

# Miscellaneous Papers

*Volume Two*

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Author of "Mysteries of God;" "Minor Prophets;"  
"Holiness: The False and the True;" "Sailing with Paul;"  
"Praying in the Holy Spirit;" "The Four Hundred Silent Years;"  
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# **The Mass versus The Lord's Supper**

**Sermon Delivered at the Moody Church, Chicago,  
Sunday Afternoon, June 27th, 1926**

**By H. A. IRONSIDE**

Reprinted from "The Moody Church News."

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The Pastor learned late in the previous week of the possibility of holding a great Protestant Rally in the Moody Church, with Mr. H. A. Ironside as speaker, on the Sunday following the Eucharistic Congress held in Chicago. The time was much too short for extensive advertising, but through announcement in the Saturday papers, and the co-operation of a large number of city ministers, many of whom were present at the Rally, the effort became known to a great many. Rev. John O'Hair and Rev. James M. Gray, D. D., very kindly mentioned the meeting to their radio audiences. The former presided at the Rally. More than 3,500 people attended.

**I**T is possible, as I speak to you to-day, that I may use the word "Catholic" as opposed to "Protestant." If I do, it is simply a slip of the tongue, for I maintain that every true Protestant is a real Catholic, that every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is a member of the one Holy Catholic Church.

purchased by the precious blood of the Son of God. But I distinguish between a Catholic and a Romanist. When I was speaking, on one occasion, to a Roman Catholic priest whom I met in a train in California, he asked me what my profession was and I said, "I am a Catholic priest."

He looked at my collar and said, "You are surely jesting with me."

I said, "No, I never was more serious in my life. I am a priest in the Holy Catholic Church. I mean that I am a member of that holy and royal priesthood composed of all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ and together forming the Holy Catholic Church." So if I use the word "Catholic" when I mean "Romanist" you will understand me.

I am not here to say anything unkind against the Roman church. As my friend, Brother O'Hair, has reminded you, our Government guarantees to every man the right to full liberty of conscience in regard to religious privileges. As we wish to enjoy that liberty ourselves, we are glad to accord it to others. But I simply desire to examine some of the teachings of the Church of Rome and compare them with the teaching of the Word of God, particularly on the great central doctrine of that church, which is called the Sacrament of the Blessed Eucharist, or the Sacrament of the Mass.

## THE CRUX OF THE MATTER

Every Roman Catholic priest will tell you that all the claims of the Church of Rome stand or fall with the doctrine of the real presence of Christ in the Mass. If the bread and wine used in the Sacrament of the Mass, when consecrated by the priest, are changed in some mysterious way into the body, blood, soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ so that the communicant receiving the bread actually takes into his mouth and eats and digests the body, blood, soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ—if this is true, then the Church of Rome is the true church of Christ and every one of us should be members of it. But if it is false, if it is absolutely opposed to the teaching of the Word of God, then the Church of Rome is an apostate church and every faithful believer should come out of her in order that he might not be held accountable for her sins.

It was because the great reformers of the sixteenth century saw this clearly and were assured in their own hearts that the doctrine of the Church of Rome in regard to the Eucharist or the Mass was absolutely opposed to the Word of God and was not only blasphemous but idolatrous, that they came out in protest against that apostate system and they won for us at tremendous cost of Christian blood the li-

berty that we now possess. And yet we, unworthy children of such worthy sires, are frittering away our liberty and we are allowing our children to be ensnared again by this evil system from which our fathers escaped with such tremendous effort.

### BASIC TRUTH

I want to call your attention first of all to a passage in the 10th chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews which may not seem at first sight to have any reference to the subject in question, but I think we shall see that it not only has reference to it but presents the basic truth in regard to it. The 10th chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, beginning with verse 11:

**“And every priest (the Apostle is referring to the Levitical priesthood) standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: but this man (that is, the Lord Jesus Christ who as to the mystery of His person is both God and man in one blessed, glorious person never to be divided), after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God: from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that**

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He had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more."

Now here is the crucial text that I want you to get:

**"Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin."**

### CHRIST'S FINISHED WORK

In the Epistle to the Hebrews the apostolic writer contrasts the ritual system of the Old Testament dispensation with the glorious work achieved by Jesus Christ when He offered Himself on Calvary's cross for our redemption. He draws our attention to the fact that under the old economy the priest's work was never done because the sin question was never settled. No sacrifice had been found that was of sufficient value to atone for the sins of the world and so whenever men sinned afresh they had to come with a new sacrifice. One offering followed another constantly, therefore there was not even provision made for the priest to sit down in the tabernacle or in the temple of the Lord. *The priest's work was never done for sin was never put away.* But he goes on to say that in those sacrifices there was an ac-

knowledge again made of sin from year to year. That is, the worshiper under the Old Testament dispensation came to God in faith, confessing his sin, and brought his animal sacrifice, whether a bullock from the herd, a sheep from the flock, or two birds. He confessed his sin and these sacrifices were offered for him. *They did not cancel his guilt. They did not cleanse his heart.* They were rather in the nature of a note that a man gives to his creditor for a debt. A man is owing a certain sum of money. He makes out a note for that sum. He is unable to pay when it is due, so he makes out another note, and in those notes there is an acknowledgement again made of the debt from year to year. So in the sacrifices of old there was simply an acknowledgement of sin made year after year. Sometimes when a man must give a note for a debt he has a wealthy friend who is good enough to endorse that note for him. By endorsing that note his friend says, "If you are not able to pay when the note becomes due, I pledge myself to pay for you."

### THE SIN QUESTION SETTLED

When these people of old gave their notes to God by bringing their sacrifices again and again, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son still ex-carnate, endorsed every note and He said,

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**“Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me) to do Thy will, O God.”**

In the fulness of time He came, made of a woman, made under the law, and He went to Calvary's cross and there, may I say, gathered up and settled for all those notes of the past, and undertook the full responsibility for every believer to the end of time and offered Himself a sacrifice for the sins of men. By that one all-sufficient offering of Himself upon the cross, He has settled the sin question to God's satisfaction so that now God can be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.

The sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ had both a backward and a forward aspect. *It put away all the sins of the past that had only been covered by the blood of the sacrifices and made ample provision to put away all the sins of the future for every one who would believe on Him.* The means by which needy sinners avail themselves of an interest in the finished work of Christ is very simple. The sinner has to take his place before God as a lost, guilty man, owning his iniquity and putting his trust in the Man who died on the cross; for

**“By Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by Moses' law.”**

In this New Testament economy Christ is the only sacrificing priest. He is the one all-sufficient victim. Christ having made atonement for sins, rose from the dead and God has manifested His righteous satisfaction in the work of the cross by seating Him in heaven at His own right hand.

### A FEAST OF LOVE

Our Lord Jesus before He went away, foreseeing all this, gave to His disciples that feast of love which we commonly call "The Lord's Supper." In the Lord's Supper this mystery of redemption is wonderfully and beautifully pictured. I want to read to you the various scriptures in the New Testament that refer to it. I am going to read each passage that speaks of this feast of love in order that you, hearing them, may compare them in your own mind with the celebration—the idolatrous celebration—which you have either seen or of which you have been reading during recent days, and I ask you to put the questions to yourself: *Is there anything here that is remotely connected with this ceremony that myriads have been so occupied with during this past week? Is there in this a sin offering? Is there a sacrificing priest? Is there any provision here for incense, any provision for worshipping the Virgin Mary, any provision for a great hierarchy with their*



*brilliant garments?* I read the other day that \$200,000.00 worth of priestly garments were ruined by the rain during the celebration at Mundelein. You could put all the apostles, and the 500 who saw the Lord after His resurrection, and all the Christians in the early days, out in the rain and hail and they would not ruin \$10.00 worth of priestly vestments! *Is there anything that compares with the ceremony that has been enacted in this city and its environs in the last few days and which is supposed to be the continuation of that of which our Lord speaks here?*

In the 26th chapter of Matthew—our Lord had just eaten the Passover with His disciples—we read, beginning at verse 26:

**“And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat: this is My body. And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it: for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom. And when they had sung an hymn they went out into the mount of Olives.”**

How beautiful in its simplicity is this first celebration of the Lord’s Supper! How different to this

mysterious ceremony which is the very center of the Roman Catholic system!

### OTHER VERSIONS

Now turn to the Gospel of Mark and get his account of the same Supper. See if there is anything which Matthew left out which he has inserted which might give some ground, some basis, for the doctrines that have gathered round the so-called Sacrament of the Mass. St. Mark, chapter 14, verse 22:

**“And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body. And He took the cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them: and they all drank of it. And He said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many. Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God. And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.”**

“And as they did eat.” I would draw your attention to that. Every Roman Catholic is instructed to take the Sacrament of the Mass *fasting*. Here you read that after “they did eat, Jesus took bread.” They were just concluding the Passover meal. And

“Jesus took bread.” Mark you, not some special cake marked with the mystic letters “I. H. S.” which are supposed to mean Iesus Hominum Salvator, but that might just as well mean the Egyptian deities Isis, Horus, Seb, as they did ages ago in a similar ceremony.

Now I turn you to the account given by our brother Luke, Doctor Luke, the beloved physician. Luke's Gospel, chapter 22, verse 19:

**“And He took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of Me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.”**

#### PAUL SPEAKS

The Apostle John does not give us any account of the institution of the Lord's Supper, but after Christ's ascension and after the conversion of Saul of Tarsus when he became the Apostle Paul, a special revelation was given to him, and in the 11th chapter of 1st Corinthians we get the full account of it. Read from verse 20:

**“When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper. For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and**

Then in the 10th chapter of the same Epistle we read in verse 16:

**“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?” Verse 21: “Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord’s table, and of the table of devils.”**

#### THE TEACHING IS CLEAR

I have read all these passages because they give you every verse in the New Testament that definitely refers to the Lord’s Supper. You can see just what they teach. Our blessed Lord was going out to die and before He left His disciples He gave them this memorial feast. There is a striking passage in the book of the prophet Jeremiah in which he is predicting dire judgments coming upon Israel and he says that so many people will die that there will be none left to break bread for them (that is the marginal reading), nor to give them the cup of consolation. It evidently referred to an old custom that when somebody died loving friends gathered together with those who were left and they sat down and ate and drank in memory of the loved one, probably talked of his virtues and tried to comfort his loved ones.

Now our Lord Jesus Christ has come to the end of His thirty-three wonderful years here upon earth. He is about to go out to die. He came for that purpose. He said, "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." Now He has His little company of disciples gathered about Him. They have kept the Pascal feast, the last Passover that God ever recognized. Actually, they kept the Passover and Christ died on the same day, because the Jewish day began in the evening and went on until the next evening. So the Lord ate the Passover with His disciples on the first evening and before the next evening—between the two evenings—He died on the cross, Christ, our Passover, sacrificed for us.

#### A MEMORIAL FEAST

Our Lord, with all this before Him, takes a piece of bread—just common bread, the bread they were using at the Passover—probably unleavened bread, although there is no scripture that definitely indicates that it must be that. I don't find that the Word of God has been careful to legislate whether the bread should be leavened or unleavened, whether the wine should be fermented or unfermented. I think we may see the wisdom of God in it, for there are circumstances under which, if there were such a rule,

many of God's children could not partake. But He took bread and held that bread in His hand and said to the disciples, "This is my body which is given for you." Observe: *There He sat at the table. He is not indicating that any change takes place in the bread.* He is there in His perfectly human body and He holds this bread in His hand and He says, "This is my body." Surely any one must be blind who cannot see what He is telling them is this: This bread, I want you to understand, is to bring before you the truth that my body is to be sacrificed for sin. He had not yet been sacrificed and yet He speaks as though it had already taken place. "This do in remembrance of Me." And He passes the bread around to them. *There is no mysterious priesthood; there are no costly vestments; there are no candles burning in a ceremonial manner; no smoking incense ascending. They have partaken of one meal and then He gives them this beautiful memorial feast. He does not even appoint a clergyman to preside there. He addresses them as brethren and He says, "This do in remembrance of Me."*

#### SIMPLE AND BEAUTIFUL

I think, my brethren, the simpler we can be in our thoughts of the Lord's Supper the better. I read some time ago of a Hindu who was living in a vil-

lage when a missionary came for the first time and they said to him, "Come. You must see So-and-So."

The missionary went to this man's house. When he saw a white man coming with a Bible he rose to greet him and bowed at his feet. The missionary said, "Stand up. I am just a man like yourself."

"Oh," said the Hindu, "you have come with the Book. I have waited for it for twenty years."

"How is that?"

"Well, twenty years ago I took a long journey. I heard a man in the market place (he looked like you) read from a book. He told the story of the Great God of Love who sent His Son to die for sinners. I bought a book." He produced a copy of Matthew's Gospel all worn so that hardly a leaf was whole. "I took it home. I have eaten that book. I have read it over and over. I have read it to all the people in the village. I have been praying that God would send somebody to tell me more."

He asked him to eat with him. Now the host was a little embarrassed. He had a bowl of rice and he turned to the other man and said, "Before we eat, I always do as Jesus said."

The missionary did not understand. But he said, "Go ahead. Don't let me interfere."

The Hindu closed his eyes, thanked God that

Christ had died for him, and then he said, "I eat this rice because the body of my Lord Jesus was nailed on the cross for me." Then he took the common drink of the land and said, "I drink of this because my Lord Jesus died for me," and he gave some to the missionary, as he had given the rice, and they ate and drank together.

The missionary said, "How long have you been doing this?"

"For twenty years."

"And how often?"

"Every time I eat a meal."

He saw nothing in the Book that would tell him how often. So I repeat, the simpler we can be the better. It is a memorial—that is all.

### WHAT DOES "EUCHARIST" MEAN?

You ask, Do you not believe in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist? Some may not know the meaning of the term Eucharist. It is "thanksgiving." Oh yes, dear friends, every instructed Christian believes in the real presence in the Eucharist, but *de does not believe that the bread ceases to be anything but bread and he does not believe that the wine ceases to be anything but wine.* He does not believe in a strange, mysterious transformation of cereal bread and of wine into the body, blood, soul and



divinity of Jesus Christ. But he believes this : "Where two or three are gathered together in My name (as Jesus said) there am I in the midst." Some of the sweetest moments of my life have been spent at the Table of the Lord, communing with the Blessed One who of old said, "Do this in remembrance of Me," and faith's eye could discern Him there standing in the midst, showing His wounds and spreading His hands.

A Roman Catholic layman in St. Louis who does much to put Protestants to shame because of his zeal in advertising his religion, recently put out an advertisement like this: "Catholics believe in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist; Protestants believe in the real absence." But that is false. Protestants do not believe that the bread and wine undergo any mystic change, but *they do believe that as you eat and drink in remembrance of Christ, Christ is present in His sweet and wonderful way, manifesting Himself to the hearts of His beloved people so that by faith they are enabled to feed upon Him. We feed upon Him in remembrance. We look back and think of the sorrows He bore. We contemplate His cross and bitter passion, and as we do, we eat of His flesh and drink of His blood, and as we feast on Christ we find our love for those things for which Christ died upon the cross becom-*

ing less, and our love for those blessed things into which He would lead us through the new and living way, through the veil into the holiest, becoming greater, for we become like that upon which we feed.

### NO DISTINCTION BETWEEN CHRISTIANS

In this feast Christ gives the bread and then He gives the wine. He did not separate believers into a clergy and a laity and say to the clergy, "The wine is for you: the bread is simply for the laity." There is no such distinction made in the Bible. For two centuries and a half after Christ's gospel began to be preached in this world you will search reputable church history in vain to find such a distinction. There were officials in the church; there were elders and there were deacons; elders who had a special oversight, but no such distinction as the dividing of Christians into the laity and the clergy, the clergy having special access to God and special authority in dispensing divine mysteries. This was unknown in the early days of Christianity, and in those early days the Lord's Supper was observed in simplicity. We have distinct records of it.

If you care to look it up you will find that the Younger Pliny, when Governor of Bythinia, wrote to the Emperor Trajan asking what offense the

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Christians had committed for which they should be exterminated. He said in substance, "I have been trying to get all the information I could regarding them. I have even hired spies to profess to be Christians and become baptized in order that they might get into the Christian services without suspicion. Contrary to what I had supposed, I find that the Christians meet at dead of night or at early morn, that they sing a hymn to Christ as God, that they read from their own sacred writings and partake of a very simple meal consisting of bread and wine and water (the water added to the wine to dilute it in order that there might be enough for all). This is all that I can find out, except that they exhort each other to be subject to the Government, and pray for all men."

Pliny could not understand why they should be persecuted. *He knew nothing of a gorgeous altar, of a sacrificing priest, nothing of a special cake upon the altar which the faithful were to fall down and worship as the Incarnate God*, but his spies found Christians partaking together of a very simple meal of bread and wine and water.

Justin Martyr, who wrote about the same time, gives us a very clear account of the way in which the Lord's Supper was observed. He knew of no priesthood, no altar, no mystic change. He certainly

knew of no prayers to the Virgin Mary. He knew nothing of ascending incense or anything of the kind, but he describes just such an observance of the Lord's Supper as you would find in any evangelical company of Christians to-day. He speaks of one of the elders presiding, of the people singing together, of giving thanks for the bread and wine, of distributing these elements among the faithful and sending portions to any who were not present because of illness—beautiful in its simplicity, as is the account given in the gospel.

#### WHEN THE CHANGE OCCURRED

But you go down through the Christian era a few centuries and you find everything is changed. You enter a Christian church. The Lord's table is conspicuous by its absence. Instead of a table you have an altar. An altar in a Christian church! The altar belonged to Judaism. But the altar is typical of Christ Himself whose glorious person sanctifies the offering He gives, and second, it typifies the cross upon which He was uplifted. The Christian's altar is the cross of Christ, but in these churches of the centuries after Constantine we find an altar again and, serving there, is a priest with special vestments, not such as were used by the Jewish priesthood, but vestments which were identical with

those worn by the priests of Babylon centuries before. What had brought about the change? Simply this: As long as Christianity was persecuted, as long as the Christian company was under the ban of the Roman Government, simplicity and reality prevailed. But the day came when the state became the patron of Christianity and *an effort was made to unite the ancient heathen religion and the Roman Empire with the new Christianity. The result was that little by little pagan forms and ceremonies were brought in and displaced the early Christian forms which were so simple, so beautiful and so scriptural.* The altar was not even taken from Judaism, for no such altar as the altars of Judaism was ever found in so-called Christian churches.

### HEATHENISM

A few years ago I had a company of Indian youths in Oakland, California, that I was educating. I was teaching these young men church history, and one day, to give them a practical lesson, I took them to San Francisco through three Chinese temples and then I took them through two Roman Catholic churches. After our visits I said to these youths, "Now tell me what you saw in each place." And they wrote it all out. They said, "In each building we found holy water at the door. Each building

had an altar. Each building had priests in costly vestments bowing below the altar. Each building had candles and incense. In each building a bell rang when the worshipers were to kneel down." The Romanist and pagan temples were practically alike.

Any one who familiarizes himself with the history of the ancient heathen cults can see where all these forms and ceremonies came in that are now linked up with what is called the Sacrament of the Eucharist. The identical customs were practised by Babylonish priests over 500 years before Christ. There was in the Babylon temples and on the altars an image of a woman with a child in her arms. This woman was said to be the Queen of Heaven. Her child was called the Seed, which was evidently Satan's imitation of the truth involved in the words, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." To this woman was sacrificed a bloodless offering consisting of round moon-shaped cakes, and these being presented to her were put upon the altar and the faithful bowed down in reverence before them.

In the 44th chapter of Jeremiah the people had read of the same cult transferred to Palestine and observed afterwards among the dispersed Jews in Egypt:

**“Seest thou not what they do in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem? The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to make cakes to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke Me to anger.”**

In the 44th chapter of Jeremiah the people had turned from their idolatry, but they declare that they are going back to it. In verse 15 we read:

**“Then all the men which knew that their wives had burnt incense unto other gods, and all the women that stood by, a great multitude, even all the people that dwelt in the land of Egypt, in Pathros, answered Jeremiah, saying, As for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee: but we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, as we have done, we, and our fathers, our kings, and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem: for then had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil.”**

#### COMPROMISE

This ancient custom of offering these round cakes was taken up by the apostate church. They said,

"The best way is to get all the different religions into one and we can take this heathen rite and turn it into a Christian ceremony. This round cake we will call the body, blood, soul and divinity of Christ." That is what is called the host. It must be absolutely round. It is taken into the church and the priest blesses it. If it has a piece broken off of it, anybody can eat it; it is just bread.

The Roman Catholic church will tell you that this is taught by our Lord when He said, "This is my body which is given for you." But as He said that He was there with them. No part of it was broken for them. He handed them this bread and they partook of it, clearly giving us to understand that the bread was God's wonderful way of illustrating the value of feeding upon Christ. We feed upon bread and we get physical strength. We feed upon Christ and we get spiritual strength.

But now they tell us that the bread is changed when the priest blesses it. *We charge that to fall down and worship that piece of bread is an act of idolatry.* The Roman Catholic church says that bread is actually Christ. We say, "Do you mean us to understand that that bread is literally the body of Christ, literally the body, blood, soul and divinity of Christ?"



"No, not literally, but mystically it becomes such."

*It is a well-known fact that Roman priests have been poisoned at the altar drinking wine that had been blessed and was supposed to be turned into the body, blood, soul and divinity of Christ, when some enemy had poured poison into it. It has been known that the host has been poisoned. They understand that no such change as they declare, actually takes place. But they say that at the moment of consecration Christ comes and enters it.*

Here is a man making images. You say, "Are these images actually gods?"

"No, not yet."

"When will they become gods?"

"When the priest takes them and blesses them and consecrates them to the deity they represent. Then the deity will come and dwell within them so that when the worshiper bows down he is not worshiping the image but the soul of the divinity that dwells within."

### BLASPHEMY AGAINST CHRIST'S SACRIFICE

Is there any difference between that and the Romish doctrine? None whatever. The bread was bread until the priest blessed it, and then in some

mystical way Christ's body, blood, soul and divinity became identified with it. Worship in the New Testament is only given to God the Father and God the Son in the energy of the Holy Ghost. Then the Roman church tells us that this host is a continual unbloody sacrifice for the sins of the living and the dead. Christ died once on the cross, but Christ is offered daily upon the altars of the Roman church. This, we maintain, is a denial of the all-sufficiency of the one offering of our Lord Jesus Christ. As long as sacrifice had not been found that could put away sin, it was necessary for one offering to follow another, but when Christ came into the world and offered Himself without spot unto God, then the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, thus signifying that the way into the holies is made manifest and every believer is entitled to enter into the very presence of God, washed from every sin and justified from all things through the infinite value of the atoning work of the Son of God. *Now to talk of any man on earth offering a continual sacrifice for the sins of the living and the dead is not only blasphemy against the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, but it is absolute nonsense, for the Word of God says, "Without the shedding of blood is no remission of sins." It is worthless because being bloodless it has no value to atone for sin and be-*

*cause it isn't needed to atone for sin for Jesus' atonement has already been made.*

### PROTESTANTS NEED REVIVAL

Therefore, I say, there is a tremendous chasm between the Roman Catholic doctrine of the Mass and the Bible doctrine of the Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper is a memorial feast. Christians, members of the body of Christ, come together to remember the One who died for them and who put away their sins, and do this because their sins have been put away. No instructed Christian would approach the Lord's Table to get forgiveness. I come because my sins have been forever put away by the atoning blood of the Lord Jesus and I desire gratefully to remember the One who offered that mighty sacrifice and so fitted me for the presence of a holy God.

