamb, his thoughts would have inevitably gone back to that memorable passover day when the true Paschal Lamb was sacrificed. Also, he would have recalled the evening sacrifice of that day when a lamb was consumed by fire upon the temple altar, which coincided with the death of the Lamb of God upon the cross. As we proceed with this study, we shall find the under-lying

imagery for the Apocalyptic Lamb appears to be more of the Lamb for the evening sacrifice than that for the passover.

This is the first occurrence of the appellation "Lamb" applied to Christ in Revelation. In the New Testament, the word "lamb" occurs thirty-four times for the translation of two Greek words, which need to be differentiated. Setting aside the word occurring four times and not found in Revelation, the other word *arnion*, occurring thirty times, is used once of Christians (John 21.15), once of the antichrist (Rev. 13.11), and twenty-eight times of Christ in Revelation where it "presents Him, on the ground, indeed of His sacrifice, but in His acquired majesty, dignity, honour, authority and power," says W. E. Vine. This is true of this 6th verse under consideration, for the Lamb, bearing the wound marks of sacrifice, is seen exalted to the highest of the heavens where He occupies the place of greatest honour. Furthermore, this apocalyptic word "lamb" is a diminutive in form, meaning 'a little lamb' literally, which is a reminder that the lamb for the evening sacrifice (and that for the morning) was to be "of the first year" (Exod. 29.38).

To bring out the Deity of His Person, making the Anti-type superior to the type, John describes two of His divine attributes in metaphorical language. The Lamb is depicted as "having seven horns and seven eyes" which are interpreted as being "the seven Spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth." The horns are a symbol of His might and power whilst the eyes are emblematic of His perception and knowledge. The numeral seven enumerating His horns and eyes is suggestive of His perfection in power and likewise in perception, and so the Lamb is both omnipotent and omniscient.

Next, "the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb" (5.8). What a wonderful sight of homage as the cherubim and the priestly elders around the Lamb prostrated themselves in worship of Him! These celestial worshippers are described as "having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours" (or, incenses, mgn.) (5.8). In a footnote to this verse, J. N. Darby says in his *New Translation* that the present participle "having" refers strictly to the 'elde-s.' This clarifies the scene, because the twenty-four priestly elders, not the four cherubic beings, were holding harps and censers of incense,

and fragrant odours ascended from the censers. The incense is said to symbolize "the prayers of the saints." These prayers were not uttered by the elders, because prayer, as an expression of need, would be out of place in heaven. But prayers of the saints on earth ascend to heaven as sweet odours from burning incense.

In this scene, there appears to be an allusion to "the time of incense" (Luke 1.8-10) during the evening sacrifice, when one priest with a censer full of fire from off the altar entered alone into the holy place of the temple to burn incense upon the golden altar, even as a priest did when the Lamb of God was offered sacrificially upon the cross. In the heavenly sanctuary, not merely one but all the priest-elders were holding censers of incense, and the Lamb was no longer suffering outside the temple, but He was inside the sanctuary standing in the midst of the priest-elders.

Besides censers, all the elders had harps, "and they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy . . . ; for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation: and hast made us into our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth" (5.9f). As John listened to this new song from the lips of the harpist-elders clad in their white priestly clothing, a similar temple scene would have come to his mind. No doubt, he would have remembered witnessing the vast company of worshippers in the temple courts for "the hour of prayer" (Acts 3.1) during the evening sacrifice and heard the white arrayed priests and Levites, of whom there were one hundred and twenty in number as there were at the consecration of Solomon's temple (II Chron. 5.12), chant the psalm for the day to the accompaniment of their ten-stringed harps. For it, they stood on the fifteen steps to the court of the women, which was one of the four temple courts. The singing of the psalm, which was after the priest had burnt incense in the holy place of the temple and after the lamb had been consumed by fire upon the altar, brought the service of the evening sacrifice to an end. According to Dr. A. Edersheim, the psalms sung, commencing with the first day of the week, were Psalms 24, 48, 82, 94, 81, 93 and 92, one for each day, but on the sabbath, the seventh day, they sang in addition to the psalm for the day the two Songs of Moses.