There can be no compromise between the two systems. *While Protestant churches have been sleeping Rome has been stealing the fruits of the Reformation. While they have been quarreling about the most trifling things Rome has been getting a great many weak Protestants who have looked in vain for spiritual help because they have not been hearing the precious gospel of the grace of God.*

*But let there be a revival of doctrinal preaching; of the proclamation of the great truths of the Reformation; of the universal priesthood of all believers, doing away with anything like a special priesthood; of the membership in the body of Christ of all who have been washed in the blood of Jesus, justified from all things, by faith in the one offering that has forever settled the sin question; of the Lord's Supper not as a sacrament but a memorial feast. Let these great truths be re-emphasized and wherever the Word is preached in faith and dependence upon the Holy Ghost God will use it to bring joy and peace and gladness to souls as in Reformation days.*

### LUTHER LIT THE TORCH

Let me just remind you of Luther. When he was still a monk of the Augustinian order he went to Rome to transact business for his Order. He was delighted to go. A restless, unhappy man, having tried everything the church had to offer and yet without peace with God, he said, "If I go to Rome, the holy city, I will find all I want." So he went, earnestly counting on meeting God. Giving his testimony afterwards he says, "Rome living would have made me an infidel, but Rome dead kept me a Christian."

When he arrived there and saw the simony of the priests and the corruption of the church his soul was filled with horror. He said, "In Rome they sell everything for money, forgiveness, the right to commit sin—everything. In Rome they would sell the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost!"

Then at last, as he wended his way through the city, he came to the church of St. John Lateran and he learned that in it there was supposed to be the very staircase down which Christ walked from Pilate's judgment hall. It was said that if one would go up that staircase on his hands and knees he would get great spiritual blessing by the time he reached the top. So earnest was this German monk that he was ready to do anything that might give peace, and he started up that staircase, until suddenly in the midst of it all a passage of scripture came rushing down into the depths of his soul: "The just shall live by faith."

He sprang to his feet and said, "What a fool I am. If 'the just shall live by faith' what am I doing climbing this staircase?"

He went back to Germany to light that torch which for hundreds of years has been the light of all our Protestant lands and which it is Rome's persistent and determined effort to put out if it possibly can. *Rome wants religious liberty and we gladly*

*accord the liberty we want ourselves, but let Rome become supreme again in this country or any other Protestant country and we will no longer have an open Bible, or a public school, or any of the institutions that we have learned to value. God wake us up that we may not leave to our posterity a land of bondage out of which God mercifully delivered our forefathers.*

# The Midnight Cry!

## FOREWORD

THE day has passed when writers or preachers need to tender an apology for calling attention to the supremely important subject of the second advent of our Lord Jesus Christ. Only the wilfully blind and culpably ignorant can fail to discern the signs of the times that so clearly indicate the approaching return of Him for whom saints in all ages since His ascension have earnestly yearned.

It was once the fashion to scoffingly refer to pre-millennial teachers as "visionary enthusiasts" and "rank pessimists," when they declared that the coming of the King, and not humanitarian agencies, would alone bring in the reign of peace on earth predicted by the angel host. But the pessimists are now on the other side. The frightful European convulsion has caused a wail to rise from thousands once given to lauding the achievements of civilization and the evolutionary progress of the race. The so-called Christian nations, whether Romanist, Greek or Protestant, have proven to be only veneered barbarians, and the conditions predicted to prevail immediately before the coming of the Son of Man are rapidly being developed. The seals of the roll taken by

the Lamb have not yet been broken, but little discernment is needed to see that few changes will be necessary to prepare the world for the riders on the four horses and the shaking of all things terrestrial. Therefore the need of sounding out with all faithfulness, in the little time that remains, the awakening midnight cry:

“BEHOLD, THE BRIDEGROOM COMETH;  
GO YE OUT TO MEET HIM!”

It is late—midnight is already past. The dark hours preceding the shining forth of the Morning Star are upon us. Lamps must be trimmed and provided with oil *now*, or it will shortly be too late to go in with Him to the wedding. To rouse the sleepers is the object of this paper. May God speed the message and bless the present truth!

It is late in the dispensation, so late that everything else pales into insignificance before the great blazing fact of all facts that “the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.” To all His own the cry rings out in power:

“AWAKE, THOU THAT SLEEPEST!”

The Lord Jesus spoke of ten virgins who went forth to meet the Bridegroom. It depicted the early days of the Church’s history, when love was warm and saints longed to behold His face once marred for them on Calvary’s tree—now shining with a radiance brighter than the mid-day sun. Wherever apostolic preachers went they carried the good news, not alone of a Saviour who had



come in grace, and in deepest humiliation had suffered and died, the Just for the unjust, to bring men to God, but they also declared in language unmistakable and with solemn assurance that the once-Crucified was coming again, coming to summon His own to Himself above, and take them in to the Father's house; then, with all His redeemed, to appear visibly before an astonished world and, putting down all other rule, to take His great power and reign.

The Old Testament had predicted the sufferings and the following glory of Him who was to be Israel's Messiah, and a Redeemer for the whole world. Apostolic preaching was based on these two great pillars of divine revelation. He had come to *suffer*. He was *coming again* to bring in *the glory*! And so, the Christian company, like virgins waiting the call to go in to the marriage-feast in the Bridegroom's train, turned their expectant faces toward the glory-gate, longing for their Lord's return.

But days, and months, and years slipped by. The expected One had not forgotten. He did not willingly delay His coming, but His heart yearned over others who had not yet found eternal blessing through His sufferings; and because He was "not willing that any should perish," He waited in mercy till many more might be saved. It was right to look for Him daily; but it was wrong to assume that He must come in any particular generation. And here the virgins failed. They strained their eyes for One whose face they did not see; they yearned for One who seemed to

disappoint their hopes; then they took their ease, gave up the waiting attitude and slept among the dead. And while they slept, they dreamed. The dreams were strange and wonderful, but far different from the reality their waking eyes had looked upon.

The whole professing Church seemed lulled to slumber as by the devil's opiates. And then it was they dreamed of a converted world, and of a millennium brought in by human agencies, which drove from the mind and heart the truth that earth's only hope was in the Coming One.

Fitful was the slumber at times; deep and heavy the sleep at others, as through the long night the professing Church dreamed on. But at the mystic midnight hour a Voice broke in upon the drowsing virgin company that roused them from their visionary deceptions, and startled them to preparation for the forgotten One they had gone out to meet. It was the cry, "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh!" And loud it swells, and louder, waking every sleeping saint — yea, and arousing some who only have a name, and many more who have not even that!

To-day the loudest voice on earth is that of the announcer of the coming Christ! Everywhere the midnight cry is sounding out, bringing with it solemn responsibilities, and causing many hearts to fail with fear, while others are filled with joy. It has been heard in the cannon's roar and the rattling musketry-fire on scores of battle-fields. It sounds in the swelling tumult and wordy war of capital and labor. It cries aloud

in Christendom's widespread apostasy, to turn from fables that suit itching ears unto the faith once for all delivered to the saints. It rings out in power in the great awakening among Christians in all lands, stirring them to Bible study and calling to preparation of heart and life in view of the Bridegroom's coming. Israel too, unknowingly, are helping to shout the warning, yet joyful announcement, that "the coming of the Lord draweth nigh!" The "fig-tree" of Judah, and "all the trees" of the Gentile nations, are putting forth their green boughs declaring that summer is nigh.

It is in view of all this that I would solemnly challenge my reader: What will the Lord's personal coming mean to you? Do you know that One who is coming, or are you still a stranger to the long-promised Deliverer of this groaning creation? His advent draws on apace—"Yet a very, very little while, and the Coming One will come and shall not tarry." And *you*, how does such news as this affect you? If redeemed to God by the precious atoning blood, if saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation, you may well leap for joy at the very thought of soon beholding your Saviour's face. But if still in your sins, still "in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity," it is high time that you be awakened to the seriousness of your condition. For, whether you are ready to meet Him or not, *He is coming again*, and His advent will mean fulness of blessing for His own, but unmitigated wrath for those who have trampled upon the offers of His grace.

Reader, awake! Open your eyes, unstop your ears; arouse yourself while yet there remains a moment of mercy. The midnight cry rings loud and clear:

“BEHOLD, THE BRIDEGROOM COMETH! GO YE OUT TO MEET HIM.”

But on every hand is also heard the voice of the scoffer and objector. The unfaithful servant shuts his eyes to the most manifest signs of the times, and cries, “My Lord delayeth His coming.” The unbelieving scorner asks ironically, “Watchman, what of the night?” and tarries not for the answer, “The morning cometh, and *also the night!*” The scornful cynic exclaims: “Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation!” But he is wilfully and culpably ignorant of the solemn fact that all things do *not* continue as they were, for changes of vast import and momentous consequences are taking place — politically, religiously, and even physically, in the earth beneath and the heavens above. Even earnest Christians are not wanting who ask, hesitatingly perhaps, but none the less unbelievably, “What special reasons are there for expecting the Lord Jesus now, which have not always existed since He ascended to heaven? The apostolic band and believers in the earliest period were all looking for His return. Yet He came not, and long centuries have since elapsed. What evidence is there that *now* His advent is so nigh, and that there may not be as long a

time yet to elapse ere He comes back than has already passed?"

We admit the reasonableness of the queries, while grieved at the latent unbelief they manifest. To answer them is the writer's present design, and in order to do so there are a large number of scriptures relating to the Jews, the Gentiles and the Church of God, which it will be necessary to examine. To take them up in their inverse order may be most helpful at the present time, so we shall first of all inquire, What can be gleaned from the past history of, and present conditions prevailing in the Church of God that would indicate the soon closing-up of the present age and the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ?

## PART I

# The Evidence that the Church of God is about to Close its Earthly History

EVEN in apostolic days the near return of the Lord Jesus was ever kept before the souls of believers as a present hope; yet there are many scriptures that in a hidden way (as we can *now* realize) intimated a certain series of events, or succession of conditions, which would run their course ere the blessed hope was fulfilled. In the wisdom of God these prophetic forecasts of the Church's history were couched in terms of such a nature as not to hinder Christians of any period in their continued expectancy of the Lord's coming, which was designed to be a great sheet-anchor to their souls, keeping them from drifting into worldliness and kindred folly.

But now that nearly twenty centuries (two of God's great "days"—2 Pet. 3: 8) have elapsed, we can look back over the long course of the Church's pilgrimage and see how all her varied states and experiences were foreknown and foretold, and the heart thrills with joyful expectancy as we look ahead. For the next great miraculous event *must* be the shining forth of the Morning Star, "the coming of the Lord Jesus, and our gathering together unto Him."

I purpose to trace this out from several different standpoints. In our introduction we have

noticed briefly how the Lord Himself intimated what has been mentioned in the parable of the ten virgins. It was a veiled picture of the whole course of Christendom, and plainly divides the Church dispensation into three distinct stages, or epochs: First, the period of eager expectation. Second, the era of lethargic indifference to the blessed hope. Third, the season of awakening which was the almost immediate precursor of the coming of the Bridegroom. We are living in this last solemn time, and it is well to be trimming our lamps and waiting in holy fear for the summons which may come at any moment to enter in with Him to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

The parable of the Ten Virgins was not given, it is true, to teach Church truth, but it presents in a graphic way the responsibility of saints to wait for the return of the Lord.

There are other passages corroborative of this interpretation, and to them let us now turn.

In the two epistles to Timothy we have two distinct conditions predicted as characterizing what the Holy Spirit designates "the latter times" and "the last days." In 1 Tim. 4: 1-5 He speaks of the first of these periods; in 2 Tim. 3: 1-9, of the second. A careful reading of both passages ought, I think, to convince any reader that they show the progress of evil.

At any rate, the conditions of the "latter times" were the first to develop, and out of these grew the anarchic state of the "last days."

I quote the first scripture in full: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times

some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of demons; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared ((*Gk.*, cauterized); forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of those who believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer" (1911 *Version*).

Now while the various things here credited to demoniacal influence are found in many modern systems, such as Christian Science, Seventh-day Adventism, and others, it is very evident that it was in connection with the Romish apostasy they were first introduced. The "latter times" were the times of Papal domination. Their evil teachings are still to be found on many sides, but the point I want to make is that the latter times have long since been passed, and we are further down the course of time than many have supposed.

Note well how Rome has fulfilled these predictions to the letter. Departing from the faith of God's word, she has been misled by evil spirits seducing her devotees to believe that the church cannot err, and that her voice is the voice of inspiration. Thus has Satan foisted doctrines of demons on the blinded nations. Rome, the very citadel of untruth, has spoken lies in hypocrisy, her leaders having cauterized consciences which seemed immune to all Scriptural appeals. This the Reformation proved, when God "gave her



space to repent....and she repented not" (Rev. 2:21).

But one might say: "All this is mere assumption. You tell us Rome is demon-led. You tell us her hierarchy teach lies in hypocrisy. But this is the very point to be proven. What outward evidence have you that she is the guilty one?"

In reply we turn to verse 3, where God has given us two great marks which none can successfully deny fit Rome, as they fully describe no other large communion. It was Rome who forbade to marry—enjoining an unnatural celibacy upon her vast clergy and her hosts of monks and nuns, thus setting herself up to be wiser than God (who says: "Marriage is honorable in all," Heb. 13:4), be-littling His holy ordinance of matrimony, declaring the celibate nun far holier than the married mother, and the unwedded priest in a higher state of grace than the godly husband and father.

And what of the second mark? Who has so assiduously cultivated the dogma that piety is manifested in abstention from certain foods, as Rome? God created all to be received with thanksgiving. Rome would damn the one who ate flesh on Fridays and gave God thanks therefor! Her numberless rules on such subjects declare all too plainly that she it is who is marked out in 1 Tim. 4:1-5. Others have been deluded by the same demons, but it was in the Roman apostasy that the "latter times" came in.

Now let us turn to the second epistle: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times

shall come. For men shall be self-lovers, money-lovers, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, unforgiving, false accusers, incontinent, savage, haters of good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away. For of this sort are they who creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with manifold desires, ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all, as theirs also was" (1911 *Version*).

These are the great outstanding features of the "last days"—closing the Church dispensation, and to be immediately followed by the coming of the Lord. Can any believer in Holy Writ doubt our being now in the very midst of them?

But it may be here objected: "When have men in general been other than as here depicted? Is not this but a repetition of what Paul has already said in describing the heathen world in his day? (Rom. 1: 29-32). In what special sense are they any more characteristic now than then?" To these very natural queries I reply: "Such things, indeed, ever described the heathen; but in 2 Tim. 3 the Holy Spirit is describing conditions in *the professing Church* in the last days! It is not the openly wicked and godless who are being depicted

here. It is those who have a form of godliness, while denying its power. *This* is what makes the passage so intensely solemn and gives it such tremendous weight in the present day. There are twenty-one outstanding features in this depicting of Church conditions in the last days, and that each may have its due weight with my reader I touch briefly on them in order.

1. "Men shall be self-lovers." It is men self-occupied, as contrasted with the godly of all ages who found their joy and delight in looking away from self to God as seen in Christ. This is the age of the egotist in matters spiritual as well as carnal. They find their God "within" them, we are told, and not without. They make no secret of it. When they profess to love God it is *themselves* they love.

2. "Money-lovers." Is it necessary to speak of this? Colossal fortunes heaped together by men who profess to believe the Bible and its testimony! What a spectacle for angels and demons! There was one Simon Magus of old. He has myriads of successors in the professing church to-day, and the command "not to eat" with a covetous man or an extortioner is in most places a dead letter indeed.

3. "Boasters." Read the so-called Christian papers; attend Christendom's great conventions of young people, or old. Listen to the great pulpiteers of the day. What is their theme? "Rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing!" Great swelling words are rapturously applauded by people dwelling in a fool's paradise,

even when uttered by men who are tearing the Bible to shreds, and who deny practically every truth that it contains.

4. "Proud." So proud as to glory in their shame—congratulating themselves on the very things the Word of God so unsparingly condemns. Proud of their fancied superiority; proud of their eloquence; proud of their miscalled culture; proud of their very impiety, which is hailed as the evidence of broad-mindedness and a cultivated intellect! How nauseating it must all be to Him who said, "Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart."

5. "Blasphemers!" Yes, there it is—that big, ugly word that one hesitates to use, but which is chosen by the Holy Spirit Himself to describe the men drawing salaries as ministers of Christ who use their office to impiously deny His name! Blasphemers! Aye, the whole host of the new theologians, miscalled "higher critics," and all their ilk—all who deny the deity of the Son, His virgin-birth, His holy humanity—blasphemers, every one, and as such to be judged unsparingly in the harvest of wrath so near at hand! And think of the disloyalty to Christ of Christians—real Christians, I mean—who can sit and listen to such men week after week, and are too timid to protest, or too indifferent to obey the word, "From such turn away!"

6. "Disobedient to parents." It is one of the crowning sins of the age, and indicates the soon breaking-up of the whole social fabric as at pres-

ent constituted. Opposition to authority is undoubtedly one of the characteristic features of the times. Children will not brook restraint, and parents have largely lost the sense of their responsibility toward the rising generation. Does this seem unduly pessimistic? Nevertheless, a little thoughtful consideration will, I am sure, convince any reasonable person of its truth. And it may be laid down as an axiom, that children not trained in obedience to parents will not readily be obedient to God. We have been sowing the wind in this respect for years, as nations and as families. The reaping of the whirlwind is certain to follow.

7. "Unthankful." It is the denial of divine Providence—utterly forgetting the Source of all blessings, both temporal and spiritual. Straws indicate the turn of the wind, and even in "so small a matter," as some may call it, as the giving-up of the good old-fashioned and eminently scriptural custom of thanksgiving at the table, we may see how prevalent is the sin of unthankfulness among professed Christians. Go into the restaurants or other eating-houses; how often can you tell the believer from the unbeliever?

8. "Unholy." The godly separation from the world according to the Bible is sneered at as "bigotry" and "Puritanism." In its place has come a jolly, rollicking worldliness that ill comports with the Christian profession. Piety—that characteristic Christian virtue—how little seen now! It is not necessary to be outwardly vile to be unholy. Giving up the line of separation

between the believer and the unbeliever is unholiness.

9. "Without natural affection." The foundations of family life are being destroyed. Unscriptural divorces and all their kindred evils cast their dark shadows over the professing church, as well as over the body politic.

Of the next unholy octave I need not write particularly. To enumerate them is enough to stir the heart and appal the soul when it is remembered how they are tolerated and spreading through the great professing body. 10—"unforgiving;" 11—"false accusers" (let us beware lest we be found almost unwittingly in this Satanic company!); 12—"incontinent"; 13—"savage"; 14—"haters of good;" 15—"traitors"; 16—"heady;" 17—"high-minded." This last accounts largely for the daring things proudly uttered by learned doctors against the Scriptures and the great fundamentals of the faith, and complacently accepted by unregenerate hearers. Surely, the time *has* come "when they will not bear sound teaching, but according to their own desire shall heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears" (2 Tim. 4: 3, 1911 *Version*).

18. "Lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God." Would you not almost think the words were written by some fiery-souled exhorter of the present day? How aptly they characterize in one brief clause the greatest outstanding feature of the religious world. The Church of God has gone into the entertainment business! People must be amused, and as the Church needs the people's

money, the Church must, perforce, supply the demand and meet the craving! How else are godless hypocrites to be held together? How otherwise can the throngs of unconverted youths and maidens be attracted to the "services"? So the picture-show and the entertainment, in the form of *musicale* (sacred, perhaps!) and minstrel-show, take the place of the gospel address and the solemn worship of God. And thus Christless souls are lulled to sleep and made to feel "religious" while gratifying every carnal desire under the sanction of the sham called the Church!—And the end? What an awakening!

19. "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." Men must have some form of religious expression, and so the outward thing is sustained after the life is gone out of it. Thus formality prevails where regeneration, conversion to God, the Spirit's sanctification, and everything really vital has long since been virtually denied. The bulk of so-called church-members do not even profess to have been saved, or to be Spirit-indwelt. All this is foreign to their mode of thought or speech. The gospel, which alone is "the power of God unto salvation," is seldom preached, and, by the mass, never missed! Could declension and apostasy go much further? Yet there are still lower depths to be sounded!

20. Feminism. No, you won't find the word—but read verse 6 again, slowly and thoughtfully. Does it not indicate a great feminist movement in these last dark days? "Silly women, laden with manifold desires"—craving what God in His in-

finite wisdom has forbidden them: authority, publicity, masculinity, and what not? Thus they leave their own estate and make a new religion to suit themselves. Is it a matter of no import that just such emotional, insubject women were the tools used by Satan for the starting and propagating of so many modern fads? Need one mention Mesdames Blavatsky, Besant and Tingley of Theosophy; the Fox sisters' relation to modern Spiritism; Mrs. Mary Baker Glover Eddy and her host of female practitioners in the woman's religion miscalled "Christian Science;" the neurotic Ellen G. White and her visionary system of "Seventh-day Adventism;" Ella Wheeler Wilcox and her associates in the spreading of what they have been pleased to denominate the "New Thought," which is only the devil's old lie, "Ye shall be as gods," in a modern garb; and the women-expounders of the "Silent Unity," or "Home of Truth" delusions? All these are outside the "orthodox" fold;—but when we look within, what a large place has the modern feminist movement secured in the affections of women who profess to believe the Bible, but who unblushingly denounce Paul as "an old batchelor" with narrow, contracted ideas, little realizing that they are thereby rejecting the testimony of the Holy Spirit. It is one of the signs of the times, and clearly shows towards what the professing body is so rapidly drifting!