John, of course, refers later to the singing of "the song of Moses" (15.3) without mentioning which of the two songs, but it provides further evidence of the temple and its daily services as the background of the book. The reason for singing the Songs of Moses besides the set psalm for the seventh day was the offering "on the sabbath day of two lambs," which meant an additional lamb in the morning and another in the evening (Num. 28.9f). It was after the sacrifice of this extra lamb that the song of Moses in Deuteronomy chapter 32 was sung for concluding the morning sacrifice, and Moses' other song in Exodus chapter 15 was sung at the close of the evening sacrifice.

It was neither the psalm for the day nor a song of Moses that the seer heard echoing in the celestial sanctuary but it was "a new (*kainos*, Gr.) song," by which he meant that the song is new in content and character, and nothing like it had been sung in the earthly temple.

The new song, into which the elders burst forth, acknowledged the work of Christ upon the cross as the basis of blessing and it proclaimed the purchase by blood of a vast company from every branch of the human race to be a kingdom of priests.

It is clear from the song with its theme of redemption that the elders were redeemed creatures who had tasted of deliverance from the devil's thralldom and the joys of salvation.

Looking beyond the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders around the throne, John saw myriads of angels and he heard their seven-fold doxology addressed to the Lamb. Power, riches, wisdom, strength, honour, glory and blessing were ascribed to Him. All was laid at His feet as a tribute of His inestimable worth (5.11f). No doubt, as John gazed upon such a sight in the courts of the heavenly temple, his thoughts went back to the courts of the temple in Jerusalem crowded with worshippers singing in unison with the priests and Levites the psalm for the day.

Simultaneously, the whole of creation, embracing all celestial, terrestrial and infernal beings, joined in a four-fold doxology, ascribing blessing, honour, glory and power to the Occupant of the throne and to the Lamb. (5.13). Such universal worship was unknown in the earthly temple.

At last, the Man of Calvary is exalted far above all and He has received universal homage, to which the four living creatures said aloud "Amen" whilst the twenty-four priestly elders bowed low in worship before Him (5.14).

THE COMPENSATING GRACE OF GOD

A Study of Psalm 49

by **HAROLD ST. JOHN**

Two Psalms commence by propounding a 'dark saying' or enigma for solution; in 78.2 Asaph offers the riddle of a saint's failures, and in the Ode before us we are called to consider life's apparent injustice in the light of the inevitable adjustment which lies on the other side of the grave.

The Sons of Korah boldly face the question as to whether wealth is really a master force or not; whether the poor ought to cringe in the presence of the rich or even envy them at all; and they decide that the limitations of riches are so evident that, to a thoughtful mind they cease to be desirable at all.

These limitations are described from three points of view:

(a) Riches cannot buy the redemption of their owner, either for himself and far less for his fellows (v.7.).

(b) They cannot postpone death for an instant (v. 11).

(c) They have no purchasing power in the markets of Eternity; they are worse than post-war German paper money, they are not even allowed inside the gates of Heaven (v. 17).

The only Divine Name used is Elohim (twice) because the range of the Psalm is universal, and has no special reference to the people of the Covenant.

The historical period probably falls within the reigns of Jotham and Uzziah when great wealth and deep poverty existed side by side, as always, provoking widespread unrest; the policy of the landowners was to add field to field until there was scarcely standing room for the poor. (See Isa. 5.8; Mic. 2.2; Amos. 5.11; 8.4-6).

The structure is an exquisitely complex piece of writing and merits more than a little attention :

vv. 1-4. An introductory appeal to the Universe.

vv. 5-12. The limits of wealth in this life, both as to power and permanence.

vv. 13-20. Its utter worthlessness when its owner has passed through the gates of the grave.