21. "Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth"—and that by *their own* confession. They are "truth-seekers." Ask



them if it be not so. They confess it without a blush, and consider it humility thus to speak. According to these apostates, the Church which began as "the pillar and ground of the truth," is, in this twentieth century of its existence, "seeking" the truth, thereby acknowledging they never yet have found it! Truth-seekers! Yet the Lord Jesus said, "I am the Way, the TRUTH, and the Life." Why then seek further? Because they have drifted away from Him and His Word, so they go on, ever learning, ever seeking, and ever missing the glorious revelation of the TRUTH as it is in Jesus.

Well—this is the end. Declension can go no further than to deny the Lord that bought them, until He Himself shall remove His own to the Father's house. Then the apostate body remaining will declare, "We have found the truth at last!" and they will worship the Antichrist, believing the devil's lie and calling it the truth. And how comes such delusion? "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie; that they all might be judged *who believed not the truth* but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thess. 2: 11, 12—1911 Version).

Predictions of two directly opposite conditions are made in the word of God in regard to events to be consummated immediately before the Lord's return to establish His kingdom and close up the Times of the Gentiles. If therefore we see these predictions within a small degree of being already fulfilled prior to the rapture of the Church, we

may be certain that the coming of the Saviour to the air is very near at hand.

The predictions referred to were made—one directly by the Lord Himself; the other by the Holy Spirit through the apostle Paul. To the question of the disciples, "What shall be the sign of Thy coming and of the end of the age?" the Lord gave a lengthy answer recorded in Matthew, chaps. 24 and 25; but the prediction I refer to now is that of the 14th verse of chap. 24: "This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all the nations; *and then shall the end come.*" Now I recognize, in common with others, a distinction in *aspect* between "the gospel of the kingdom" and "the gospel of the grace of God," but I regard it as a mistake to say that the gospel of the kingdom is not, or should not be, preached *now*. Each are but different aspects of the one gospel; and Paul preached both.

In Acts 20:24, 25 we find the two aspects intimately connected in the ministry of the apostle Paul: "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify *the gospel of the grace of God.* And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone *preaching the kingdom of God,* shall see my face no more." See also Acts 14:22. When he wrote, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus," it involved the present phase of the gospel of the kingdom; when he added, "And believe in

thy heart that God hath raised Him from the dead thou shalt be saved," it was the gospel of the grace of God. Christ Jesus is *Lord*. He is also *Redeemer*. Men are called on to own Him in both characters. In the Jewish age, and in the coming tribulation period, the gospel of the *kingdom* is the emphatic phase. Now, where there is intelligence, it is the *grace* of God that the gospel preacher will lay special stress upon.

Now it is the individual believer who owns the sovereignty of the Lord Jesus Christ. In the Tribulation era, when Matt. 24:14 will be completely carried out, the whole world will be called on to own the sway of Him who is about to appear as King of kings and Lord of lords to reign over His world-kingdom.

But why this effort to show that the gospel of the kingdom is *now* being preached? Because, my reader, the *end* comes when it has been carried into all the world, for a witness! And even now it has gone to the uttermost parts of the earth, so that it can confidently be said that with the possible exception of a few *wild* tribes of Indians in South America, or negroes in Africa, there is probably no nation to whom the witness has not already been given. The nineteenth was the greatest missionary century since the days of the apostles. In one hundred years, the gospel was practically carried to the whole world after a millennium of lethargy and indifference to the claims of the heathen. This great missionary awakening is like the trumpet-blasts that herald the King's approach. In this twentieth century

the work of carrying the gospel to the pagan world has gone on more extensively than ever. None can say when the last tribe or nation will get the witness message, but when they do, "*then* shall the end come." And, mark it well, it is not before the rapture, but after it, that the final call is to be given. It will be Jewish saints, and not Christian missionaries, who will complete the work of world-wide evangelization; therefore the coming of the Lord as predicted in 1 Thess. 4 must be very near!

But now we turn to consider the other prediction to which I referred in the beginning. "That day," writes the apostle, "shall not come except there come the apostasy first" (literal rendering of 2 Thess. 2:3). This is startling surely—the gospel going into all the world, the apostasy sweeping all before it, and both just before the end, or the day of the Lord, shall come! How strange a paradox, and yet how exactly are both scriptures being fulfilled! Never before such wide-spread missionary activity! Never before such far-reaching apostasy! Earnest workers guided by the Holy Spirit are hazarding their lives to carry the good news of Christ's incarnation, atonement, resurrection and coming again to the heathen world. Equally earnest, but Satan-inspired, men at home are tearing the Bible in pieces and railing at these very truths once for all delivered to the saints, and, alas! their unholy rationalizing is fast finding its way into the fields of missionary endeavor, where education is taking the place of the gospel; and culture, charac-

ter-building, and various accomplishments are put in place of the Son of God, the Saviour of sinners!

Theological seminaries, in many instances, are hot-beds of infidelity. Schools and colleges are busy, as Harold Bolce graphically expressed it, in "blasting at the Rock of Ages." The rising generation in so-called Christian lands bids fair to be a generation of Bible-rejectors. "The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means, and My people love to have it so, and what will ye do in the end thereof?" That *end* is almost upon us, and "When the Son of Man cometh shall He find the faith on the earth?" It is fast being supplanted by human speculations and "oppositions of science falsely so-called."

The leaven of man-worship is rapidly leavening the whole lump and preparing the way for Antichrist who shall, if it were possible, deceive the very elect. Thank God, it is *not* possible; but it behooves every regenerated soul to hold fast to the revealed Word of God and utterly refuse the lying systems of the enemy. To sit in churches and listen to preachers of the apostasy, or to support such in any way, is treason against Christ! "He that biddeth him [the false teacher] God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."

It would be a great mercy if every converted person would refuse positively to listen twice to a minister who denies the inspiration of the Bible, or to give a penny to a church or a missionary society that gave the right hand of fellowship to men of this type. To stay the on-rushing apos-

tasy is impossible. To protest against it and to "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness" is a positive duty.

Reader, let me press my point again.—The world-wide gospel proclamation and world-wide apostasy *at the same time* are clear proofs that the end is close upon us! It is too late to trifle. Let us be in earnest for the few remaining hours!

Another line of evidence is presented in the seven prophetic letters of Rev. 2 and 3. For that they *are* prophetic, and not merely moral—dispensational, and not simply local in their application—is a fact now familiar to many earnest students of the Scriptures. The proof of this is found in their exact correspondence with the seven stages of the history of the Church on earth. This is incontrovertible, however self-styled optimists may object to it—the objection being chiefly based on the fact that Laodicea closes the septenary series, thus precluding all thought of a triumphant Church and a converted world at the end of the dispensation. Yet the Church shall be triumphant; of that there should be no question. For our Lord Jesus has solemnly declared, "Upon this Rock (Christ as Son of the living God) I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." But between the Church of Christ's building and the vast complex church of man's devising there is a great difference. The real Church will be triumphantly raptured to glory ere the judgments fall on the great apostate mass of Laodicea.

I do not therefore attempt to prove by argu-

ment that the seven letters give us an outline of the Church's course from apostolic days to the closing up of the present age. This has been so well done by others that it would be on my part a work of supererogation to try to make it any more convincing.\* I only desire in these necessarily brief pages to refresh the memory of my reader by pointing out how aptly those letters fit the history.

Ephesus then, from this view-point, presents the Church in apostolic days—an unworldly, called-out company who labored earnestly and well in making known the riches of grace, and who walked apart from iniquity; unable to bear those who were evil, as indeed these in turn could not endure the company of God's redeemed, for we read elsewhere, "Of the rest durst no man join himself to them." In those days of primitive simplicity men were tried by the testimony they brought, and if they spoke not according to the doctrine of Christ were rejected as "liars"—a "short and ugly word" that aptly designates many profane hucksterers of the Word of God to-day.

But the picture has its shadows too, for even during the very lifetime of the apostolic band declension began: the Church left her first love, and a somewhat mysterious form of evil, the "deeds of the Nicolaitanes," came in, though largely against the desire of the mass, for Ephesus is commended because of hatred to this unholy

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\* The inquiring reader is referred to "The Prophetic History of the Church," by F. W. Grant, 35 cts. Same publishers.

thing. Leaving their first love was losing the sense of Christ's presence: occupation with work, with service, took the place of heart-occupation with Himself. No sect of the Nicolaitanes is known, though some have tried to link the name with the reputed followers of an apostate Nicholas, traditionally held to be one of the seven of the 6th of Acts, who were set apart to serve tables. He is supposed to have taught his disciples that the indulgence of licentious practices was not inconsistent with the grace of God. This, however, is very uncertain and largely conjectural. They seem to be right who consider "Nicolaitanes" to be an untranslated Greek word, properly rendered "rulers of the people." In that case Diotrephes of 3 John would be a typical Nicolaitane, who has had many successors. It would be the divine condemnation of the clerical system. Not yet had this system become an accepted doctrine, but the deeds manifested the spirit behind it. Crystallization into an accredited dogma came later (Rev. 2: 15).

The second period followed apace, as set forth in the letter to Smyrna. It depicts, as by a few master-strokes, the tragedy of the Pagan persecutions in their efforts to crush Christianity beneath the iron heel of the Roman emperors, from Domitian to Diocletian. Nero's persecution was local rather than general, but the monster who succeeded him set in motion a world-wide effort to destroy the Church of Christ. Historians count ten general persecutions, which are connected with ten main edicts of the emperors. The last



under Diocletian went on for ten years, ceasing only with the death of the incapacitated tyrant. "Ye shall have tribulation ten days" seems to hint at this. But a suffering Church is more likely to be rich in faith than a Church fawned upon by the world; though in deepest poverty the Church in the Smyrna age was "rich," and prospered, for as Augustine later said, "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church." Those dark days were days of Christian devotion and heroism unparalleled save in similar times of suffering and danger. And yet the picture is not altogether bright, for the clear gospel of grace was largely obscured by the legal teaching of "those who said they were Jews and were not." Such are a synagogue of Satan. Judaism was a divine institution, Christianity is a divine revelation. But the strange mixture of Judaism with Christianity is of Satan. It is a corruption and a counterfeit; and "the corruption of the best thing is the worst of corruptions."

Pergamos followed this, and gives us the period of the Church's relief from persecution and her subsequent union with the world. It is the era of Constantine the Great and his successors, when the Church became the pet of the emperors (save for a brief period under Julian the Apostate), and Church and State were linked in an unholy alliance. Thus the Church sat at ease where Satan had his throne, clung to this for centuries, until the world itself wearied of her, and wrenched her from her place of power. He who is familiar with Church history can scarcely read the Perga-

mos letter without the vast pageant of the fourth century passing before the eye of his mind. The death of Diocletian; the temporary triumph of Maxentius; the Gallic legions hastening eastward led by Constantine; the famous vision of the fiery cross; the "*in hoc signo vinces*" portent; the Christians coming forth into the glare of publicity from the dens, caves and catacombs which had been their hiding places for so long; the bishops summoned to the general's august presence; his endorsement of the new doctrine and intellectual conversion; the cross-led army driving all before it; the overthrow of Maxentius; Constantine hailed as Emperor of the world; proclaimed head of the church and *pontifex maximus* (the title of the head of the heathen hierarchy); the bishops seated among princes; the Church's mourning over, her eyes dazzled by the unaccustomed luxury and splendor, basking in the imperial favor! Then the Arian controversy; Christ's true deity denied, but maintained at the council of Nicea where despite tremendous pressure the Church "held fast His Name, refusing to deny His faith." Of Antipas personally we know nothing, but we see in his very name (which means "against all") the trumpet-note of Athanasius who, when a later Arian emperor sought to persuade him to endorse the hated Unitarian heresy by crying, "All the world is against you," in holy dignity exclaimed, "Then I am *against all* the world."

The Balaam doctrine too was openly advocated by many in those days, and since—urging the

mingling of clean and unclean, the unequal yoke of the Church and world, a spiritual marriage, which "Pergamos" seems to imply; while Nicolaitanism, or clerisy, had now become a full-blown doctrine, and the distinction between clergy and laity was at last complete. The Pergamos letter is a synoptic description of the conditions prevailing from the fourth to the seventh centuries.

And Thyatira followed as the natural result. Things were going down-hill with fearful rapidity. Yet the church of the middle ages was rich in works of mercy and abounded in "charity." Her monasteries and hostelries dotted the lands and kept open house for the sick and distressed. But doctrinally she had deteriorated tremendously, and the Papal system was fully organized, becoming a church within the Church, to which all had to bow. It was the woman Jezebel teaching and leading the servants of God astray. As the heathen princess of old foisted her idolatry on Israel, so this false paganistic thing crowded out the Christianity of Christ and superseded it by a system unspeakably evil and inherently corrupt.

At the Reformation of the sixteenth century she was "given space to repent, but she repented not," as the decrees of the Council of Trent bear witness. She spurned the light shining from the newly-recovered Scriptures and continued in her idolatrous course. For "her children" there is naught but death, though grace ever has discerned even in Rome a remnant having not known the depths of Satan, whom a gracious Lord owns as His and commands to cling to what they have

till He shall come. It is the first intimation that declension has gone so far that His return is now the only hope.

For Sardis, though it speak of Protestantism and its great State churches, is not a true recovery. They had received a deposit of truth at the Reformation, which became crystallized into creeds and confessions but did not quicken the mass. So of the great Protestant bodies it can be said, "Thou hast a name that thou livest and art dead," for churchmanship has largely been substituted for new birth, and orthodoxy for conversion to God. Yet there are a few with garments undefiled who know the Lord and love His truth, and who are exhorted to *watch* for His coming again!

Philadelphia speaks of the great revival period of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, assuming different forms in different places, but in all characterized by *reality*, by brotherly love, by clinging to Christ's Word and honoring His Name who is the Holy and the True. They who take such ground will never be popular with the world or the world's churches, but they will be content to know that God approves, and that the Lord Himself has opened for them a door of service which none on earth or anywhere else can shut. They wait in patience for the Morning Star—the Bridegroom's symbolic title.

Laodicea closes the series. It is the solemn arraignment of latitudinarian Christianity with its pride and folly, marked by impudent self-conceit and utter indifference to Christ. It glories in its

breadth and culture, its refinements of thought, and its refusal of ancient formulas. It congratulates itself on its wealth and following, while, in His sight who stands knocking outside, it is "poor and wretched and blind and naked." All the church machinery can go on without His presence, and without any sense of His absence.

And this is the last state of the professing body on earth. When things are in this condition, the Lord Himself will come, and will spew out of His mouth that which is so distasteful and disgusting to Him. "After this," says John, "I looked, and behold, a door was opened in heaven." As he is caught up through that open door he beholds surrounding the throne in glory the true Church seated in triumph, as symbolized in the twenty-four elders.

Laodicea is the closing period of the Church's history, and who can doubt that we have now reached the very time depicted? It behooves us to act as men who wait for their Lord, knowing that His coming cannot be much longer delayed.

We have thus glanced at various scriptures having to do with the evidences in the professing church of the Lord's near return. We must now look at some movements among the nations which point unquestionably to the same thing.

## **The Evidence that the Times of the Gentiles have nearly run their Course**

The prophetic Scriptures are as a light shining in a dark place. So marvelously has God therein depicted the characteristics of the age in which we live, and the conditions that would prevail as its end drew near, that no reverent reader of the Bible need be left in the dark as to the place now reached in the history of the Gentile powers. Recent startling events are so fully in accord with what Spirit-taught servants of Christ have long seen foretold in Holy Writ as to be overwhelmingly convincing that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God." He alone sees the end from the beginning and speaks of the things that are not as though they were. It is this feature of foretelling the future that differentiates the Bible from every other book. Human writers guess and theorize. God has by inspiration communicated facts which are attested by each passing year.

In this last respect, the book of Daniel stands preeminent. The 2nd and 3rd chapters give an outline of the times of the Gentiles from Nebuchadnezzar's day to the setting up of Messiah's kingdom. The four empires of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome, as depicted in its earlier

form, have risen and passed away as foretold. But a later form of the last empire is predicted to arise in the time of the end, immediately before the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, the all-glorious Son of Man, as the Stone falling from heaven.

Now the last state of the fourth empire is to be brought about as a result of an effort to combine the iron of imperialism with the miry clay (or, more correctly, brittle pottery) of democracy. This union—which can never be unity—of royal authority and socialistic principles characterizes the feet of the image even before the formation of the ten toes. This latter condition does not come in so long as the Church is still upon earth. It is subsequent to the rapture of the saints of the present dispensation. But the iron and clay are *already in evidence*, and statesmen are making desperate efforts to combine the two, after having learned, to their chagrin, in the last hundred or more years, that the “voice of the people,” if not “the voice of God,” is yet something to be reckoned with—is to be acknowledged and appeased if possible. With our Bibles open to the 2d chapter of Daniel, and the records of the present day before us, we do not hesitate to say that we are now in the iron and clay period, and at any moment the Lord’s assembling-shout may summon all that are Christ’s to the skies, after which the re-formation of the Roman empire in its last Satan-controlled condition will be a matter of but a very brief time, for “a short work will the Lord make in the earth.”

When, in past years, teachers of the Word of God have positively declared that the Scriptures foretold a new socialistic-empire formed of ten great kingdoms, on the ground of the Roman empire of old, many found it hard to take such predictions seriously. But the events of recent years, particularly since 1914, have wrought a wondrous change in the minds of men as to this. It is not only that the enlightened Bible believer declares such *must* be, but the secular press has taken up the matter, and it is being pointed out that the formation of a United States of Europe is *absolutely necessary* to safeguard the interests of all nations and to preserve the peace of the world. This in itself is a remarkable sign of the times, and shows how rapidly the end is approaching.

The world-war demonstrated the need of some strong centralized government that could bring order out of the chaotic conditions which even the League of Nations seems unable to control. This League is in itself a step—and a long step—toward that very union of nations predicted by both Daniel and John in the Revelation. And the sudden rise to power of Mussolini is a startling evidence of how rapidly the kingdom of the Beast may be developed after the Church is gone. Already we hear of the revival of the Roman Empire, and this modern “man of destiny” declares that Rome shall soon be restored to its ancient splendors and will emulate the Empire of the Cæsars in worldly power and glory.

We need, however, to be on our guard against



hastily-arrived at and ill-considered conclusions. I have seen in print, and heard it affirmed by many, that Il Duce, Premier Mussolini of Italy, the great Fascist leader, is the predicted Antichrist, the Man of Sin, who should arise at the end of this age. This is quite unwarranted for a number of reasons. Mussolini is a civil leader, not the head of a religious system. Since the last edition of this booklet was published he has brought about a *rapprochement* with the papacy through the Lateran treaty by which the pope is once more recognized as a temporal prince and Roman Catholicism is now the State Church of Italy. This may result in the fulfilment of the seventeenth of Revelation, placing the mystic woman in the saddle, where for a brief time she will again dominate the Roman earth. But the Antichrist is the lamb-like Beast depicted in the last part of the thirteenth chapter. He is the imitation Lamb of God who is to be energized by Satanic power. This one will utterly deny the Father and the Son. "This," says St. John, "is the deceiver and the antichrist." He will be accepted by apostate Christendom and apostate Judaism as the promised Messiah. His seat will be in Palestine; while, in the West, in the revived Roman Empire of the last days, there will be a great civil leader, a Napoleonic "Man of Destiny," who will for a brief time attempt to exercise autocratic sway over the civilized world. Both this leader, called emphatically, "the Beast," and the Antichrist are to act together as the enemies of God and His truth. But they are distinct personalities.

Mussolini, once a socialist of the reddest type, now the advocate of autocratic power, has already declared it is his intention to restore the ancient glory of the Roman Empire. Once an infidel, he has become a Catholic, and is eager that there be a concordat established between the Empire and the Vatican. The Fascist Creed, as it is called, is said to be the foundation of the instruction of the youth of Italy. It begins with, "I believe in Rome Eternal, the Mother of my Fatherland," and it ends with, "I believe in the genius of Mussolini; in our holy father Fascism, and in the communion of its martyrs; in the conversion of the Italians, and the resurrection of the Empire. Amen." Mussolini may be the forerunner of the Beast; he might even be that sinister figure himself, but it is better not to play the rôle of the prophet, but simply to be a humble student of the prophetic Word.

That we are on the eve of great world-changes both statesmen and religious leaders are agreed. The nature of those changes affords endless cause for speculation. For the devout Christian the next stupendous event that shines through the darkness is the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together unto Him. We do not wait for the Antichrist. We look for the Lord from heaven. We are only interested in the signs of the times as they harmonize with the warnings given whereby we may know that the end of the age is approaching.

In the last chapter of the book of Daniel there are three statements made which also have a

bearing on the times in which our lot is cast. The angel says to the prophet: "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased" (ver. 4). Observe that three things are mentioned here, which if any one of them came to pass without the other two, would be of no real value in determining the question that is before us. But if *all* come to pass at *the same time* we must be convinced that God has spoken, and has pointed out unerringly three signs that the end-times are almost upon us.

Note the three predictions: 1st, The end-times will be characterized by prophetic enlightenment, marvelously unsealing the book of Daniel, and the visions therein recorded understood by spiritual men. 2nd, There will be a period of world-wide restlessness: men will run to and fro as never before, owing doubtless to new and convenient methods of locomotion and insatiable desire for travel and adventure. 3rd, There will be a wide diffusion of knowledge—bringing educational advantages to the door of the poorest if there be but an ambition to learn and acquire. Now what are the facts? The last century has been more and more characterized by the very things mentioned. It is not that these things are occasionally fulfilled, but that they are everywhere apparent in the civilized parts of the world. Here then is a three-fold cord that cannot be quickly broken. Insignificant as any one of these facts might seem if it stood alone, *the combination of the three at one and the same time is the startling fact.* Man's

day is nearly at an end. The day of the Lord comes on apace!

Now link on to this evidence a New Testament prophecy that clearly applies to the same times. Turn to 1 Thess. 5:2, 3. "For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape." Here is a strikingly convincing statement, if received in literality as it is written. The day of the Lord is going to break upon the world at some special time, foreknown by God, when men will be talking loudly of Peace and Safety! These are the very themes talked of on every hand for the last decade, and, despite the fearful European tragedy, are heard more loudly to-day than ever. Men of affairs are loudly proclaiming a coming era of universal peace to be brought in by arbitration, treaties, and the evolutionary forces of society, while the day of the Lord steals on them unawares in overflowing judgments to cut off the ungodly from the earth, at the very time that universal peace and safety become the slogan of a world devoted to destruction. All man's efforts to make this world a happy and peaceful scene, while still rejecting the Lord Jesus Christ, are futile and vain. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked."

It is not to those who wait for the return of His Son from heaven that the day of the Lord comes as a thief in the night, but to those who ig-

nore His Word and despise His grace. "Ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. .therefore let us not sleep as do others; but let us watch and be sober."

And if we would watch intelligently it is necessary that we be able, through familiarity with the Word of God, to discern aright the signs of the times. In three short verses our Lord Himself has given us a marvelous epitome of the conditions that would prevail immediately before the great tribulation. Weigh carefully Matt. 24: 5-7, and ask yourself if anything could more aptly describe the days in which we live. "For many shall come in My name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars; see that ye be not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places." With this, couple the equally pertinent words of Lk. 21: 25, 26: "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken."

The context makes it clear that these are the outward evidences of the near approach of the end-times. They do not definitely fix the time when the Lord must come. They simply show that the days of vengeance are coming on apace.

And one might fearlessly challenge anyone to give us a better description of our own days than we have in these verses, taking brevity into consideration.

Note the leading features of the two passages:

First: Many Antichrists. It might be said that there has never been a time since the very days of the apostles that this sign has not been manifested; and this I readily admit. But in a certain sense the whole Christian dispensation is marked by all those things predicted by our Lord, for ever since apostolic days men have lived in what John calls "the last hour." The greater part of earth's time or course has been run; only the last hour remains ere the kingdom be ushered in. But while this is so, we gather that the characteristic features of the age will be accentuated at the close. And so it is at the present solemn moment. We hear of antichrists on every hand, and those who are deceived thereby may well be called legion! In all lands these false Christs are found. In America we have witnessed the "powers and signs and lying wonders" connected with the system miscalled Christian Science, which venerated its woman-founder as the second coming of Christ, and holds its false philosophy to be the promised Comforter, thus blaspheming against the Holy Ghost. Lesser lights have flickered and flamed up, then died down, leaving hosts of disappointed dupes, like Dowie, the pseudo-prophet of Chicago; Sanford, the Elijah of New England; Dr. Teed, the Koresh; and others too numerous to

mention; and as they pass away, other deceivers take their places, for men would rather believe any lie than God's truth.

When the Persian antichrist, Abbas Effendi, or Abdul Bahai, toured America and Europe, he was welcomed as the forerunner of universal peace and accorded the liberty of proclaiming his propaganda from "Christian" pulpits. And though, like other pretenders before him, he has passed away, his followers still abound in a land of Bibles, and hope by the dissemination of his principles to bring in a millennial condition while refusing the cross!

Some years ago Mrs. Annie Besant, the aged Theosophical leader, formed the Order of the Star of the East, a Theosophical off-shoot, to wait for a great religious leader—a new incarnation of the Spirit of the Christ. The mountain has labored and brought forth—Krishnamurti! Yet vast numbers of otherwise intelligent people accept the drivellings of this colorless youth as the very utterances of inspiration!

Other "coming ones," too numerous to mention, engage the thoughts of men. But it is for Antichrist, not the Christ of God, they wait. The Lord of glory, when He comes again, descends from heaven. The false prophet comes from the earth—born in a natural way.

Second: Scripture predicts a period of terrible unrest and internecine warfare as an evidence that the world is entering "the beginning of sorrows." A few years ago men were flattering themselves that the world would never again be

desolated by great wars and wholesale slaughter. It was confidently believed that the social consciousness of the laboring class would make it impossible to hurl great armies against each other. Peace propaganda had so educated the people of all civilized nations that war would soon be outlawed. In the very month that the great 1914-1918 European conflict broke out, the organ of the Peace Society published in Toronto, contained an ably-written article declaring that war was now an impossibility, and a great world-conflict could never occur again! Clergymen, oblivious of prophetic truth as revealed in Scripture, and carried away by the loose, liberal theological systems of the day, were loudly voicing the same empty boast up to the very day that the devastating carnage began.

And now that comparative peace has succeeded to bloody warfare the same unbelieving views are being taught from many pulpits. Yet ever since the signing of the treaty of Versailles the nations have been feverishly preparing for "the next great war"—building navies, enlisting soldiers, storing ammunition—all for what? Universal peace? Nay, but for the wars and rumors of wars of the closing days of this age, and for the great Armageddon conflict yet to be fought out in the land of Palestine, when all nations shall be drawn into the fray. While every Christian should be grateful to God for the comparative peace now enjoyed, it needs to be remembered it is but a temporary truce, for there can be no lasting peace while Christ is rejected—nor until



all Gentile dominions are destroyed and He shall come whose right it is to reign.

In the third and fourth places we read of famines and pestilences, the very natural outcome of war, which have reaped fearful harvests since the great world-war, though the science and skill of the world are endeavoring to successfully cope with them. Many high-spirited and noble-minded physicians and nurses laid down their lives in the overpowering conflict in trying to hinder the on-rushing pestilence, while the charity of the world was strained in its efforts to check the ravages of famine—and what may it not yet be in the near future? The black and pale horses of famine and pestilence always follow the red horse of battle.

In Luke's account we get the fifth sign that the end is drawing near, calamities such as the world has never previously known. Were the dreams of evolution true, we should long since have passed earth's formative period, but events of recent years show us that this very globe is going through great and momentous changes, preparatory to the conditions prophesied of for millennial times. Surely never have there been so many terrible disasters on land and sea as since the midnight cry summoned the virgin band to trim their lamps. Earthquakes, tidal waves and kindred phenomena have occurred with amazing frequency. Is it any wonder that we see the sixth sign on every hand?—"Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth." Confidence is shaken.

Nations are bewildered and perplexed. Pledges even of nations are violated, and promises broken. Individuals are in fear and dismay where a cheery spirit of optimism prevailed but a short time ago. Yet, amidst it all, the Christian need not be in perplexity or doubt. The Word of God has forewarned of all this. Minutely it has foretold existing conditions, and the fulfilment of its solemn prophecies should only strengthen the faith of the believer as he turns from all men's empty vamping to the unerring and inerrant Word of God.

This spirit of unrest to which we have referred, is particularly manifested in the strained relations between capital and labor. Despite the evident desire of many modern captains of industry to better the conditions of their employees, and to practise what a recent writer has called "the golden rule in business," capital and labor still maintain a distinctly hostile attitude the one to the other; and the economic questions involved seem no nearer a peaceful and satisfactory solution than in the days when the apostle James wrote his intensely practical epistle.

In that letter there is a passage which, while it unquestionably applied directly to conditions then existing, was so worded by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit as to graphically depict industrial conditions at the end of the age. This is not so manifest on the page of the Authorized Version as in the Revision, or any critical translation. An evidently mistaken rendering of one preposition is responsible for this in the King James Version.

This preposition, correctly rendered in later versions, throws a flood of light on the whole passage. It is the word rendered "for" in the earlier translation and "in" in the later ones, occurring in the last sentence of James 5:3. Read the passage in its entirety:

"Come now, ye rich, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your wealth has become corruption, and your garments moth-eaten. Your gold and silver are rusted; and their rust shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as fire. Ye have heaped up treasure together *in the last days*." Note the corrected preposition, and observe where in the course of time, it locates the complete fulfilment of that concerning which the Holy Spirit speaks so solemnly. The passage continues: "Behold, the wages of the laborers who have reaped your fields which is of you kept back unjustly, crieth; and the cries of those that have reaped have entered into the ears of the Lord of hosts. Ye have lived in luxury upon the earth, and have been wanton; ye have pampered your hearts [as] in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned, ye have killed the righteous; he doth not resist you. Be patient therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until it receive the early and latter rain. Be ye also patient; establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh" (chap. 5:1-8, 1911 Version).

As by a master hand, the apostle with a few

bold strokes, pictures the times in which we live. On the one hand, haughty wealth; on the other, grinding poverty; on the one hand, scornful indifference; on the other, angry dissatisfaction. On the one hand, wanton waste; on the other, bitter need. Such contrasts have ever been common in this world's sad history, but never were they so accentuated as at the present time when the rich are growing richer and the poor are growing poorer, and the great gulf between the two classes is steadily widening. Ours has been called, and not without reason, the millionaire age. If our grandfathers were worth a few thousands, they were counted well-to-do. Now men hold securities mounting into the millions, while even a billion of money may be heaped together by one man. Statistics show that the great bulk of the world's wealth is held subject to the order of a little coterie of arrogant plutocrats, who conniving together can control the resources of the nations, and make or prevent financial panics at their will. It is a condition of affairs never before known, and tells us with absolute certainty that we are in the last days.

Nor should I be misunderstood in writing as I have done. It is no sin to be rich, nor is a man necessarily a malefactor because he possesses the ability to amass great wealth. But wealth is a stewardship, and "it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful." He to whom riches are entrusted is accountable to God for the use to which he puts them. Their selfish conservation He will judge unsparingly. James arraigns

the rich for their greed and self-indulgence. They had forgotten the word, "He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this is also vanity" (Eccl. 5:10). They were living as though accountable to no higher power, and were eagerly seeking to gratify every lust. Their hoarded treasure, corrupting, moth-eaten, and rusting, witnessed to their sordid selfishness. And this mass of wealth would soon have been largely dissipated had they but dealt in fairness with the laborers on the fruits of whose toil they were fattening. Those thus down-trodden have often felt as though God had forgotten, and in their despair have often denied His very existence. But "when He maketh inquisition for blood He forgetteth not the cry of the humble." He has been a silent but not unfeeling spectator of the injustice, the heartlessness, and the haughty arrogance of the godless rich. He has noted every tear, heeded every sigh, heard every cry of oppression from the anguished hearts of the downtrodden whose rights have been ruthlessly disregarded by those who should have been to them the instruments of Providence for their protection and blessing. The same spirit that has thus ill-used the poor and needy is the spirit that condemned and slew the Righteous One. It comes to its full fruition in the last days. It will be judged unsparingly when the Lord arises to plead the cause of the afflicted.

But what is to be the Christian's attitude in such conditions as are here described? Is he to link himself with labor unions and industrial as-

sociations of various kinds, generally composed of Christless men guilty of violence and even murder, in order to curb the greed and check the tyranny of soulless corporations and capitalists preying on the laboring classes? Is he to oppose force to tyranny, the boycott to oppression, and the strike to employers' arrogance? By no means. His path is indicated clearly and unequivocally in verses 7 to 12. "The coming of the Lord draweth nigh." Till then the believer is exhorted to patience and to trust in the living God. He is not to be carried away by the spirit of the age. Complaints, grudges, harsh invectives, are not to come from him who sides with a rejected Christ and waits for His return from heaven. Of old, the prophets had to learn this lesson of patience, suffering for righteousness' sake, committing their cause to the Lord; ever proving His faithfulness in spite of all man's unfaithfulness. And they who so endured we count happy, even as was Job the servant of the Lord whose patience has become proverbial, and in whose later history we see "the end of the Lord" and are assured that He is very pitiful and of tender mercy.

Till He comes the Christian can well afford to stand aside from the restless, surging movements of the day; and, committing his cause to the Lord with quietness of heart, he is to let the potsherds of the earth strive with the potsherds of the earth, knowing that God has said, "I will overturn, OVERTURN, OVERTURN it, until HE shall come, whose right it is to reign." That that glad day has now drawn very near the conditions we

have been considering would be sufficient to clearly prove.

But there is another line of evidence, having to do particularly with the nations of Israel, at which we must now look, and with which the next chapter will occupy us.

## PART III

# Evidence from Israel's History and Present State that Points to the Speedy Consummation of this Age

If the evidence we have been considering shows that the Church of God is soon to close its earthly history, and that the Gentile dominions must shortly surrender their lease of power to Him who shall reign as King of kings and Lord of lords, that which Israel's past and present condition furnishes is of an even more startling character. The Lord Jesus said to His eager, inquiring disciples, in that great prophetic discourse which we have already noticed in part, "Now learn a parable of the fig tree: When its branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors" (Matt. 24: 32, 33). And again, in the companion passage in Luke, we are told, "He spake unto them a parable; Behold the fig tree and all the trees; when they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh. So likewise ye, when ye see these things being fulfilled, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh" (Luke 21: 29-31). Mark 13: 28, 29 is almost the exact counterpart of Matthew.

Now why does our Lord direct special atten-



tion to the fig tree? Is it not because it is the particular symbol of Judah, which was likened to "a fig tree planted in a vineyard?" See Luke 13: 6-10. "The vineyard of the Lord of host is the house of Israel," as depicted in Isaiah 5: 1-7. Because of their sin the Lord rooted out the vines of all the twelve tribes and left His vineyard desolate. After the Babylonian captivity Judah was planted as a fig tree in the desolated vineyard. Christ Himself nurtured this fig tree in the three years of His ministry. He came seeking fruit, only to find none. When this was manifested as the settled condition, and "nothing but leaves" was found, the fig tree fell under the curse, and withered from the root. But, in the last days, the fig tree of Judah is to revive and to put forth leaves and bear fruit. When revival is noticed, the end will be near. This is the clear teaching of the Lord in the "parable of the fig tree." As we look upon the Jewish nation to-day, who can fail to see the leaves and fruit both pushing out from the stock which has been dry so long? Judaism is experiencing a revival of the national spirit, and, as never since apostolic days, Jews are turning in heart to the Lord whom they once rejected.

The national revival might be likened to the green leaves. The spiritual awakening would more readily answer to the developing fruit.

We look first at the "leaves." For centuries, Jewish history has been the verification of prophecy. Israel, scattered and peeled, have been outcasts among all nations; a people despised and

scorned; yet provoking the envy of their Gentile neighbors, and a certain feeling of awe likewise. There is something about the undying Jewish people which the nations cannot comprehend. The Jew assimilates with none, yet pervades all. He is the unquestionable "man of destiny," for he represents that race, or "generation," which shall not pass away till all these things be fulfilled.

Persecuted and oppressed, it is true to-day as in Egyptian times that "the more they afflicted them the more they multiplied and grew." Yet, though the Jew has ever secretly cherished the hope of a coming Messiah and restoration to Palestine, for centuries his national spirit seemed utterly crushed, and he lacked the sense of solidarity which alone can assure the integrity of any nation. Yet in his most wretched estate the Jew has never become identified with the peoples among whom he wandered. We speak of men of other lands, naturalized in another country, as German-Americans, or Anglo-Americans, or Scotch-Canadians, and so on. But we do not speak of Jewish-Britons, or Jewish-Americans, or Jewish-Germans, etc. Instead we know them as American Jews, English Jews, Russian Jews, and so on. Wherever born, they are *Jews*, and only Jews.

The last century has intensified this national feeling in a marvelous way, and resulted in the birth of the world-wide Zionist movement, having for its avowed object the return of the Jews as a nation to Palestine, the acquirement of their ancient patrimony, and the foundation of an in-

dependent Jewish State—possibly a protectorate, under the care of one or more of the great world-powers.

Has the recent fearful war in Europe jeopardized these plans or disheartened the Jew? Did the accompanying season of intense suffering in Palestine make such a scheme seem foolish and futile? Not at all. More than ever the Jewish spirit asserted itself. More than ever the Jews felt they must establish a Hebrew commonwealth.

During the fearful world-conflict Jews were fighting in the ranks of all the great opposing armies. They suffered terribly whichever side won, and since the signing of the peace pact they have endured unspeakable horrors of persecution, famine and pestilence in many parts of Europe. As long as present conditions prevail, the Jew is caught as it were between the upper and nether millstones. He does not want to be found in such a plight again. To avoid it he sees only one way; that is, to become once more an independent nation.

And the war itself opened the way for the first great steps toward the fulfilment of their national aspiration. The Balfour declaration guaranteed a home in Palestine for Israel in return for Jewish loyalty to the Allies in their struggle with Germany. The successful outcome of General, now Lord, Allenby's great campaign made possible the fulfilment of this promise. The British mandate over the Holy Land has opened the door to the re-settlement of the "people of the wandering foot" in their ancient patrimony. In spite of the

opposition of the Arabs and the Roman Catholic Church, the Jew is rapidly taking over the land. Jewish colonies and cities are rising in the once-desolate places and the Scriptures are being literally fulfilled in a way that is amazing to one who does not understand the divine plan. The land is being planted with "strange slips," as Isaiah declared it would be, and once more Palestine is becoming a land of vineyards and olive-yards and a country of Jewish homes. The past ten years have seen marvelous developments. What the near future has in store no man can say. The establishment of Hebrew schools, the revival of the ancient language, the opening of the great Hebrew University on the Mount of Olives are the forerunners of a marvelous Hebrew renaissance. The Jews are returning by thousands every year, and in spite of certain difficulties and trying situations economically, which are to be expected in connection with such a movement, the Jewish population is steadily increasing, and gradually the land is coming into their possession.

Prophecy has foretold all this. The Jews are to be gathered back in unbelief to their own land by the help of some great maritime power (see Isa. 18), and given a place in the councils of the nations. Before our very eyes we see all heading up toward this consummation. The fig tree is putting forth her leaves. The national life-sap, if I may so put it, is once more manifesting itself in the one-time dry and desolate tree of Judah. And this is the sure indication that the period

of Gentile domination is fast drawing to a close.

Money is flowing into the coffers of the Zionist societies. Influential Jews hitherto indifferent, because largely agnostic and rejecting their own Scriptures, are giving their countenance and aid to a scheme that once seemed to them visionary and absurd. National feeling has wrought where of religious feeling there was none. And thus men who believe not the prophets are fulfilling them in their ignorance.

And now I desire to press the solemn truth that all this forces upon us. The coming of the Lord *must* be very near, for the prophetic scriptures give us no reason to believe that such a condition of things as we have depicted above, will be brought about *so long as the Church is on earth*. But time speeds on, and preparations are fast taking place for the final re-gathering of Israel and their establishment in their own land *after the Church has gone*. And the Church will be caught away from this scene at the coming of the Lord to the air; hence the solemnity of the sign of the green leaves! The Midnight Cry sounds louder each passing day!

"Trim your lamps and be ready,  
For the Bridegroom's nigh."

We turn our attention now to what is evident fruit for God from among the Jews, so long blinded and indifferent to the light of the gospel.

And first, be it noted, we do not slight the fact that all down the centuries of the Christian dis-

pensation there has ever remained an election of grace, God in every period saving some who turned in repentance to the Messiah whom their fathers abhorred. But such conversions were lamentably few, and the great bulk of the nation has ever remained in wilful and judicial blindness. This is still the case, we must frankly admit; but we believe we can safely say that there are more Jewish Christians in the world to-day than at any time since the earliest centuries of the Church's history. The past hundred years have been years of grace to the blinded nation in a most marked way—witness the awakening of the Church of God generally to its responsibility to give the gospel to the Jew, through whom the Scriptures were first given to the Gentiles.

To the shame of Christendom, be it said, that its treatment of the Jew in past centuries, and in many places still, has been most *un*-Christlike, and utterly opposed to the spirit of the Saviour's intercession on the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Too often it has been taken for granted that work for the conversion of Israel would be but wasted effort, because of the blindness referred to in Rom. 11; but it has been quite generally overlooked that the blindness was not to be entire, but "in part."

In these last days the Christian has realized his indebtedness to the Jew in a way he had hitherto overlooked, and efforts have been put forth by voice and pen to carry the gospel to this much-neglected people; efforts which God has

graciously deigned to bless in a marvelous way. From the days when one of the first modern missions to the Jews was begun in Hungary, in the middle of the last century, to the present time, work of this character has come more and more into prominence, claiming the help and prayerful sympathy of those who know the Lord. There have been many, many mistakes and blunders; unprincipled men have used such work as a means of self-aggrandizement and self-enrichment, and thus dishonor has been brought upon the name of the Lord. But, alas, what line of missionary enterprise has escaped this stigma? "Evil men and seducers" have abounded in all lines of professed Christian service; but this sad fact does not invalidate what is truly of God. So we praise Him for the devotion of many faithful lovers of Israel, who have labored for the conversion of the neglected Jew.

And what have been the results? Only eternity will make the full fruitage known; but not only hundreds, but thousands, from among Israel after the flesh have already turned to the Lord showing that the blindness in part is passing away. Among these are many eminent names—some now with the Lord, others still engaged in His service on earth. Who can estimate the value to the Church of God of an Edersheim, a David Baron, an Adolph Saphir, a Joseph Rabinowitz, and a host of others, whose lives and labors were fragrant with Christ? And to these may be added a great multitude of the lowly and unknown on earth who have been led to joyfully own the claims of

the Lord Jesus, and to suffer shame and ostracism for His name's sake.

"Not Barabbas, but *this Man!*" exclaimed a dying Jew; and in so doing he reversed the sentence of his nation, and proclaimed himself on the side of the long-rejected Saviour. And he was not alone, for his brethren and sisters in the faith from among Israel are now legion. It is estimated that in the first decade after the close of the World War over 200,000 Jews had professed Christianity. Many of these are really born again and are active in trying to reach others.

Remembering this, let it be borne in mind that the Holy Ghost predicts the blindness passing away when the fulness of the Gentiles shall have come in. If already the scales are falling from the eyes of many of the Jews, does it not proclaim the fact that the Gentile times are nearly expired, and that "the fulness of the Gentiles" will soon have come in? The "*times* of the Gentiles" will not run out until Messiah comes to establish His throne at Jerusalem; but the *fulness* of the Gentiles comes in at our Lord's return for His Church.

Between the two, the awful time of Jacob's trouble intervenes, "the great tribulation," toward which events are so rapidly tending. The *times* of the Gentiles cannot end until Jerusalem has been delivered from Gentile oppression and become the city of the Great King. But the *fulness* of the Gentiles may come in ere my reader lays down this paper; for it will take place when the unbelieving branches are torn away from the



olive tree of privilege, and that will be when the true believers have been caught up to be forever with the Lord. If this momentous event were to take place ere this paper drops from your hand, my unknown reader, I ask you kindly, but solemnly, what would it mean to you?

You cannot be ready for His second coming unless you have been saved through the mighty work He accomplished at His first coming. It is written, "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9:28). None look for Him except those who value His atoning work and have been redeemed to God by His most precious blood. Are you numbered among these? If not, I earnestly beseech you, weigh well the

MIDNIGHT CRY :  
"BEHOLD, THE BRIDEGROOM COMETH ;  
GO YE OUT TO MEET HIM !"

—H. A. I.



# THE MORMON'S MISTAKE

OR

## WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

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NOT long since, there came to my door a young man dressed in the conventional, pseudo-clerical style that readily proclaimed, to one at all acquainted with the so-called Latter-day Saints, that he was a Mormon "elder"—though "younger" might be a more correct term, (1 Pet. v. 5) as scriptural elders were invariably men of years and experience,\* who could care for the flock of God (1 Pet. v. 1-3), but were not to lord it over the people of God as over possessions.

In the case mentioned, the Mormon introduced himself as a "minister of the gospel, doing missionary work among the mountain towns" of California, and stated that he would be pleased to put before me some of "the principles of the gospel." Intimating that I myself was also seeking to give forth God's good news to poor sinners (1 Tim. i. 15), he was told that if

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\* See 1 Tim. iii. 2-7; noting, as shown in Titus i. 5-7, that "elder" and "bishop" are the same; the former word referring to the age of the man; the latter, to his office. As to all this, Mormonism is in dire confusion.

such was indeed his object, I would be glad to converse with him; so bade him be seated.