The correspondence between the two main sections ought not to escape the reader's notice. Thus :

The following verses answer to each other :

vv. 5 and 16. 'Wherefore should I fear: . . . be not thou afraid.'

vv. 6 and 14. 'They trust in wealth: . . . like sheep they are laid.'

vv. 7 and 15. 'None of them can redeem: . . . but God will redeem.'

vv. 10 and 17. 'He seeth that wise men die: . . . but when he dieth.'

vv. 11 and 19. 'To all generations: . . . the generation of his fathers.'

TEXT NOTES

vv. 12 and 20. Refrain: identical except that v. 12 has 'man **abides not**,' and in v. 20 'man **understands not**.'

vv. 1-4. The opening address contains four distinct calls addressed to all nations, 1,2.

Four classes appealed to in v. 2.

Four channels of revelation (mouth, heart, ear, harp) (vv. 3,4.)

Four forms which revelation may assume (wisdom, understanding, parable or dark saying).

v. 1. 'Peoples' is plural because the call is to earth's short-lived races, in contrast to Israel who is the true citizen of eternity. The word translated 'world' means earth's life, with special reference to its brevity (see its use in Job. 11.17; Ps. 17.14; 39.5; 89.47). Like the Image that Nebuchadnezzar saw

In outline dim and vast
Their fearful shadows cast—
The giant forms of Empire on their way
To ruin, one by one: they tower
And they are gone.

v. 2. 'Both sons of Adam, sons of Ish' (Heb.), that is, all men alike and especially all distinguished men. The rich must recognize their vanity, the poor must learn true contentment (as in James 1.9, 10).

v. 3. 'Wisdoms'—plural as expressing profound insight; 'meditation' is the same word as 'device' in Lam. 3.62 and Ps. 39.3 (in a slightly different form).

v. 4. 'Dark saying' — (**gheedah**) occurs eight times in Judges 14 as 'riddle'; and also in Num. 12.8. The harp is the instrument of the heart's gladness and the writer knows he can open out what till then had been mysterious.

v. 5. 'Wherefore should I fear . . . the perversity of those who would trip me up.' He feels that his rich and powerful neighbours are a poor lot after all (cp. Jer. 9.4).

'Heels'—(**gahkekv**) occurs Jos. 8.13; Ps. 41.9 in the sense of those who lie in wait.

v. 7. From such powerless people their friends have little to hope and their foes have nothing to fear. The reference is to Exod. 21.30 where the same phrase, 'ransom of life,' occurs again and nowhere else. The Psalmist may also have in mind Num. 35.31, where money was powerless to bluff off an offender. In the East the brother is the nearest and dearest (Jer. 22.18).

v. 8. Law cases could be assessed but no money will compensate God, as in Matt. 5.26.

v. 9. Revert to v. 7, 'not see the pit.' The word **shahghath** probably means 'pit' in every case (see 9.15; 30.9; 94.13).

v. 10. 'Leave,' not as legacies, but merely 'abandon' it—the word **azab** is translated 'gone from me' in Ps. 38.10; and 'forsake' in 22.1.

v. 11. There is a difficulty about the word 'inward thought' (**kehrev**). In Ps. 5.9 and Jer. 31.33 it occurs as here; but it seems that the lxx had a text which gave 'sepulchres are their houses.' The difference in the words in Hebrew is slight, the consonants being QBRM instead of QRBM; the vowels were added much later. They call their lands as conquerors do (2 Sam. 12.28); but the word for 'lands' (**adamoth**) may mean 'heaps of dust'!

v. 13. 'Folly' (**kehsele**) is used in the ritual of the sacrifices for the flanks of the animal as the seat of its fat or energy (Deut. 32.15), but in Prov. 3.26 it is 'confidence,' as here.

v. 15. 'Receive' translated 'took' in Gen. 5.24; there is probably an underlying reference to Enoch's experience.

v. 17. cf. Job. 21.1; Eccles. 5.15.

v. 18. 'Blessed' means self-congratulations (Deut. 39.19).

v. 19. The ranks of those whose lot is fixed.

v. 20. Those amongst the rich who are destitute of discernment.