"And now, sir," he was asked, "would you kindly favor us" (a number were present) "with a short statement of what the gospel really is?"

"Certainly," he replied. "The gospel consists of four chief points. The first is repentance; the second, faith; the third, baptism for the remission of sins by one duly qualified; while the fourth is the laying on of the hands of a man called of God, for the reception of the Holy Ghost."

"Well, and supposing one has gone through all this, is he then saved?"

"Oh, of course, no one can know that in this life. If one goes on to the end, he will be exalted in the kingdom." Thereupon he proceeded to open a little Testament, with which, however, he was but slightly familiar, and pointed us to some proof texts showing conclusively that the Lord and the apostles preached repentance and faith, as also that Peter spoke of "baptism for the remission of sins" (Acts ii. 38; let the reader carefully note the verse and its context), and that in at least two instances (Acts viii. 14-17; xix. 1-6) apostles laid their hands on people in order to their receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit. An effort was also made to find a verse to prove that no one can know he is saved now; but in the face of Eph. ii. 4-8; 1 Pet. i. 9; 1 Cor.

i. 8; 2 Cor. ii. 15; and 2 Tim. i. 9, this was an utter absurdity, though he pointed to Matt. xxiv. 13, "He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved," in defense of his position.

As to this, one need only say that endurance certainly is a proof of reality. One who said he was saved, yet did not endure, would thereby prove the emptiness of his profession.\*

"I quite agree with you," I said, "as to the fact that Scripture speaks of the four points you mention; but, possibly, you did not understand my query. I asked you for a statement of the gospel. If these so-called 'four principles' be indeed the gospel, then you have a gospel without Christ; in other words, a gospel with the gospel omitted. And if you are correct, then surely the apostle Paul, at least, labored under a most serious delusion, for he gives us a clear statement of his gospel, and actually says nothing of either one or other of the various points upon which you have dwelt. No doubt you will recollect the passage?"

He did not, however. He was not aware of any such direct statement on the subject. In fact, it was soon evident that, with the exception of a few verses on his favorite themes, his

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\* I would commend to the notice of the reader who has difficulty here, "Fallen from Grace; or, Castaway," by W. Barker: also, "The Perseverance of the Saints," by F. W. Grant, 5 cents each; to be had of Loizeaux Bros.,

Bible was practically a sealed book. He turned, however, at my direction, to the fifteenth chapter of 1st Corinthians, to which, for a little, I would invite the reader's careful attention.

Commencing at the first verse of this precious and wondrous portion of Scripture, we read: "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you *the gospel which I preached* unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also *ye are saved*, if ye *keep in memory what I preached* unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that *Christ died for our sins* according to the Scriptures" (see Isa. liii. 5, 6); "and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures: and that He was seen of Cephas," etc.

Here I stopped, as the rest of the passage is devoted to bringing forth the eye-witnesses of Christ in resurrection, and therefore could hardly be considered doctrinal; though the reader will derive much benefit by meditation on the entire portion at his leisure.

"Now," I said, turning to the Mormon, "we have here a statement of the gospel—the gospel which Paul preached; and it is dangerous to preach any other, as we find from Gal. i. 8, 9 that the person who does so, though it be an angel from heaven, is under a curse, or devoted to judgment. I understand that you teach that

your gospel was revealed to Joseph Smith by an angel. If true, that would prove nothing, if it be found, upon examination, to be other than that proclaimed by the apostle to the Gentiles. His gospel had been received by the Corinthians; in it they stood; by it they were *saved*, if *real believers*. It was not, you will notice, a careful obedience to certain ordinances or a walking according to certain rules, such as you mentioned a few minutes ago, that would insure their salvation, however blessed such might be, if properly understood; but it was keeping in memory this gospel.

“I notice, then, to begin with, that his gospel is *concerning a Person*, and quite a different person than yours brings before us. It is ‘concerning the Son of God,’ as Rom. i. 3 tells us. Your gospel did not have a word about Him in all its four points. The subject of Paul’s gospel has not a word about any one or any thing save Him. Perhaps we might say it also could be divided into four heads, though more properly three; but even divided into four (to go as far with you as we can), what marked differences do we find! Your four heads are all concerning the poor sinner, and might be put this way:

1. The sinner repents;
2. The sinner has faith;
3. The sinner is baptized;
4. The sinner has hands laid on him.

Now, in contrast to this, see how the true gospel can be put:

1. Christ died;
2. Christ was buried;
3. Christ has been raised again;
4. Christ is the object for the hearts of His own.

“Surely the two gospels have nothing in common. You teach, I believe, that Christ died for Adam’s transgression, not for ours; but maintain that while Adamic sin is met by the Cross, our sins as individuals must be washed away by baptism. Paul’s gospel tells us that He died for *our* sins; and if that be so, and ‘the blood of Jesus Christ, God’s Son, cleanseth us from *all* sin,’ where does baptism in your sense apply? If *all* my sins are met by His precious blood, if they were borne ‘in His own body on the tree’ (1 Pet. ii. 24), how many are left to be cleansed by baptism?\* Assuredly none. But, alas, this is but one instance in which the false gospel of Mormonism is opposed to the precious gospel of the grace of God as revealed in the Bible.

“But I go on to the second point. Christ not only died, but ‘was buried;’ yet it was written

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\* We quite admit that *governmental*, or *administrative*, forgiveness of sins was conferred in baptism, as receiving the baptized among the body of believers. This is a different thing to *eternal* forgiveness before God. See John xx. 22, 23.



of Him, 'Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell, neither wilt Thou suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption' (Acts ii. 27; Psa. xvi. 10). His burial declares the reality of His death, and surely speaks of His being forever through with the place He took on earth. It is the end of all the relationships in which He previously stood, and tells us He is dead to the law—having paid my penalty—and to sin—not His own, but mine—which He bore, and I am 'buried with Him by baptism unto death;' so that I am not left where Mormonism would leave me, as a poor, struggling soul on earth, striving to continue to the end in order to be saved, but I am accounted as one who, with Him, has been buried to it all: thus I am brought to the third point:

"Christ was raised from the dead, and I am raised with Him. His place is now mine as to acceptance with God. 'He was delivered for our offences and *raised again* for our justification;' His resurrection being God's open declaration that the believer is cleared from all charge of sin, since his Substitute is released from death.

"And now the One who is alive forevermore (Rev. i. 18) is presented as an object for the hearts of His own. 'He was seen;' and the same apostle exclaims, in another place, 'We see Jesus!' (Heb. ii. 9). Poor sinners are first led to see the utter impossibility of improving or rendering themselves more fit for God's pres-

ence. The eye of faith is then directed to the One who died, in whom believing, they are 'justified from all things' (Acts xiii. 38, 39). Now they have also an object for the heart, even Christ in glory (2 Cor. iii. 18). How different this to what you have presented! Here,

'Tis Jesus first, 'tis Jesus last,  
'Tis Jesus all the way,'

while you are cast entirely on yourself.

"But now, another question. You spoke of men with *authority* to baptize and lay on hands. Where do you get that in Scripture?"

For answer, he turned to Heb. v. 4, and read, "And no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron."

"What 'honor' is here referred to?" I asked.

"The honor of the priesthood giving authority to baptize and confer the Holy Ghost."

"No; the first verse contradicts this. It is not a question of the 'priesthood' at all. As *all* believers now are priests, there is no special priestly class in Christianity, as is clearly shown by referring to Rev. i. 6; and 1 Pet. ii. 5, 9. The subject in Heb. v. is that of *High Priesthood*, and is referring to the Lord Jesus Christ, called of God, as noted in ver. 6. Nor is there a word about baptism or imposition of hands; but it is a question of 'offering gifts and sacrifices for sins' (ver. 1; also Heb. ii. 17), and then of succoring His people in this world of trial. To apply such a scripture to human ministry is simply

‘handling the word of God deceitfully,’ and deserves the severest censure.”

Such was, in substance, what I sought to put before the misguided young man; but, alas, so deceitful is the human heart, that man would rather be occupied with *his* repentance, *his* faith, or *his anything*, than with God’s Christ; and I found this preacher of “a different gospel, which is not another” (Gal. i. 6, 7, margin), to be of the same class as thousands in professed Christendom. The scriptures brought before him had but little weight compared with “present-day revelation,” despite the word of Paul in Col. i. 25 (for “fulfil,” read “complete,” the correct word); so he went on his way, trusting to his fleshly religion, and ignoring the “gospel of God.”

Ere dismissing the subject, I might remind the reader that neither faith nor repentance is ever presented in Scripture as the *ground* of salvation. The Cross alone is that. Brought to it by the Spirit of God, the sinner will indeed repent; trusting the work there accomplished, the soul is saved.

Nor are repentance and faith as set forth in the Scriptures to be confounded with the vagaries of Mormonism. In that wretched system repentance is confounded with penitence, and faith with credulity.

In its Biblical sense, repentance is self-judgment; the owning that one is lost and guilty,

ence. The eye of faith is then directed to the One who died, in whom believing, they are 'justified from all things' (Acts xiii. 38, 39). Now they have also an object for the heart, even Christ in glory (2 Cor. iii. 18). How different this to what you have presented! Here,

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"What 'honor' is here referred to?" I asked.

"The honor of the priesthood giving authority to baptize and confer the Holy Ghost."

"No; the first verse contradicts this. It is not a question of the 'priesthood' at all. As *all* believers now are priests, there is no special priestly class in Christianity, as is clearly shown by referring to Rev. i. 6; and 1 Pet. ii. 5, 9. The subject in Heb. v. is that of *High* Priesthood, and is referring to the Lord Jesus Christ, called of God, as noted in ver. 6. Nor is there a word about baptism or imposition of hands; but it is a question of 'offering gifts and sacrifices for sins' (ver. 1; also Heb. ii. 17), and then of succoring His people in this world of trial. To apply such a scripture to human ministry is simply

‘handling the word of God deceitfully,’ and deserves the severest censure.”

Such was, in substance, what I sought to put before the misguided young man; but, alas, so deceitful is the human heart, that man would rather be occupied with *his* repentance, *his* faith, or *his anything*, than with God’s Christ; and I found this preacher of “a different gospel, which is not another” (Gal. i. 6, 7, margin), to be of the same class as thousands in professed Christendom. The scriptures brought before him had but little weight compared with “present-day revelation,” despite the word of Paul in Col. i. 25 (for “fulfil,” read “complete,” the correct word); so he went on his way, trusting to his fleshly religion, and ignoring the “gospel of God.”

Ere dismissing the subject, I might remind the reader that neither faith nor repentance is ever presented in Scripture as the *ground* of salvation. The Cross alone is that. Brought to it by the Spirit of God, the sinner will indeed repent; trusting the work there accomplished, the soul is saved.

Nor are repentance and faith as set forth in the Scriptures to be confounded with the vagaries of Mormonism. In that wretched system repentance is confounded with penitence, and faith with credulity.

In its Biblical sense, repentance is self-judgment; the owning that one is lost and guilty,

righteously deserving the wrath of a holy God. Faith is trusting in Christ, whose finished work puts away sins forever. It is not simply crediting the statement that God exists, or that the historical Jesus was the Son of God. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thy heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved; for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. x. 9, 10).

Of you, reader, we would affectionately ask, Are you making the same mistake as the "elder?" You might ridicule the poor, benighted Mormon, and be amazed at the semi-heathenism taught by his church, but do you, perhaps, trust in something just as hollow, when judged by the book of God?

Remember: penances; wrought-up repentance, consisting in peculiar frames, feelings, and renunciations; intellectual acquiescence to the truths of the Bible, miscalled faith; baptism, whether administered by Mormon elder or ordained clergyman; laying on of hands, or any other human rite or divinely prescribed ceremony, will avail nothing for you.

Christ, and Christ alone, is your only salvation. Discarding all else, fly, then, to Him. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts xvi. 31).

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# NOTE ON MORMON DOCTRINES

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IN the preceding paper it has been my aim not to follow all the devious errors of Mormonism, and seek to refute them, but rather to endeavor to show how opposed the system is to the *gospel* of the glory of the blessed God, which He has revealed in His Word.

It has been suggested, however, that a brief epitome of some of the more important doctrines of the sect, on other lines, might be helpful in serving as a warning to any who, allured by fair speeches and sophistical reasonings, are drifting towards its awful vortex.

The following statements can readily be proven to be part of the weird paganism of this dreadful quasi-religious cult, by examination of the more "advanced" of their publications, though some of them are often denied by the traveling "elders," whose business it is, not to alarm by making public the "depths of Satan," but to allure by presenting a creed as near like that of orthodox Christianity as possible. Nothing could be more misleading than the statement of the "doctrines of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" which is now being circulated by thousands all over the land. This was compiled by the assumed prophet Joseph Smith in the infancy of the movement, long before "present-day revelation" had introduced the many vagaries with which it abounds to-day.

The leading doctrines accepted among them to-day are, briefly, as follows:

They profess to believe in the Bible, but gain additional "light" from the "Book of Mormon," a collection of rubbish which one but needs to scan to see its utter absurdity and incongruity with the word of God. "The Book of Doctrine and Covenants," purporting to be a series of revelations, chiefly to Joseph Smith, is also considered inspired, as is "The Pearl of Great Price," which includes "The Book of Abraham," and other apocryphal works; while prophets and apostles abound who may at any time give forth further communications, all of equal authority with these.

They are really polytheist, and believe that there are many gods, but that all (save possibly the first—as to this their statements are conflicting) were at one time men, but gained their exaltation to divinity by their faithfulness in this state. It is the hope of each man to become a god eventually. Their gods are supposed to retain their human forms and functions.

It is in connection with this that polygamy comes in. This relationship is carried on eternally. The progeny of the gods and their numerous wives will constitute their "kingdom" in the ages to come. Woman's welfare depends on her being united to one of the faithful.

As to *this* world (to them there are many), they teach a Trinity, who administer its affairs. God and Christ are both said to have human bodies, parts, and passions; but the Holy Spirit is omnipresent, though of a material substance.

The preceding paper has outlined their teaching as to the salvation of the living. They also publicly pro-



claim salvation for the dead, to whom the gospel is being preached, and who can be saved if their friends on earth will be baptized for them.

As to eschatology, they have a system of prophetic teaching embodying an exceedingly carnal view of the Millennium, ushered in by the return of Christ to regather Israel, including the ten tribes, to a Zion in America (!), and to destroy all the enemies of "the saints." The dead will be raised, and will appear on the earth. Referring to this time, Parley Pratt says, in his "Voice of Warning," "Our father Adam will sit enthroned as the Ancient of Days," etc., ascribing the words of Dan. vii. 9, 10 to refer to him!

A final judgment will conclude all things; but no one will be eternally lost. There are three spheres, terrestrial, celestial, and *telestial*. In one of these all will eventually be found.

Such a system needs no attempt at refutation. It refutes itself. No child of God, who has at all apprehended the Cross, could be ensnared by it; but it is because many unwary and simple ones, anxious to be saved, but ignorant of God's way, are daily being entrapped by it, that this paper has been penned.

The Lord use it to deliver many from such "abominable idolatries" (1 Pet. iv. 5).

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# Christmas - -

O Night of Glory, when the star  
Lit all the Orient sky,  
When hill and valley, near and far,  
★ Rang back the angel's cry,  
When men saw heaven's bright portals ope  
With sounds of holy cheer—  
O night of glory! Night of hope!  
★ O Night of all the year.

To Him this day our prayers arise,  
Each soul its tribute pays:  
★ The precious myrrh of sacrifice,  
The incense sweet of praise,  
The glowing gold of sacred love  
That knows no stain of fear,  
★ These gifts we bring to Christ above  
This Day of all the year.

Give us the calm and tranquil soul,  
The loving, open heart,  
★ The life that sways to Thy control  
And dwells in Thee apart;  
The peace that makes life's thorny way  
Seem beautiful and clear:  
★ Grant us these boons on this Thy day,  
This Day of all the year.

# *There Was No Room in the Inn*

★ ★ ★ “And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger: because there was no room for them in the inn” (Lk. 2:7).

DOUBTLESS there seemed to be very good reasons, at least in the mind of the innkeeper, why it was impossible to entertain Joseph and Mary when they came to Bethlehem to be taxed. There must have been many other Bethlehemites who had hastened thither in order that they too might be properly enrolled. Probably many of these were much better able to pay for accommodations than the Nazareth carpenter and his young espoused wife and so they had to make the best of the only accommodation available, a cave, which was in all likelihood closely connected with the inn and which was ordinarily used as a stable. There in that humble place,



Him away from our heart's door? How many there are who are keeping Christmas, who have never yet found room for the Christ, the anniversary of whose nativity is observed on December 25 of each year. While no one knows exactly when Christ was born, yet the day set apart in memory of His birth is recognized throughout Christendom as speaking of the incarnation of God the Son, yet thousands will spend that day in unholy revels who are strangers to the blessed One who was born of a virgin mother in a Bethlehem stable and at last died for sinners on Calvary's cross.

THE commercialization of the Christmas season is one of the saddest and most significant signs of the times. Merchants, to whom Christ is a stranger, make much of His birth in order to attract purchasers and dispose of their merchandise. Myriads of gifts, costly or otherwise, are given and

exchanged by those who are absolutely indifferent to the offer of mercy extended to the lost by the God of all grace, and who have never received His unspeakable gift, whose advent they profess to honor.

NO ROOM IN THE INN of old and, in oh so many cases, no room in the heart today, for Him who created the universe, and yet deigns to dwell within the hearts of the humble and the contrite who turn to God in repentance and receive His gift in faith.

WHAT AN ETERNITY AWAITS THOSE who, throughout all their lives, refuse to make room for Him, the Holy One, who says, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." He has waited so long and knocked so loudly, and yet for

Him no room has been found. By and by it will be at His door the Christless will stand knocking and crying, "Lord, Lord, open to us," only to hear Him say from within, "I know you not." Surely, nothing could be more fitting at this time, when Christmas carols are sounding from almost every radio and Christmas music is being sung in ten thousand churches all over the land, than to throw wide open the heart's door and bid Him enter, whose coming in means eternal life and peace. Let it not be said of any of us that we have no room for Jesus.





# NOT WRATH, BUT RAPTURE

OR,

## WILL THE CHURCH PARTICIPATE IN THE GREAT TRIBULATION?

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### **I.—What is Meant by the Term, “The Great Tribulation?”**

**T**HE careful student of the prophetic Scriptures cannot fail to observe that in both the Old and New Testaments, the Spirit of God directs attention to a time of very special trial involving the pouring out of divine wrath upon men, known as “the great tribulation,” “the time of Jacob’s trouble,” “the coming hour of temptation,” “the day of the Lord,” and also designated by other striking terms. This specific period of judgment is clearly distinguished from the ordinary trials and tribulations to which the people of God have been subjected in all dispensations, and which are promised to the Church of God at the present time. “In the world,” said our blessed Lord, “ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” “We must,” declares the Apostle Paul, “through much tribulation enter the kingdom of God,” and speaking for all right-minded saints, he can say, “We glory in tribulation.” So long as Satan is the god of this world and saints of the Most High are in this scene, it cannot

be that there will be other than trial and tribulation to face. This arises from the very nature of things. The world as such is opposed to everything that is of the Spirit of God. The Christian's trials arise therefore from the adverse circumstances through which he is passing, like Israel of old journeying through a waste and howling wilderness. More than this, there is the direct opposition of the enemy: "All they that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." But there is one character of tribulation that God's children in this age will never have to know, and that is exposure to divine wrath.

"God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ." We look for His return as our Deliverer from the coming wrath. This is a principle of great importance when it comes to defining the Church's relationship to the great tribulation, when the vials of wrath will be poured out on guilty Christendom and apostate Judaism.

Many have taught in the past, and some still teach, that the Old Testament passages referring to the great tribulation were all fulfilled in the days of Israel's sufferings under the nations, after the fall of Jerusalem, particularly in the era of Antiochus Epiphanes, who is sometimes called the Old Testament Antichrist. But a careful examination of the Scriptures of the prophets having to do with this time of trial, and a comparison of these with New Testament declarations make this position absolutely untenable. Others have supposed that the great tribulation referred either to the days of persecution under pagan emperors of Rome for two bloody centuries, following the death of the Apostle Paul, or perhaps the even more fearful persecutions under the Papacy during the dark ages; but there are very definite

statements made by our Lord Jesus Christ Himself which positively negative any such view and make it evident that this solemn period of judgment is still in the future. Will the Church of God or any part of it go into or pass through this day of grief and sorrow? In order to answer this question aright, it will be necessary first of all to consider carefully a number of scriptures indicating the nature of and the time for the great tribulation.

So far as I have noticed, the first scripture that definitely speaks of this era is Deuteronomy 4: 26-31. This is part of the message which Moses gave to Israel on the plains of Moab ere they entered the land of Canaan, very shortly before their great leader resigned his responsibility and went up into Mount Nebo to be put to sleep by God until the day of the Lord's coming. He said to the people, as he warned them of the folly of departure from God: "I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto ye go over Jordan to possess it; ye shall not prolong your days upon it, but shall utterly be destroyed. And the Lord shall scatter you among the nations, and ye shall be left few in number among the heathen, whither the Lord shall lead you." These words we know have been literally fulfilled. For many centuries Israel has been scattered among the nations, and even though many of them have recently returned to Palestine, the day of their dispersion is not yet ended. This scattering of course was because of their sin and their violation of God's holy law. In verses 28, 29 Moses continued, saying, "And there ye shall serve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell. But if from thence thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find Him, if thou seek Him with all thy heart

and with all thy soul." In my judgment this last verse has never yet been fulfilled. Evidently it does not refer to the return from Babylon. It has to do with the final repentance of the nation when they will be brought back from among all the nations on the earth. The scattering referred to was not simply that which took place in the days of Nebuchadnezzar, but rather the worldwide dispersion following the destruction of Jerusalem forty years after the crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ. Never since that day have the people of Israel turned whole-heartedly unto God, and consequently they have not yet been restored to their land. The present movement is not a return to God but simply a natural awakening, leading many to go back to Palestine while still in unbelief. Such a return is elsewhere predicted in Scripture, but is not what is contemplated here. The circumstances which will result in the repentance of the nation are indicated in the verses that follow: "When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, even in the latter days, if thou turn to the Lord thy God, and shalt be obedient unto His voice; (for the Lord thy God is a merciful God;) He will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which He sware unto them" (30,31).

It seems clear that we have here the first definite mention of the coming tribulation. Certainly verse 30 does not refer to the age-long sorrows through which the people of Israel have passed, but to a definite set period of tribulation in "the latter days." This term, as any student of prophecy knows, refers to the closing days of God's dealings with this nation before they will be restored to Himself.

So far as I am aware there are no other clear references to this same period until we come into the Book

of Psalms. Many of these psalms give us experiences that Israel will be called to pass through in that time of distress and show us what the glorious outcome will be. But to attempt to develop the truth of this would take far more space than is at my disposal. Consequently, instead of dwelling on the testimony of the Psalms, I pass on to the prophets.

Out of many passages which we might quote from the book of the Prophet Isaiah, I select but two. In chapter 13: 6-13 we have a most graphic description of the day of the Lord's indignation. "Howl ye; for the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt; and they shall be afraid: pangs and sorrow shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth: they shall be amazed one at another; their faces shall be as flames. Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and He shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir. Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of hosts, and in the day of His fierce anger."

By "the land" here is of course meant, as throughout all the prophets, the land of Palestine, the home of God's earthly people. "He shall destroy the sinners out of it"

—this will be one result of the tribulation the nation will go through. The apostates will be destroyed but a remnant will turn to the Lord. Notice that there are certain supernatural events which must take place at that time, affecting, as our Lord Himself later indicated, the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof. The darkening of the sun and the shrouding of the moon are here definitely predicted. Keep these signs in mind for we shall come across them again. Not only will the people of Israel be punished in that day, but the judgments will fall on the world as such because of pride and arrogance. These verses give us a most vivid description of the end of our boasted civilization, when God is left out. They show us what this present evil world is hastening toward. They tell us what apostate Israel will have to endure and what unbelieving Gentiles will be obliged to go through.

We may get a little idea of at least part of the meaning of this prophecy if we remember what happened recently to the great Empire of Russia. How little there was of God for many years, and how corrupt and false the professing church! Evangelicals were terribly persecuted. Pride and arrogance prevailed, until God overthrew the ancient regime and permitted the awful conditions that have succeeded it, as if in answer to the sin and corruption of those who professed to own His Name. His people have suffered dreadfully in that tribulation but, be it observed, the wrath of God as such has not been poured out, nor have the saints known divine indignation.

Turn now to Isaiah 17: 4-11: "And in that day it shall come to pass, that the glory of Jacob shall be made thin, and the fatness of his flesh shall wax lean...that day shall a man look to his Maker, and his eyes shall

have respect to the Holy One of Israel. And he shall not look to the altars, the work of his hands, neither shall respect that which his fingers have made, either the groves, or the images. In that day shall his strong cities be as a forsaken bough, and an uppermost branch, which they left because of the children of Israel: and there shall be desolation. Because thou hast forgotten the God of thy salvation, and hast not been mindful of the Rock of thy strength, therefore shalt thou plant pleasant plants, and shalt set it with strange slips: in the day shalt thou make thy plants to grow, and in the morning shalt thou make thy seed to flourish: but the harvest shall be a heap in the day of grief and of desperate sorrow."

In verses 4-7 we see the remnant of Israel in the latter days, and in verses 8-10 the conditions that will prevail in the land of Palestine. Already we see everything working up toward this. Notice the striking prophecy of verse 10, where God tells the people that because of their long years of rebellion against Him, their land shall be denuded of trees, that just prior to the day of their great tribulation they shall plant that land with pleasant plants and shall set it with strange slips. It is a remarkable fact that in recent years many millions of plants and slips have been imported into and planted in the soil of Palestine. At the present moment the Jewish leaders are congratulating themselves that the day of their long trial is almost ended, and that their ancient patrimony will soon be again a land flowing with milk and honey. God has said, "In the day shalt thou make thy plant to grow, and in the morning shalt thou make thy seed to flourish: but the harvest shall be a heap in the day of grief and desperate sorrow." Whose grief and whose desperate sorrow? The answer to this

question will settle the problem that is before us. It is perfectly clear that in this passage God is speaking of Israel's apostasy and His dealings with them. When our blessed Lord was on the earth, Palestine was one of the most fruitful of lands. Josephus' account of the conditions prevailing in Galilee before the siege of Jerusalem is almost unbelievable, so productive was that land and so thickly populated. But, alas, they knew not the time of their visitation, and when the Saviour was rejected as Messiah, and His authority refused, God rejected the people and cast them out and blasted their land, and since then Palestine has been like a great desert, with here and there an oasis, unable to support a large population. The climate of that country has also been changed, chiefly because of the fact the large forests upon the Lebanon Mountains have been destroyed. The Turkish government but helped the desolation. The Turk never planted a tree where he cut one down, and in the last hundred years of his rule he put a tax on trees, which was so exorbitant that the people found it cheaper to cut down their orchards and groves than to pay this tax. But ever since the World War they have been busy planting the land with pleasant plants and setting it with strange slips. If we did not have the word of prophecy we might take it for granted that the new day of Israel's final blessing is dawning. But as we study what God has revealed, our hearts might well bleed as we realize what these poor Jews are going back to, and how little they understand that this, their hour of tribulation, is still in the future, how that they must pass through it ere they recognize the Messiah their fathers rejected.

Now let us turn to the prophet Jeremiah, chapter 30, and note particularly verses 4-9: "And these are the



words that the Lord spake concerning Israel and concerning Judah. For thus saith the Lord: We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? Wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? Alas, for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it. For it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him: but they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them."

Reading this chapter carefully and the one that follows, will give us many more particulars in regard to the subject that is before us. But what I particularly wish to stress here is the different name now given to the era of tribulation. It is called specifically "the time of Jacob's trouble," and it is important that we have this clearly in mind. It is not the time of the Church's trouble. As we have seen, we are having our time of trouble now. We have been enduring tribulation ever since the beginning of the Church's testimony here on earth, but the passage before us refers to something very different, a time of unprecedented distress which is called "Jacob's trouble." If Christian students of the Word would always distinguish carefully what prophecy has to say concerning the Jew, the Gentile, and the Church of God, it would not be difficult to clear up this entire subject. It is by confusing these three distinct classes that many strange unscriptural theories are foisted upon the people of God.

Observe that the time of Jacob's trouble is to be immediately followed by the repentance of the remnant and their deliverance from Gentile oppression, when once more they will serve the Lord their God and David their King, that is, when the true Son of David will be recognized as their Messiah and will be seated upon David's throne. David means "beloved," and God the Father has already designated the Lord Jesus Christ as His beloved Son in whom He is well pleased. He was refused as the Son of David when He came in grace the first time. He will be received in that very character when He returns in power and glory.

From many passages which we might quote in the Book of Ezekiel, I will confine myself to only one selection, found in chapter 20, verses 33-38: "As I live, saith the Lord God, surely with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out, will I rule over you: and I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out. And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face. Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord God. And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant: and I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against Me: I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel: and ye shall know that I am the Lord."

Note carefully that here too this time of fury, divine fury, poured out upon the people, is to be Israel's culminating experience immediately preceding their restoration

to the Lord, when He will purge from among them the rebels and those that transgress, and will bring the redeemed remnant out of the lands of the Gentiles into their own country and reveal Himself to them as the Shepherd of Israel. By no possible system of sound exegesis can these experiences be made to refer to the Church of God. Most definitely the Lord tells us why He will permit this time of trouble. It is to be a judgment on those in Israel who rebel against Him. It will be the time when He will separate the remnant from the rebels. He will cause that remnant to pass under the Shepherd's rod and will acknowledge them as His own flock.

The Book of Daniel, as we know, is the great prophecy of the times of the Gentiles and gives us Israel's experiences under the domination of the nations. One could pause over many passages, but we draw attention particularly to chapter 12, verses 1-4: "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever. But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased."

In Daniel's eleventh chapter God gives us a remarkable picture of His dealings with the nations, from the overthrow of the Persian Empire right on to the time

of the end immediately preceding Messiah's second coming. In that day Israel will be passing through a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time, but what will the result be? God says, "Thy people, (that is, of course, Daniel's people, the Jews) shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book," or those who are regenerated. For centuries they have been sleeping in the dust of the earth. Some take this literally. My own thought is, in common with many others, that it refers to their present condition as scattered among the Gentiles. But in this time of trouble, some shall awake to everlasting life, referring to the remnant, and some to shame and everlasting contempt, which takes in all who are apostate. This era of trouble is to prevail right on to the time of the end. Evidently the Spirit of God has in view that particular period spoken of by Moses as the tribulation of the latter days.

The Minor Prophets abound with awesome descriptions of this same day of distress, but we must content ourselves with two more Old Testament quotations. Notice Joel 3: 9-11: "Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles: Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up. Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning-hooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong. Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about: thither cause Thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord." It is the call of God to the heathen to come up into the land of Palestine for the great conflict of the latter days when Israel will be back in the land in unbelief. The fearful wars of that time will go on until the Lord Himself descends with a host designated here "Thy mighty ones." Who are these

mighty ones? If we had nothing else to guide, we might think of them as angels—and undoubtedly angels will be in His train, as many scriptures show—but we shall see as we go on, I believe, that these mighty ones are the saints of the past and present dispensations, who shall have been caught up to be with the Lord and glorified ere the great tribulation begins.

Zechariah in his last chapter describes the great Armageddon gathering, and tells us of the last siege of Jerusalem immediately preceding the Lord's return. Read carefully verses 1-4: "Behold, the day of the Lord cometh... Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle. And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south."

Here we have a wonderful description of the appearing of our Lord, answering undoubtedly to His coming with His mighty ones in the passage we have just noticed. And again it proves that the great tribulation does not refer to any past experiences that the Jews have gone through, nor yet to any experiences the Church has suffered, but to that time of Jacob's trouble which immediately precedes the revelation of Jesus Christ from heaven to set up His kingdom and reign over all the earth in righteousness.

From the Old Testament, then, we have learned that the tribulation will take place in the latter days of Israel's history; the people who will feel it most will be the Jews, but all the apostate nations of the Gentiles will

also share the afflictions; it will not be a time of mere providential judgments but a time when there will be terrific and startling signs in the heavens and on earth, and men will be obliged to acknowledge that God Himself is dealing with them in His wrath and great indignation. All past tribulations have been merely natural and providential, as for instance in the days of the great war; but this time of trouble will be characterized by supernatural events that will add to the horrors under which men will live, so that they will desire to die, and death shall flee from them. We have also seen, I trust, that this tribulation goes right on to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ with His mighty ones to rule with the rod of iron. During the trial, a remnant of Israel will be separated from the apostate part of the nation and will turn in repentance to the Lord and be led to recognize Him when He comes. This remnant He will own as the true Israel and in them "all Israel shall be saved." They will be the handful of corn on the top of the mountains, the gleanings of the olives on the topmost boughs that will eventually "blossom and bud and fill the place of the whole earth with fruit."

Now let us turn to the New Testament and see if we can get any further light on this day of grief and desperate sorrow. Look first at Matthew 24. In this portion of the Kingdom Gospel, our Lord portrays the conditions that will prevail on earth right up to His second coming. He does not, however, speak definitely of the Church, which is His Body, or of any testimony such as we now know. This great prophecy was given before the revelation of the mystery and it is fully in keeping with the older predictions. He shows us the conditions that will prevail in the land of Palestine where there will be a remnant who cleave to Him and love His Name

immediately preceding His second coming. In verse 15 He indicates the beginning of a time of very special trial "when ye shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place." This carries us back to Daniel 12, and is clearly the starting-point of the great tribulation, which He describes in verses 16-29: "Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains: let him which is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house: neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: for then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened. Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, He is in the desert; go not forth: behold, He is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together. Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken."

Note particularly that all of this is Jewish, and all refers to the land of Palestine, excepting of course as

the Gentile nations are linked with the conflict of that day. Here we have the definite name given to this period of trial, "the great tribulation," and that by the Lord Himself. That it is exactly the same period spoken of by the prophets from Moses to Malachi, is clear in the verses that follow, where we read: "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (verses 30, 31).

This makes it very plain that the great tribulation has never taken place in the past either in connection with Israel's experiences or those of the Church. It could not refer to Israel's sufferings under Antiochus Epiphanes, for our Lord speaks of it as in the future. It cannot refer to their sufferings in the days of Titus and Vespasian, for those experiences did not culminate in the return of the Son of God. Neither can it by any possibility be fitted in to the experiences of the Church, either in the days of the pagan emperors or the papal persecution, for both of these are long since in the past and the Son of Man has not yet returned. His coming definitely puts an end to the great tribulation. We can only conclude therefore that it is still in the future and the scriptures we have gone over show it has to do with the future of Israel, not of the Church.



## II.—The Coming Hour of Temptation

IT might be well to compare the testimony given in Matthew's Gospel with the records of both Mark and Luke. In Mark 13: 14-27 we have a passage almost parallel to the one in Matthew, a careful reading of which only confirms what we have already seen, namely, that the great tribulation is still in the future, and that it closes with the Son of Man coming in the clouds with power and great glory.

In Luke 21 it is evident that considerable time must elapse between the overthrow of Jerusalem under Titus and this coming of the Son of Man. Jerusalem's destruction is predicted in verses 20-24: "And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

Notice particularly that following the downfall of the Holy City and the desolation of Palestine, Jerusalem's treading down, or subjection to the nations, is to last until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. This expression, "the times of the Gentiles," is not used anywhere else

in Scripture, though a similar term is found in Ezekiel 30: 3: "For the day is near, even the day of the Lord is near, a cloudy day; it shall be the time of the heathen." The heathen, of course, are the Gentiles. Ezekiel is referring there to the triumph of Nebuchadnezzar over Israel and the powers to which they turn for help, Egypt and Ethiopia. The times of the Gentiles began with Nebuchadnezzar. They go on until the return of the Son of Man, who will come as the stone that smites the feet of the image of Gentile supremacy, breaking it to pieces and scattering the dust to the four winds of the earth, then becoming a great mountain and filling the whole world. The actual circumstances immediately preceding this coming are given in Luke 21: 25-27: "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory."

The signs here referred to are the supernatural events which we have already seen will take place during the great tribulation, while the conditions set forth in verse 26 shows us the effects of these things on the hearts of men. This period of tribulation culminates in the shaking of the powers of heaven and then will be seen the Son of Man descending in a cloud to take His kingdom and reign in righteousness.

A careful consideration of many scriptures, particularly in the Old Testament prophets, would show us that when the Lord thus returns, He will smite apostate Israel and the rebellious Gentile world with judgment. They will be destroyed at His presence. On the other:

hand, a remnant of Israel will not only be spared from judgment, but will welcome Him as their long-looked-for King Messiah, and in addition to these, a great multitude of Gentiles will be saved from the wrath which will fall upon the worshippers of the Beast, of which we will speak later, and will form the nucleus of our Lord's kingdom on this earth for a thousand years. This is the predicted program for the coming of the Son of Man.\*

The term "the coming of the Son of Man" never refers to that particular aspect of the second advent for which the Church as such is taught to look. When our Lord addresses Israel as in the days of His flesh, He uses this expression over and over again. In John's Gospel, chapter 14, our Lord announces an aspect of His return which is not definitely depicted in the Synoptics. He speaks of coming to receive His own to be with Himself. This is the first clear word we have in the New Testament regarding what is commonly called the *Rapture*. This particular aspect is always distinguished from the coming of the Son of Man as such. With the above facts in mind, let us now turn to Revelation 3:10,11. Here writing to the angel of the church in Philadelphia, our Lord says: "Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I will also keep thee from the hour of temptation (of trial), which shall come upon all the world (habitable earth), to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." These letters to the seven

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\* May I refer the inquiring reader to my books on prophetic study, "Lectures on the Book of Daniel" (60c. and \$1.25) and "Lectures on the Book of Revelation" (75c. and \$1.50), which may be obtained from the Publishers.

churches set forth, as is very well known, "the things which are," that is, the conditions prevailing in the professing Church of God on earth throughout the present dispensation. Always until our Lord returns, churches will be found in the moral and spiritual condition of those depicted here. Many are also familiar with the fact that in a very striking way these seven letters set forth the characteristic features of seven distinct periods of Church history from apostolic days until the end of her testimony in this scene. Therefore the warnings and exhortations and promises in these seven letters are for all the Church of God throughout the dispensation. Addressing those who are shown to be genuine, who have a little strength and have kept Christ's Word and not denied His Name, which is the least that could be said of any true believer, we have this very definite promise that such will be kept from the coming hour of trial, which is to fall upon the entire habitable earth to try the earth-dwellers. The term "habitable earth" is a translation of the Greek word *oikoumene*, which was used in apostolic days to distinguish that part of the world which was in subjection to the Roman Empire and which is the proper sphere of prophecy, from all the rest of the world whose inhabitants were opprobriously denominated Barbarians. It is on this Roman earth that the vials of divine wrath will be poured out in all their intensity in the days of the great tribulation. Those who will be particularly exposed to these judgments are distinguished as "dwellers on the earth." This expression is used again and again in the Book of Revelation, and a careful consideration of every passage in which it is found will make it plain, I believe, that it refers not simply to people who live upon this globe but to those who have despised the heavenly calling and whose hopes and

affections are all centered upon this earth. In other words, they are the same as those spoken of in Philip-  
pians 3, who have spurned the heavenly calling and who  
"mind earthly things."

Now this promise expressly declares that real believers of this dispensation, that is, the true Church, will be kept from this coming hour of trial. They have not been kept from the frequent trials and tribulations to which Christians throughout the past centuries have been exposed, but they will be kept from this particular hour.

It is very evident that the Spirit of God in so speaking was using a term which Christians generally were expected to understand. If any ask, "What is the hour of temptation or trial which is coming upon the whole habitable earth, from which we shall be kept?" the answer naturally would be, that hour of trial so frequently spoken of elsewhere in Scripture. We have seen something of what the Old Testament and also the four Gospels have to say concerning it. Is it referred to in the Epistles, and if so, in what way?

First Thessalonians is the earliest of Paul's letters which the Spirit of God has preserved for the edification of the Church. In this letter the Second Coming of Christ is presented as the imminent hope of the saints. No one can read the latter part of chapter 4 thoughtfully, without seeing that the Spirit of God intended the Church to live in the daily expectation of our Lord's return. Now no one could possibly live in the daily expectation of the coming of the Son of Man as set forth in the Synoptic Gospels, unless he knew that he was in the very closing days of the great tribulation. Consequently the hope of the Lord's return set forth in Thessalonians must of necessity be a different thing to the expectation of His coming to set up His kingdom,

and a careful consideration of the passage referred to only serves to make this clearer. It is the Lord's coming *for His saints* whereas the other is His coming *with them*.

Now in chapter 1 in this epistle, Paul speaks of the conversion of the Thessalonians, and the testimony they were giving to the world outside, and says: "For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come" (1: 9, 10). The last clause, it is generally conceded, does not exactly represent what the apostle wrote. The Revised Version translates it, "Even Jesus who delivereth us from the wrath to come." J. N. Darby renders it, "Jesus, our Deliverer from the coming wrath." Dr. Young is very explicit. He translates it, "Jesus who is rescuing us from the anger that is coming." The point is, it is not simply that we are looking for our Lord as the One who has delivered us from eternal wrath, but we look for Him as the One who is coming to snatch us away from the wrath that is soon to fall upon this earth. This exactly accords with the promise in Revelation 3: 10. And it is in this way that the Church will be kept from that hour of trial. Before the judgments fall the Lord Jesus will descend from Heaven with a shout, the dead in Christ will be raised, and the living saints changed, and we shall be snatched away, caught up to be with Him before the indignation is poured out upon this guilty scene.

Turn now to 2 Thessalonians, chapter 2. As we read it carefully, let us bear in mind what has already been before us, and then in order to get the viewpoint both of the apostle himself, and of those to whom he was writing at that particular time, it will be well to con-

sider certain facts which may be clearly deduced from a careful study of the entire letter. It is evident that the coming of the Lord had a large place in the hearts and minds of these particular saints, and some among them had become unbalanced upon the subject, and were teaching that they were already entering into the time of great tribulation. They believed that the day of the Lord was practically upon them. They were endeavoring to substantiate this teaching in all probability by the use of a forged letter purporting to come from the Apostle Paul, and the advocates of this system declared that the Spirit had revealed these things to them. Therefore the saints were becoming unsettled, losing the blessedness of the hope of the Lord's return for His own; they feared they were already entering the great tribulation, and that the next thing would be the coming of the Son of Man.

Notice carefully verses 1, 2: "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand." The Revised Version reads, "As that the day of the Lord is just at hand." The best manuscript authority authenticates this. The day of Christ is not the same thing as the day of the Lord. The day of Christ refers to the time when believers will stand in their glorified bodies at Christ's judgment-seat; but the day of the Lord is the time when His judgments will be poured out on the earth, and He will descend and take the kingdom. But the apostle reminds these believers of what he had already written in his previous epistle. They were not to look for the day of the Lord but for the return of our Saviour to deliver them from

the coming wrath. So He pleads with them in view of these very facts, that, "by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and by our gathering together unto Him," not to be troubled or distressed, no matter what assertions others might make in regard to the day of trouble being already upon them. The coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together unto Him must take place before that time of distress could begin. This is exactly what we insist upon today, we who do not believe that the Church will go through the great tribulation. Our daily expectation is the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together unto Him. This must precede the judgments. The day of the Lord cannot begin until after it takes place.

Let me use an illustration for which I am indebted to another, though I cannot now recall to whom. Suppose that a great city is in rebellion against its rightful sovereign, but there are in that city certain loyalists who grieve over the defection of the rest, and are faithful to their king. Word comes that the offended monarch and his great army are on the way to the city to subdue or destroy it. Naturally the loyal citizens are anxious and troubled. They do not want to be exposed to the fire of the royal army, and they manage to get word out to the king declaring their loyalty and asking his consideration. Word comes back that his standard will be planted on a certain mountain outside the city before the bombardment begins. When that standard is seen on the mountain, all the loyalists are instructed to leave the city under protection of the king, who will make special arrangements to guard them from destruction. By-and-by the van of the army appears. Soon more and more troops arrive and surround the doomed city. Great guns are being placed at advantageous points on the



outlying hills and all preparations for the shelling of the city are being made. Rumors of all sorts are being circulated. The bombing is to begin tonight, or tomorrow, or the next day. The loyalists are becoming nervous and anxious, but in some way a message reaches them from without, saying, "I beseech you by the coming of the king, the lifting up of the standard on the mountain, and your gathering together unto him, be not troubled because of what you see in the way of preparation," and he goes on to assure them that not one shell will fall upon the city until they are safely gathered to him without. And so their hearts are quieted.