From the standpoint of the preacher this Psalm is especially fruitful. The awful picture of v. 14, 'Death shall be their Shepherd,' shows us the ghostly Pastor driving his terror-stricken flock along the undesired path which leads to the Land of Darkness, out of the world they have loved, **leaving behind them the books, the music, the money for which they have bartered their souls;** they go, knowing that the only thing that they can carry with them is their sin, and then, like 'sheep they are laid in the grave.'

Well has Shakespeare said : 'Death is a fearful thing; the weariest and most loathed earthly life that age, ache, penury and imprisonment can lay on nature, is paradise to what men fear of death.'

In striking contrast with the Psalm, the Book of Revelation reveals to us that the Lamb in the midst of the Throne shall be the Shepherd of His own, and will lead them beside living Fountains of waters (Rev. 7.17, lit.).

The contrast may be set forth by a scribe instructed in the Kingdom as follows :

The two Shepherds—Death and the Lamb.

The two Folds—The Grave and the Green Pastures.

The two Flocks—The sons of Time and the citizens of Eternity.

It will be noted that no word is said as to any special wickedness on the part of the wealthy landowners; it is simply that they are absorbed by the present, that they have forgotten God, and that they have not realized that shrouds have no pockets.

As to the Flock of the Lamb, white robed and waving their palms of Victory, their only title is that they have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb; each one for himself has done it and not for another.

From David's lips the word did roll

'Tis true and living yet,

No man can save his brother's soul

Nor pay his brother's debt.

Thus do the Two Shepherds pass on their way, each with his flock, and every man is claimed by one of the two worlds which they represent.

Dear reader, have you put your soul in the balance of eternity? You may sell yourself for some thirty pieces of silver, some honour or favour which this world may offer; you may risk eternity for the sake of an occasional hour of sensual pleasure, the effects of which may already be reacting on the dust of your material life, revealing itself in your dimmed eye, slackened step, and soiled manhood; but to you the pealing, pleading voice of Christ the Beautiful Shepherd is calling.

Out from the deep impenetrable silences of eternity His voice is sounding: 'Come unto Me . . . and I will refresh you.' Will you answer to Him?

HYMNS AND THEIR WRITERS (30), by Jack Strahan, Enniskillen.

"STRICKEN, SMITTEN, AND AFFLICTED"

THOMAS KELLY (1769—1854)

Thomas Kelly was probably Ireland's greatest and most prolific hymn writer. The only son of Judge Kelly of Kellyville, Queen's County, Ireland, he was born in the city of Dublin on July 13th, 1769. Judge Kelly intended for his son a career at the Bar and so after graduating with honours from Trinity College, Dublin, Thomas entered the Temple, in London. While studying there and while yet in his early twenties, he was converted to God. He had been using Romaine's edition of Colosio's Hebrew Concordance and his enquiring mind had led him to a deeper perusal of Romaine's evangelical doctrines. That pursuit produced within his heart a deep conviction of sin and his true state before God. Earnestly desiring Divine approval, he diligently sought to obtain it through his own merit and only when self-reformation, fasting and other forms of practical asceticism had all proved futile, he found salvation and peace through believing in the Lord Jesus Christ.

At the age of 23, he left the Bar and returned to Ireland where he was ordained a minister of the established church. However, Kelly was too fervent and forceful a preacher of justification by faith alone to be allowed to stay within the established church. He incurred the displeasure of Archbishop Fowler of Dublin who, thereupon, closed to him all the pulpits of the diocese. Thus debarred from consecrated buildings, Kelly moved outside the established church and crowds flocked to hear him, attracted by his magnetic presence. A writer of those times stated that,

“his presence, his conversation, his learning were all tending to improve his intercourse with others; for they felt that they were enjoying the society of one who was ‘on his way to God’”. Nevertheless, he had to withstand bitter opposition in those days and especially from members of his own family. This caused him much heartbreak for he felt that in many ways it would have been easier to have died at the stake than to have gone against his family.