One day the standard is uplifted. A regiment of cavalry comes careering over the plain, and at the same moment the loyalists acting by preconcerted arrangement, leave the city and are immediately protected by the royal horsemen. Soon they gather about the king, prostrating themselves at his feet and attesting their faithfulness. Then the attack on the city begins.

Like all human illustrations, I realize this one does not fully picture the conditions that are to prevail at the Lord's return, but it may at least help to make clear what the apostle means in these opening verses, and it will prepare us to understand what follows. "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come except there come a falling away (the apostasy) first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition." The "day" of course is the day of trial and distress that we have been occupied with, but it will not come until the apostasy is fully manifest. Complete apostasy there cannot be so long as the Church of God is in this world. No matter how much there may be in the way of unfaithfulness to Christ and His truth, our Lord has declared, "Upon this rock will I build My

Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." So long as the Church is in the world, it is being led in His triumph. Individual apostates there may be, but complete apostasy there cannot be. But when the Church has been caught up to be with Christ, then the apostasy in all its fulness will arrive, and out of that condition of things the son of perdition will arise, "who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God" (ver. 4). This is the sinister character whose awful features are dimly seen in both Testaments as one of the dominant actors in the last days. While not for one moment condoning the abominations of the Papacy, it is not logically possible to link this personage with that system as a whole, nor with any individual Pope of the past or present. The Popes at their worst have all professed to act as vicars of Christ. They have not exalted themselves above all that is called God or that is worshipped. But the man of sin will be an absolutely self-deified atheist. He will recognize no God but himself. His rise to power is evidently linked with the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place, spoken of by Daniel and referred to by our Lord, as the true starting-point of the great tribulation.

In verses 6 to 10 we are told of One who hinders this full manifestation of evil until the set time appointed of God. "And now ye know what withholdeth (hindereth) that he might be revealed in his (own) time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only He who now letteth (hindereth) will let (hinder), until He be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked (one) be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the

brightness of His coming: even he, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved."

There has been a great deal of controversy about this passage. Some claim that the hinderer is Satan who has his place in the heavens until after the rapture of the Church, and then he shall be taken out of the way. Others insist that this hinderer is orderly government, and so long as orderly government prevails these things cannot take place. Some of the early fathers thought the hinderer was the Roman Empire, and that Paul dared not put upon paper just what was in his mind lest he expose the Christians to the charge of plotting the downfall of the existing government. They supposed that verse 6 referred to some private information which he had given to the Thessalonians when he was with them, which had to do with this subject. But let us remember that this letter, like every other epistle in the New Testament, was written not for the local believers only to whom it was addressed, but for all Christians during the entire dispensation. Therefore verse 6 is addressed to believers everywhere, who ought to be capable of understanding it, if they are at all familiar with their Bibles. "Ye know what hindereth that he (that is, the man of sin) might be revealed in his (own) time." No matter who the Christian is who holds this letter in his hand as he reads these words, he should be able to answer, if he is acquainted with the Word, "Yes, I do know who it is that hindereth the full manifestation of iniquity. There is only one answer possible and that is, of course, the Holy Spirit." What Christian is there who would think of any other hindering power in such a connection? In

both Testaments this is the very province and work of the Spirit of God. He causeth the wrath of man to praise Him and the remainder of wrath He doth restrain (Ps. 76: 10). "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him" (Isa. 59: 19). He is working in the Church at the present time convicting the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. Moreover, His presence in the Church continues as long as that Church is here, for our Lord promises, "When He is come He shall abide with you forever." How then will He ever be taken out of the way? Only by the fulfilment of 1 Thessalonians 4, the return of the Lord and our being caught up to meet Him in the air. This is the tremendous event which will clear the way for that time of trouble from which the Church of God is to be kept.

There is one other passage that deals with the rapture, and that is 1 Corinthians 15: 50-58: "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast,

unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

There are two aspects of the coming kingdom, a heavenly and an earthly. Both together are called "The kingdom of Heaven," but the saints of this and past ages will not live here on the earth during the kingdom age, but their home-city will be the New Jerusalem above. This is called the kingdom of the Father. "Then shall the righteous shine forth," says our Lord, "in the kingdom of your Father." The earthly saints will live here in this world in natural bodies. This is spoken of as the kingdom of the Son of Man. The apostle is referring to the heavenly kingdom when he says, "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." All who have part in the heavenly side of the kingdom will have glorified bodies in that day. The manner in which this will be brought about is given us in the verses that follow. "We shall not all sleep" (that is, we shall not all die), "but we shall all be changed," or transformed. This will take place in one moment in the briefest possible period of time at the last trump, that is, the trumpet that closes up the present dispensation, at the sounding of which the dead will be raised incorruptible and the living changed. This is in exact accord with what we have already seen in 1 Thessalonians 4. Some have endeavored to link the last trump of verse 52 with the seventh trumpet of the Book of Revelation. But it should be remembered that the Book of Revelation was not in existence when the apostle wrote his letters, nor did it come into existence until many years afterwards. Therefore, he could not possibly be referring to anything in that book. Furthermore, it is perfectly clear that this

last trump is the same as the trump of God in 1 Thesalonians 4, which is an altogether different thing to the trumpet of an angel. It has been pointed out by others that the term seems to be a military one, and refers to a signal used in the Roman Army to set the legions in motion. At the first trump tents were struck, at the second trump they fell into line, at the last trump they marched away. We are waiting for the last trump when we will not march nor fly, but be caught up to be with the Lord in the air, and so we shall be kept from the hour of temptation which is coming on all the earth.

### **III.—What Saints Will be in the Great Tribulation?**

**I**T is very evident from the Word of God that certain saints will be found on earth in the days of the great tribulation, many of whom will be called upon to suffer martyrdom for the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, others being preserved in life through this entire period to enter into the kingdom to be set up on earth. Because of this, it has naturally been concluded that these are necessarily members of the Church, the Body of Christ. Many, of course, think of the Church as the cognomen whereby the entire family of faith from Adam to the end of the millennium is designated. If one takes this ground of course there can be only one answer to the question, "Will the Church or any part of it go through the great tribulation?" for certainly many members of the household of faith will have to endure great suffering

during that time of trouble. But if one has learned to distinguish clearly from Scripture between new birth, common to all children of God in every dispensation, and membership in the Body of Christ which belongs alone to the saints of this present age from Pentecost to the Rapture, it should not be difficult to distinguish the saints who will have part in the tribulation from those who will be caught up ere it begins. But because many believers are not clear as to this distinction, I think it well to go into it somewhat fully, and in order to do so, I take the liberty to quote from an earlier work of mine entitled, "*Who Will Be Saved in the Coming Period of Judgment?*"\* part of which is included in the discussion here.

First, then, let it be noted that Old Testament prophecy *never* refers to this dispensation in which we live (extending from Pentecost to the Lord's coming for His own), save in a most indefinite way, as, for instance, in Daniel 9: 26. From Moses to Malachi, Scripture is mainly occupied with one nation, Israel (Amos 3: 2; Deut. 7: 6; Ps. 147: 19, 20), and the hope of that nation, namely, the raising up of the Prophet (Deut. 18: 15), Priest (Ps. 110: 4; Zech. 6: 13), and King (Isa. 32; Ps. 2: 6), who is to bring them into everlasting blessing as a people (Ps. 132: 11-18; Isa. 35: 10; 51: 11; 61: 7), though not until they have been born again (Ezek. 36: 24-30).

The Gentiles will share in that blessing (Isa. 56: 6; 65: 1), but not as on the same footing with Israel; rather in subjection to them (Isa. 14: 1-3; 60: 3-5; 62: 2, 3).

Ere the ushering in of that day of Jehovah's power and Messiah's glory, however, the prophets predicted the

rejection of the looked-for Redeemer by Israel to whom He came (Isa. 53), and in consequence Israel is set aside by God (Zech. 7: 13, 14), while the rejected Messiah takes His place in the heavens on Jehovah's throne (Ps. 110: 1), which He will occupy until the future repentance of the people (Hos. 5: 15). This setting aside of Israel, however, is not final, as the thirtieth and thirty-first chapters of Jeremiah, with many other portions of the Word, plainly declare. But before their restoration to divine favor and the land of Palestine, they must pass through a short period of unequaled persecution and chastisement, called "the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. 30: 7). At the close of this time they will be ready to acknowledge the Crucified as their Lord, and will "mourn for Him as one mourning for his only son" (Zech. 12: 10-14; 13: 6, 7). In the darkest hour of their sorrow, when Jerusalem is compassed about with armies and they are in direst distress, He will appear as their Deliverer and to the destruction of their enemies, after which the tabernacle of David will be raised up and the reign of righteousness ushered in (Zech. 14; Amos 9: 8-15).

Thus far the Old Testament. Turning now to the New, we find many new data introduced, without which the present working of the Spirit of God in the world would be inexplicable. In Romans 11 we are told that upon the breaking off of the natural branches (Israel) from the tree of promise, wild branches (Gentiles) are introduced in their place. In other words, Israel's rejection has but made way for unforetold grace to be shown to the nations, though Old Testament prophecy of blessing to the heathen can be quoted as proof that such grace is not in collision with their final blessing. This special work among the Gentiles is not to go on forever though; for if these continue not in divine goodness, they too



shall be cut off and the natural branches grafted in again, for God is able.

God, then, is doing a work, unmentioned in the Jewish oracles, during the time that His earthly people are "Lo-ammi" ("Not My people," Hos. 1: 9), unacknowledged by Him; and "blindness in part is happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in" (Rom. 11: 25). This is one of the "mysteries," one of the secret things (Deut. 29: 29), till now unrevealed. The Lord Jesus confirms this (but rather from the political side) in His prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem, the long period of desolation and Gentile supremacy following it, and, finally, the end in His personal appearing. Luke 21: 24 records: "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles *until* the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

This connects us again with Daniel 9, where we get the great prophecy of the "seventy weeks." A lengthy exposition of this passage cannot be attempted here, but we briefly notice the main points. From the course of time, seventy weeks (or heptads) of years (note the periods before the prophet's mind in verse 2), making in all 490 years, are "determined," or "cut off," and given to Daniel's people—the Jewish nation.

Ere this period of time expires six important events will have taken place: first, transgression will be finished; second, an end will be made of sins; third, atonement (rather than *reconciliation*) will be made for iniquity; fourth, everlasting righteousness will be brought in; fifth, vision and prophecy will be sealed up, or finished, *i.e.*, all fulfilled; and sixth, the most holy, or holy of holies, of the millennial temple at Jerusalem will be anointed (see Ezek., chaps. 40-48).

The seventy weeks are divided into three unequal periods: First, seven weeks, or forty-nine years; second,

sixty-two weeks, or 434 years; third, one week, or seven years. During the first seven weeks, "the strait times" (see *margin*), the city and wall of Jerusalem were to be rebuilt. The date from which to count is found in Nehemiah 2, when a "commandment went forth to restore and build Jerusalem." The sixty-two weeks seem to have immediately followed, and ended in the coming of Messiah. After the conclusion of this period He was cut off and had nothing, but by this atonement was made. Then comes in the present long interval of Jerusalem's treading down. The city is destroyed, as our Lord foretold also, and "even unto the *end* shall be war," until one arises who confirms a covenant with the mass of the Jews for the last final week. Clearly, then, this week is still future. The prophetic clock stopped at Calvary. It will not start again till "the fulness of the Gentiles be come in."

The present is a timeless epoch, parenthetically introduced between the 69th and 70th week, in which God is taking out from among the Gentiles a people for His Name (Acts 15: 14). Not that He has utterly given up the Jew now, but both Jew and Gentile stand on one footing; "There is no difference, for all have sinned" (Rom. 3: 22, 23). Both alike are saved through faith in Christ, and all such are made members of the one Body, the Church, and by the Holy Ghost united to the Lord Jesus Christ as Head in Heaven, another mystery hitherto unrevealed. (See Rom. 16: 25-28; 1 Cor. 12; Eph. 4; Col. 1: 24-29.) This began with the baptism of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2; 1 Cor. 12: 13). It will be completed at the coming of the Lord to call His Church to be forever with Himself, an event which may take place at any moment (1 Thess. 4: 15-18; 1 Cor. 15: 51-54; 2 Thess. 2: 1). Then the long-delayed

seventieth week will begin to run its course. At its conclusion Daniel's prophecy (as all other millennial prophecies) will be entirely fulfilled. Atonement was made for iniquity after the expiration of the sixty-ninth week. Everlasting righteousness will be brought in at the end of the seventieth.

This brief period, however, will be one of judgment throughout, and that threefold. It will include judgment on apostate Christendom, on Israel, and on the nations at large. It is to be the awful result of the rejection of the Prince of Peace.

The Book of Revelation from chapter four to nineteen is occupied entirely with its solemn events. The saints—of all prior dispensations, as well as the Church—are seen enthroned in heaven as the twenty-four elders who have been redeemed with the blood of the Lamb (chap. 5) at the beginning of the week. They ride forth as the "armies of Heaven" with "the Word of God" at His glorious appearing at the close. The last three years and a half will be especially the time when Israel shall receive "of the Lord's hand double for all her sins" (Isa. 40: 2), the "time of Jacob's trouble" of Jeremiah 30: 7 and Daniel 12: 1, and the "great tribulation" of Matthew 24 and Revelation 7: 14. The covenant-breaking prince of Daniel 9 is doubtless the Beast, the head of the Roman Empire, who makes a league with the wilful king of chapter 11: 36-39—the Antichrist of prophecy (1 John 2: 18), the idol shepherd of Zechariah 11: 15-17, who will "come in his own name," as foretold by the Lord Jesus in John 5: 43, and be received by the mass of the Jews as Messiah, but who will become the cruel persecutor of a faithful company designated as "the remnant" (Isa. 11: 11; Ezek. 6: 8; Rev. 12: 17, etc.).

When we turn to the study of the Book of the Revelation (chap. 7), we read there of 144,000 out of all the tribes of Israel, and a numberless white-robed multitude of spared Gentiles who will follow the Lamb wheresoever He goeth, and who are said to come up out of the great tribulation and to have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Many take it for granted that this is a heavenly company, and one is not surprised at that, for the language used is so nearly like that which we find later on in connection with the saints in the new Jerusalem. But a careful comparison of this chapter with a part of Isaiah 49 seems to make it very clear that this great multitude really represents the nucleus of the Kingdom to be set up in this world at the time when our Lord returns and the days of Heaven prevail on the earth. In other words, it refers to heavenly conditions in this world. In Isaiah 49: 8-13, we read: "Thus saith the Lord, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages; that thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places. They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for He that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall He guide them. And I will make all My mountains a way, and My highways shall be exalted. Behold, these shall come from far: and lo, these from the north and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim. Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the Lord hath comforted His people, and will have mercy

upon His anointed." Notice that there is no question here of resurrection or the peopling of the heavenly Jerusalem. This entire prophecy has to do with the resurrection of Israel and the blessing of the Gentiles through them on the earth in a coming day. The language of verse ten is almost identical with that of Revelation 7: 16. Who then are these saints?

First, we must consider the 144,000. There has been a great deal of idle speculation regarding this company. Some see in them a picture of what they call a "first-fruits rapture," linking this passage with Revelation 14, where the 144,000 are seen standing with the Lamb on Mt. Zion. And so in many places, the teaching has become current that a select group of believers will be raptured before the great tribulation, while the rest will have to pass through it. The 144,000 are supposed to represent this select group, and the great multitude, the majority of the Church who will be purified in the fires of the great tribulation. Needless to say, Scripture knows nothing of any such selective rapture. The Word of God is perfectly plain, "Christ the firstfruits, afterward they that are Christ's at His coming." And again, "We which are alive and remain shall be caught up together." There is no hint of any division in the Church of God, the Body of Christ. All are saved by grace, all are alike made "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." The rapture is never presented as reward for special devotedness, but is preliminary to the judgment-seat of Christ, where we shall all stand to receive our rewards. We will be in our glorified bodies when we appear at that great tribunal. This could not be true if only a special group were raptured before the tribulation.

It is remarkable and almost amusing, if it were not so sad, as indicating the blindness of so many who ought to know better, to observe the way various sects and systems seek to identify themselves with the 144,000. According to the Seventh-day Adventists, these are those who keep the commandments perfectly. The Russellites insist that they are a special class of overcomers who will be exalted to the divine nature, whereas others will be saved on a lower plane. Various Pentecostal groups declare that they are those who have been baptized with the Spirit and speak in tongues, or are characterized by other remarkable gifts.

But what are the facts? First, we have the vision (Rev. 7: 1-3), and then (verse 4) the interpretation. The 144,000 are out of all tribes of the children of Israel and represent therefore that remnant which will turn to the Lord after the Church has been caught up, in accordance with Romans 11: 25, "Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." In the book of Daniel, and in many parts of the prophetic Scriptures, we find this remnant distinguished from the mass. They are the wise who understand. They are the gleanings in the day of Jehovah's wrath, who will be recognized by Him as His own. They are sealed for preservation in view of the coming kingdom, before the dreadful storm of the great tribulation is permitted to break upon the earth. In chapter 14 we see them as a victorious company who have safely emerged from that storm, and form what we might call the bodyguard of the Lamb, when He returns to Mt. Zion. It is evident that they will be a witnessing company and will carry the gospel of the kingdom to millions who have never heard and rejected the message of grace. As a result of their testimony, we see the great multitude

of Gentiles brought to a knowledge of Christ and cleansed by His precious blood. Isaiah 66: 18-21 is very instructive in this connection: "For I know their works and their thoughts: it shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come, and see My glory. And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal, and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard My fame, neither have seen My glory; and they shall declare My glory among the Gentiles. And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to My holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the Lord, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord. And I will also take of them for priests and for Levites, saith the Lord." Here we have God dealing in grace with Israel and the Gentile nations during the time of the great tribulation and just before He sets up His glorious kingdom here on the earth.

We are told in Daniel 12: 3, "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." This, as the first verse of the same chapter shows us, has to do with their testimony in the time of trouble yet to come, but Daniel has told us, "At that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." I quote again from the work previously referred to:

"The hour of their darkest trouble and deepest sorrow will result in the elect among them returning to the Lord. The 144,000 of Revelation 7 picture to us those who will say, 'Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for He

hath torn, and He will heal us; He hath smitten, and He will bind us up' (Hos. 6: 1). Zion's sore travail shall result in a great bringing forth of children, as predicted in Micah 5: 3 and Isa. 66: 8. We quote the latter passage: 'Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed she brought forth her children.' The verses following are deserving also of special notice in this connection. See, too, Zechariah 12 and 13.

"And so the 'blindness in part' is to be done away, the 'fulness of the Gentiles' having come in, as shown also in Hosea 3: 4, 5. 'For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim: afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days.' This is true not of the nation as a whole (see Zech. 13: 8, 9; Isa. 24: 13; also Ezek. 20: 31-44), but of the remnant. The mass will be destroyed for their apostasy. The remnant will be acknowledged as the nation, and 'so all Israel shall be saved' (Rom. 11: 26). To be of the sons of Jacob even, will not ensure an opportunity of grace. None who refuse the truth now, whether Jew or Gentile, can be saved then."

In Matthew 25 we have the judgment of the living nations at the Lord's return. This is to be distinguished from the judgment of the Great White Throne. The former is pre-millennial, and the latter is post-millennial. We read: "When the Son of Man shall come in His glory and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory, and before Him shall be gath-



ered all nations." Notice there is no word of people here being raised from the dead, as at the final judgment; but we see the living nations gathered before Him, and a separation is made according to the treatment afforded those whom the Lord calls "My brethren." Linking this with the passages we have already considered, it would seem to be clear that the "brethren" here referred to, are His brethren after the flesh, the remnant of Israel. Those who enter into the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world, are the Gentiles who received these brethren and heeded their message. These are the ones who inherit the millennial kingdom.

Those who are martyred under the Beast and the Antichrist in that day, will be raised from the dead when the Lord descends to take the kingdom, and will thus form the last cohort of the first resurrection. Notice the order indicated in Revelation 20: 4-6. First, John says, "I saw thrones and sitters upon them, and judgment was given to them." These are undoubtedly identified with the saints who are raised at the rapture before the tribulation. Then John mentions another class: "And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the Word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received the mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." These are the martyrs of the tribulation period. They have their part in the heavenly side of the kingdom. As to the unsaved, we are told in verse 5, "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection." Verse 6 includes the entire company who have part in the various cohorts of the first resurrection: "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the

second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years."

It is plain then that there will be saints on the earth during the great tribulation, but they are not members of the Body of Christ, as that Body is now constituted by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. They will be individual believers, as in Old Testament times, and will through grace be enabled to witness for Christ in that day of great distress. They will share in the kingdom and enjoy the blessing of the Lord in a wonderful way, but they are not included in the Body of Christ which occupies a distinct place through all the ages to come.

#### **IV.—The Blessed Hope**

**A**S one thoughtfully reads the words of our Lord Jesus recorded in the early verses of John 14, and the teaching given in the Pauline Epistles in regard to the hope of the Church, it becomes increasingly evident that there is not the least hint that believers of this dispensation were to look forward to a long series of events preceding the return of the Lord Jesus to raise the dead in Christ and change the living and take them to Himself in the Father's House. This blessed hope is always presented as imminent, which it could not be, if one had to suppose that the destruction of and then revival of the Roman Empire, the rise of the Antichrist, and the great tribulation, must precede that

glorious event. Yet there are other scriptures that very distinctly show, as we have seen, that there will be saints on the earth when these conditions prevail; but I trust it has already been made clear that they will not belong to the Church, the Body of Christ.

There are in fact two distinct stages of our Lord's return presented in the New Testament. He is coming *for* His saints. This is the rapture which precedes the great tribulation. He is going to be *manifested* with all His saints when He descends to exercise judgment on those who have persisted in rejecting His grace, and when He will set up His glorious kingdom to reign in righteousness over this world. In other words, while the Old Testament and the four Gospels, together with other scriptures, plainly predict Christ's second coming to establish His kingdom on this earth, it is part of the mystery hidden from past ages that when He comes He will have with Him a Bride to share His throne, as well as a host of other redeemed saints from all past dispensations in His train. I know that this is looked upon as a visionary interpretation by many, and the attempt has been made again and again to show that this view, which is often called "the Futurist Theory," was originated by Spanish Jesuits in order to turn away opprobrium from Rome. But the fact of the matter is that the Jesuit writers in question, Alcazar and Ribera, simply set forth what was taught with more or less clearness by some of the church fathers in the first three centuries of the Christian era, and was lost sight of later.