The after-years of Kelly's life were centred around the city of Dublin and all of those years were full for God. As a man of influence and means, he became “a friend of good men” and “an advocate of every worthy cause.” Possessed of a gracious and generous spirit, his liberality was acknowledged by all and he was greatly beloved among the poor of Dublin city, particularly so in the days of the potato famine of the 1840's. He became renowned as one of Ireland's finest evangelical preachers, as one of her greatest scholars and as one of her most distinguished spiritual poets. Singleness of purpose marked all his earthly way, right till its close on May 14th, 1854 and one has written over those 63 years of busy ministry—“his language, his temper, his recreations, as well as his serious studies, were all regulated by the same rule, to “do all to the glory of God.”

Thomas Kelly, “the hymnist of Ireland” has left for us a rich treasury in verse. His compositions were the simple and natural expression of an overflowing heart. His subject matter was the word of God and his poetical works were published as such—“Hymns on Various Passages of Scripture.” Its first edition, published in 1804, contained 96 of his hymns and its 10th edition, published in 1853, (the year preceding his death) contained 765 of his hymns. In the preface of this last edition Kelly wrote, “It will be perceived by those who have read these hymns that, though there is an interval between the first and the last of nearly 50 years, both speak of the same great truths and in the same way. In the course of that long time the author has seen much and heard much but nothing has made the least change in his mind that he is conscious of as to the grand truths of the gospel. What pacified the conscience then does so now. What gave hope then does so now. ‘Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Christ Jesus’”. When he took up his pen, the person and work of the Lord Jesus was his compelling theme—Christ's cross and His resurrection, Christ's exaltation and priestly ministry, Christ's second advent and His coming glory: on these majestic themes probably no nobler verse can anywhere be found. His hymns rank among the first in the English language, lifting high the person of the Lord Jesus while, at the same time, bowing low the heart in worship and calling

forth the heart to praise. Besides his poetic distinction, Kelly was an accomplished musician and composer, compiling a companion volume of music to his "Hymns on Various Passages of Scripture."

Kelly's store is vast. The following serve to illustrate something of the richness, the beauty and the grandeur that marked his compositions;

"Behold the Lamb with glory crowned"
"Crowns of glory ever bright"
"Glory, glory everlasting"
"Glory to God on high"
"God is love, His word has said it"
"Look, ye saints, the sight is glorious"
"Meeting in the Saviour's name"
"Praise the Lord who died to save us"
"Praise the Saviour ye who know him"
"Saviour, through the desert lead us"
"Stricken, smitten and afflicted"
"The atoning work is done"
"The head that once was crowned with thorns"
"We sing the praise of Him who died"
"We'll sing of the Shepherd that died"
"Without blood is no remission"

In those privileged and precious moments at the Lord's Supper, the believer's carnal and wandering thoughts have oftentimes been elevated and stayed by some phrase or line from Kelly's pen. Likewise, in gospel testimony, Kelly fixes and enlarges our view of the grand truths of the gospel,

"Stricken, smitten and afflicted,
See Him dying on the tree!
'Tis the Christ by man rejected,
Yes, my soul, 'tis He! 'tis He!
Many hands were raised to wound Him,
None would interpose to save;
But the awful stroke that found Him
Was the stroke that justice gave.

Ye who think of sin but lightly,
Nor suppose the evil great,
Here may view its nature rightly,
Here its guilt may estimate.
Mark the sacrifice appointed!
See who bears the awful load!
'Tis the Word, the Lord's Anointed
Son of Man, and Son of God.

Here we have a firm foundation,
Here's the refuge of the lost;
Christ the Rock of our salvation;
His the Name of which we boast.
Lamb of God, for sinners wounded
Sacrificed to cancel guilt!
None shall ever be confounded
Who on Him their hopes have built."

What a picture unfolds as Kelly introduces the Saviour! The magnificance of the One who interposes to save is enhanced by the dark background of the sinner's awesome plight. As we watch with deep intent, the One appointed of God and anointed of God intervenes on the sinner's behalf, is "stricken, smitten and afflicted." Justice is fully and for ever satisfied, for there is no mitigation of sentence at Calvary. This indeed, and this alone is the sinner's refuge, his only hope.

ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY

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