Others again have tried to put the stigma of demonism upon the precious truth that the Lord may return at any time to take His saints to be with Himself preceding the great tribulation, endeavoring to link this with certain theories taught by the late Edward Irving and his follow-

ers in the early part of the nineteenth century. But any one at all acquainted with Irving's actual teaching can see how truly false this is. From the time when prophetic truth long neglected came again into prominence, there was a great deal of confusion regarding the two aspects of the Lord's return, mentioned above; but eminent Bible teachers who weighed all the scriptures carefully and prayerfully before God, were led little by little to see the distinction between the Church as the Body of Christ and the saints of a coming age who would be witnesses for the Lord in the time of the tribulation, and would share with Him in the manifested kingdom. The more carefully these views have been examined by men of God dependent upon the teaching of the Holy Spirit through the Word, the more they have been seen to be distinctly in harmony with divine revelation.

In recent years, particularly following the World War, there has been a recrudescence of Post-Tribulationism, brought about largely by the fact that so many stirring events have taken place which seem to foreshadow the actual conditions that will prevail during the time of Jacob's trouble. Already the Roman Empire seems in process of revival. The rise of dictatorship gives us to understand how readily the great world-ruler of the coming day will forge his way to the front and be acclaimed as the very representative of God Himself. The return of thousands of Jews to Palestine, involving the rehabilitation of that land, is certainly preparing the way for the very events depicted in the prophets and by our Lord Himself, which are to take place in the last days. All of these things, and many others that might be added, seem to have swept some dear brethren away from their moorings, and losing sight of "that Blessed Hope," they are now fixing their attention upon events rather than

on the Person who is coming. The effect of this is not a healthy thing. It results in occupying the heart and mind with earthly things instead of with the coming Saviour. It has led many to think that perhaps after all we are entering even now into the great tribulation, if, in fact we are not actually through the greater part of it, and just waiting for the revelation of the Antichrist and then of the Lord's actual descent to the Mount of Olives, and the establishment of the Kingdom.

But the very fact that we see conditions shaping themselves for tribulation times should only lead us to realize the nearness of our Hope. At any moment now the Lord may descend from Heaven to raise the dead and change the living, and then will come the dark days predicted in both Testaments for apostate Israel and apostate Christendom.

Another view that has clouded the faith of many who cannot see but that at least some saints will be caught up before the great tribulation, is what is commonly known as "the partial," or "firstfruits rapture." This, however, is in plain contradiction to the testimony of the Holy Spirit given through the Apostle Paul and our blessed Lord Himself. The Saviour made no distinction among His heavenly people when He said, "If I go, I will come again and receive you unto Myself." He had just foretold the defection of Peter, but He did not even hint that unless Peter is restored he will have no part in the Father's House. In fact, He addressed Himself particularly to him, when He said, "Let not your heart be troubled;" as one may see, if instead of breaking the chapters as we have them in our English Version, we read from chapter 13 right on into chapter 14. He of course had made provision for the restoration of the soul of His disciples, as He does for all of us; but He gave no

suggestion that any would be left behind when He would return for His own. In the Epistles the rapture is seen to be all-embracing. We read, "They that are Christ's at His coming;" not they that are eminently faithful, nor yet they that speak with tongues, nor they that have been baptized, or any other proviso; simply, "They that are Christ's." And again, in 1 Thessalonians, we have the simple statement, "We which are alive and remain shall be caught up together." There are no distinctions made between mature and immature Christians in these words. If other scriptures be cited that seem to indicate that some will not be ready when the Lord comes, a careful examination of the context will show that in each instance the reference is to the coming of the Son of Man at the end of the great tribulation, and not to the descent of the Lord to the air to receive the saints of this dispensation and past ages to be with Himself in the Father's House.

Therefore it may be confidently affirmed that neither post-tribulationism nor partial rapture theories are taught in the Word of God. It would not be possible in the limits of this paper to follow all the definite objections to the position we have taken, nor can we hope to satisfy every mind. But it seems perfectly evident that the Blessed Hope is intended to be the daily expectation of the believers, which could not be, if certain events must of necessity take place before its fulfilment.

Moreover, if I put anything in my thinking between the present moment and the return of the Lord, I am losing that which is of infinite value in connection with my personal walk and Christian experience. "Every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself even as He is pure." I know of nothing that is so effectual in controlling the heart and mind of the believer so that his

one aim and object will be to walk in holy separation to the Lord Himself, as the thought that at any moment He who has redeemed us may return and take us to the Father's House. One may hold certain intellectual views of the second coming of Christ, even the view of the pre-tribulation rapture, and not be practically sanctified thereby. But if this Hope holds me, it cannot but result in increased personal piety.

Then, too, we need to remember that it is at the return of the Lord for His saints that He will go over our record as servants when we stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. At that time, we are to be rewarded according to the deeds done in the body, and our place in the coming kingdom indicated. It is then that the crowns of reward are to be distributed, and in this connection it is very significant to note that in the Book of Revelation, we see the twenty-four elders crowned and enthroned around the central throne of God and of the Lamb (chaps. 4 and 5), before the solemn judgments begin to fall upon the earth. Practically all futurist interpreters are agreed that in chapters 6 to 19 of Revelation we have the great tribulation period. It is then that the wrath of the Lamb and the wrath of God will be poured upon the habitable earth, and Satan will be cast down from the heavenlies, having great wrath, knowing that his time is short. These are the circumstances of the great tribulation and we are looking for Christ as our Deliverer from the wrath to come. Whatever view we may take of the symbolic elders, whether we think of them as twenty-four individuals, or as representing the entire heavenly priesthood, which to me is clearly the true interpretation, there is this to bear in mind; they are seen crowned in Heaven before the judgments begin.

Let me put it this way.

*a.* The tribulation period does not begin until the Lamb receives the seven-sealed book and breaks the seals.

*b.* But the Lamb does not receive the book until crowned saints are seen in Heaven.

*c.* No saints have yet received their crowns, nor will there be crowned saints in Heaven until the judgment-seat of Christ is past.

*d.* The apostle Paul declares definitely that the crown of righteousness will be given to him and to all who love Christ's appearing in that day. This is the day of manifestation following our Lord's return for His saints.

*e.* Therefore, it seems plainly evident that the great tribulation cannot possibly begin until after the rapture of the Church.

There is much more that might be said, but I leave the matter here, commending the entire subject to the spiritual judgment of the people of God, feeling assured that the more carefully this matter is weighed, the clearer it will be that the Church, the Body of Christ, is not to look forward to a time when the wrath of God will be poured out upon this world, but is to live in daily expectation of the Lord's return to take us to be with Himself ere the time of grief begins.

Others have written far more fully and more ably on this question than I. May it be ours to search the Scriptures daily whether these things be so, and to live in the power of that Blessed Hope.



# The Oxford Group Movement:

## *Is it Scriptural?*

A Sermon Preached in Moody Memorial Church  
by Pastor H. A. IRONSIDE

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HAVE two texts in mind. The first is in the fifth chapter of Luke's Gospel, verse 39: "No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better." The other is in the twelfth chapter of the book of Revelation, verse 11: "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death."

Since it came home to me that it might really be a duty to speak on this subject, I have not been unmindful of that passage in Proverbs 18:

13, "He that answereth a matter before he hear-eth it, it is folly and shame unto him," and I have really taken it up with a great deal of reluctance. I want to frankly acknowledge that I have never attended any of the meetings of the Oxford Group Fellowship, I have never listened to any of their testimonies, I have never heard any of their addresses. A week or so ago I was invited with other ministers of this city to go to the Drake Hotel and attend one of their meetings, but as I had to be away from the city that day, I gave my ticket to one of my associates who attended for me and brought me a report of the meeting. Although I have not participated in any of their services, I have read quite a few of their booklets, pamphlets, and addresses, and I have also had the opportunity of meeting and conversing with a number of earnest Christians who at one time were intimately linked with the movement.

One young minister whom I met on a recent visit to Philadelphia was for three years a very

active participant in the movement until suddenly awakened to realize how far it was drifting from First Century Christianity. That is one of the names given to the movement. It is frequently known as Buchmanism, because of the fact that Dr. Frank N. D. Buchman, a Lutheran minister, was largely the originator of the movement. It is known also as the Oxford Group Movement. That name, however, would seem to be almost a misnomer, for it had been quite well started before ever the leaders of it went to Oxford. It began here in America on the eastern coast in 1908 and has been carried on chiefly in college circles ever since. It was not until 1920 that Dr. Frank Buchman crossed over to the old country and went to Cambridge and Oxford, and there sought to awaken an interest among the students and some English Church clergymen in his movement. Shortly after that a group of these people left England and went to South Africa to propagate the movement, and it was there that they were first advertised as the Oxford Group Movement.

There is something, of course, about the name that rather challenges attention. It has been said by some of the members of the inner circle that three of the greatest movements of the last two centuries began at Oxford, and they linked together the Wesleyan movement which, of course, began in the Holy Club at Oxford, the Puseyite, or High Church, movement of a century ago, and now the Buchman movement, or First Century Christianity. I cannot help but feel it is rather a fleshly pride that leads people to link the name of the university city with the movement, when it did not begin there but had gained considerable momentum before its advocates went there at all. Even at the present time, I am told by reliable persons, comparatively few indeed at Oxford have any further interest in this movement.

It is called First Century Christianity. If it is indeed a revival of First Century Christianity, then we who love our Bibles and love the name of our Lord Jesus Christ ought to welcome it

with open arms, and do everything we can to further its work. The way, of course, to find out whether it is really First Century Christianity revived would be to compare the utterances of its advocates with the utterances of the First Century Christians as recorded in our Bibles. If they are the same, then we need have no fear of the movement; we can thank God for it from the very depths of our souls. But the striking thing is that when we turn to our Bibles and ask, "What was First Century Christianity? What were the great notes dwelt upon by the advocates of it? How do they compare with this present propaganda?" we find indeed a very wide divergence, a great difference. First Century Christianity exalted first of all the Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, insisted upon the fact that God had made Him who was crucified to be both Lord and Christ, that "there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4: 12). First Century Christianity emphasized with tremendous force the pre-

cious atoning blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, and as we come to examine the few books that have already been put before the public by the advocates of this latter day movement, we are struck at once by the fact that these great truths are practically absent. I have gone through book after book, supposedly setting forth the teaching of the Oxford Group Movement, and have not found one reference to the precious blood of Christ in any of them, nor any reference to the fact that the worst sin that any one can possibly commit is the sin of rejecting the Lord Jesus Christ.

Some of my friends who have had more intimate connection with it have said that again and again they have put the question to the advocates of the movement, "What place do you give to the atoning blood of Christ?" They have been answered evasively or, if not evasively, sometimes like this, "Oh, we are not a doctrinal movement, we are not advocating any view of the atonement, we are out simply to change the lives

of people. It does not make any difference to us what they believe theologically as long as their lives are changed. If their lives are not changed, theological differences are of very small moment." And then the question has been put, "But as your converts go on, do they begin to enter into what Scripture has revealed concerning the cleansing blood of the Lord Jesus Christ? You believe they can be converted without knowing anything of this. As they go on, do they get better acquainted with what Scripture teaches concerning the cleansing blood of the Lord Jesus Christ?" And then the answer comes, "They will, if they read the Bible." But the fact remains that these things are practically never taken up by the leaders of the movement. I say "practically" because there are a few exceptions. This movement appeals both to modernists and fundamentalists alike. It appeals to people who reject the inspiration of this Book as well as to those who profess to believe in it; it appeals to people who deny the Deity of Christ as well as to those

who acknowledge it; to those who deny the eternal punishment of sin as well as to those who believe in it. Here in our city it is openly indorsed by the Swedenborgians and by the leaders of the Unitarians, as well as by a number who belong to the orthodox churches. But it is silent as to the blood of Christ. When some of the orthodox people get into it they naturally carry with them, at least to a certain extent, the teaching that they had before they became associated with the movement. Now any group that soft pedals on the doctrine of the cleansing blood of our Lord Jesus Christ surely should not expect indorsement from those who believe that they owe everything for time and eternity to that precious blood.

This movement makes a great deal of testimony. It is not propagated in the ordinary way by preaching. It seems as though the Word of God, "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. 1:21), has really failed. Leaders of the movement have said that there has been a great deal



of preaching but that there must be some other approach to mankind. And although we have no word that our Lord has ever rescinded His instruction, "Go ye into all the world, and *preach* the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16: 15), yet in place of the preaching services Buchman offers us religious house-parties. This is a very remarkable innovation.

A group of them go off by invitation to some country inn, beautiful city hotel, or country home. They boast that they are generally not after the down-and-outers but the up-and-outers, people of wealth, people of fashion and culture, and they gather together to spend several days in fellowship. Their meetings are largely of this character: they come together as groups and devote a great deal of time to testimony. These testimonies are generally in the nature of confessions. They act on the scripture that says, "Confess your faults one to another," and stop there and do not notice the rest of the connection. They take it that the way to get help is to come together

and confess their faults one to the other. Sometimes as a matter of decency women meet together and confess their sins to each other, and men meet together and confess their sins to each other. When I was in Boston, I found a good deal of scandal had been occasioned by mixed companies holding these parties and confessing their sins, many of which were of such a character that Scripture says, "It is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret" (Eph. 5: 12). Yet they confessed these things openly, men before women and women before men. You can understand that the result was anything but helpful. Where do you find anything in the Word of God that suggests this kind of confession of sin? They say when they come together and honestly face their sins and tell about them, it gives them a certain spiritual strength that enables them to turn from their sins and so enter upon a new and a changed life.

Dr. Buchman has set forth two sets of what he calls, "The Five 'Cs'," which, if acted upon,

will completely change the life. The first group is in regard to sinners: Conviction, Contrition, Confession, Conversion, Continuance. The other five are in regard to personal workers preparing to deal with others. They are: Confidence, Confession, Conviction, Conversion, Continuance. Now every one of these is all right in its place, but I say to you on the authority of the Word of God that you could participate in all of the five "Cs" in either group and yet never know anything of the saving grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the first place, the conviction of which they speak is not the conviction on which the New Testament insists. Their conviction is that of wrongfulness indulged in, the wrongfulness of sex sins, sins of pride, sins of jealousy, sins of hypocrisy, and dishonesty. The Word of God, when speaking of the coming of the Holy Spirit, has not a word to say about these sins, bad as they are, but the Lord Jesus says, "When He is come, He shall convict of sin," and of what sin? "Of

sin, because they believe not on Me." My friend, you might stand up in this audience and confess all the vile, corrupt, filthy, wicked, abominable sins that your memory can bring to mind, and after you had confessed them all, you would not be one inch nearer salvation than before, because all of those sins were dealt with on the cross of Christ, all of those sins were judged when Jesus died upon the tree, and the one great damning sin that will keep you forever out of heaven, if it is not repented of, is the sin of rejecting the Lord Jesus Christ. I have never yet heard of that sin being confessed in a Buchman house-group. It may have been; but over and over again I have asked people who have attended them the question, "Did you ever know of a man standing to his feet in one of these house-parties and saying, 'I am here to confess that up to the present moment I have been a Christ-rejecter'?" and they have always said, "No; that is never touched on."

You can confess every other sin and be in hell

for eternity. The one sin you have to face is the sin of rejecting the Lord Jesus Christ. All other confession will avail you nothing. You may as well go and seek out a priest of the Roman or the High Anglican Church and hope thereby to find salvation, as to stand up in an Oxford Group house-party and confess your sins. Yet people are so easily deceived. There seems to be real humility in thus confessing one's sins, but few of us are fit to hear confessions of the sins of other people. Again and again, as a minister of the Gospel, I have to listen, when I do not want to, to the confessions of sin that come from heart-broken people. I say to them, "Do not come and tell me these things; get down here on your knees with God and tell them to Him, and tell Him that above all else you confess the sin of rejecting His blessed Son, and that now you receive Him as your Saviour." When you do that, you find life and salvation.

Let me read to you from one of their booklets entitled, "An Apostle to Youth," some of the

impressions of an Anglican Bishop who attended one of these house-parties:

“The Minnewaska house-party, June 21, 1908, was a revelation to me. It revealed a kind of vitality which seems to me the fundamental need of the Church and of individual Christians, men and women, today. The good fellowship was striking, for it appeared not simply in fun and good times, but seemed to go to the very bottom of the deepest things we know or hope or fear.”

That does not sound like the work of the Holy Ghost. I do not think there was much hilarity in the upper room before Pentecost. I do not think there was much laughter, very much fun, when Peter came out of prison and went to his own company and they spent the night before God. I do not believe there was anything of that which characterized this house-party of which I am reading.

“The emphasis upon the possibility and need of daily, indeed constant, communion with God, and guidance by His Spirit, echoed the many-

sided appeal of Saint Paul 'to the saints that are in Christ.'

"Sin was dealt with in the frank and direct way which youth demands. Nothing was glossed over, yet there was no morbidity. Chief attention, in the public meetings, was given to those sins of envy, pride, censoriousness, cowardice, sloth, uncharitableness, and insincerity which are so often fatal to fellowship and spiritual vigor, just because they are not recognized as equally serious with the gross and carnal sins. The aseptic atmosphere of these discussions owed much to the fact that the ludicrous stupidity of many sins shone out vividly in obviously sincere confession, and brought out spontaneously the cleansing laughter of the whole group."

I want you to notice the kind of sins that were confessed: "Envy, pride, censoriousness, cowardice, sloth, uncharitableness and insincerity." Some of these sins confessed were very vile, very vulgar, and it is hardly the thing to confess them in public, but they did no harm because they were

confessed in such a ludicrous way that the cleansing laughter washed away all the filth! That is something new in theology. Personally, I never remember hearing before of the cleansing power of laughter. I have been preaching a good many years; I have seen many people washed from their sins, but I have never seen them cleansed by laughter. I have seen some who reminded me of that verse, "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing" (Ps. 126: 1, 2). That was the joy of the Lord that came when they knew they were delivered.

"Frequent reference was made to the need of discipline, beginning with the regular observance of the morning watch, or time of quiet, but refusing to stop short of whatever is required to bring us up to our *best* in body, mind, spirit and social relationships.

"Most significant of all, I think, was the group life there described, and for a few days lived



out by a large proportion of those present. 'Sharing,' or manifest willingness to 'share,' to the limit was at work before our eyes, and through it the Holy Spirit was giving courage to the timid, hope to those on the verge of despair, insight to the blind, in some cases life out of spiritual death, and initiating all who were willing to the hope and joy of strength that come from creative experience in the moral and spiritual realm."

That is an English Church Bishop's account of a Buchman house-party. If you can see anything in that comparable to First Century Christianity, you have a discernment that I personally know nothing about. Not a word of the sin of rejecting Christ, not a word of the necessity of trusting Him alone for salvation, not a word about the importance of confessing sin to God, not a word of turning to Him in repentance, not one syllable about the precious blood that cleanses. Something about the cleansing of laughter, but nothing of the cleansing of blood! Oh, no; we

have been drinking of the old wine of the gospel of the grace of God, and when they proffer this new wine to us we say, "Thank you; but the old is better." We would not exchange the real fellowship we have found with Spirit-filled and blood-cleansed believers for this kind of a sham fellowship which is simply building up the first man, the man that God has condemned.

Let me go back. I say that all these five "Cs" could be true of a man that never trusted Christ, and could all be true if Jesus had never died upon the cross. Get that clearly in mind. Here are two sets of five "Cs", and we are told that if we grasp these clearly, we have the whole of the Oxford Group Movement in its essence. I claim you could have all of these if Jesus had never left the place that He had with the Father before the foundation of the world, if He had never been born at Bethlehem, if He had never sweat drops of blood in Gethsemane, if He had never hung extended a bleeding Victim on Calvary, if He had never shed His precious blood,

and never come forth in triumph from the tomb, for this entire system is one that begins with man and ends with man.

Every man's natural conscience convicts of the sinfulness of the things mentioned in these booklets; every man's conscience tells him of the evil of the sin of impurity, tells him that dishonesty is sin. You do not need the Holy Ghost for this. He convicts of the sin of rejecting the Lord Jesus Christ.

The second "C" is Contrition. We need not think it is a special evidence of the grace of God working in the soul when a man is sorry for his sins. There are tens of thousands of men in penitentiaries who are sincerely sorry that they ever forgot their responsibility to their fellow-men so far as to commit the offenses for which they have been put behind prison-bars. The sorrow of many of them is not mere remorse, but they are sincerely sorry that they ever committed the offense of which they are guilty. Unsaved men can be very contrite and yet never

turn to Christ, never trust in Him and be washed from their sins in His blood.

The third "C" is Confession. Men have been confessing their sins all down through the centuries, confessing to priests and to one another, but no priest, no human being has the power to put away sin. There is only One who can do that. When David's heart and mind were wracked with grief and sorrow because of his offense, he said, "I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin" (Ps. 32: 5). And we read in 1 John 1: 9, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." You could confess your sins to me, you could confess them to one another, but that would never blot out your transgressions. But when you come to God in the name of Jesus, taking the lost sinner's place, then indeed you find the lost sinner's Saviour.

The fourth "C" is Conversion, and immediately you will challenge me and say, "Surely there could be no conversion apart from the divine work of Christ in the soul." Yes; there has been many a conversion that was not a work of the Spirit. During forty-two years of devoting my life to the ministry of the Word of God, I have seen a great many people whose natural consciences have been aroused; they have been troubled about their bad behaviour. Some of them were bound by one or more sins, and I have seen them come to a mourners' bench and weep and sob and ask for deliverance. I have known many of them to rise and say, "By the grace of God I am going to put these things out of my life," and for a while there was a real conversion — conversion means turning around—the man who drank stopped drinking, the man who gambled stopped playing for money, the man who was licentious endeavored to live a pure life. This went on for a time, but in many instances I have seen these people turn away, and the Scripture

was fulfilled which says, "The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire" (2 Pet. 2: 22). You see there may be a conversion which is simply a natural thing, a great stirring of emotions, bringing a man to a psychological crisis in his life where he makes up his mind he is not going to do that thing any more. This may take place even under gospel preaching, and eventually, having no root, as Jesus depicted, it withers away and there is no longer any evidence of Christianity. Spurgeon used to say, "If that sow had ever been born again, been regenerated and got a sheep's nature, it wouldn't have gone back to its wallowing in the mire." There are many people today called "backsliders" who have never been "frontsliders," who have never been born again, and consequently they go on for a time and by and by drift back into the old things. That kind of conversion is not the work of the Holy Spirit of God.

Buchman adds a fifth "C" which he calls

Continuance. I may say that our Lord Jesus Christ makes continuance an evidence of reality, and so I am glad to accept that here. If there has been Holy Ghost conversion, definite repentance for sin, true faith in Christ, it will be manifested by continuance. But a man might continue in a mere outwardly changed life without ever having put his trust in the atoning blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. The trouble with the whole system is that it has no doctrinal background. It results eventually in faith in yourself rather than faith in a Saviour who once hung on a cross of shame crucified for our sins.

I have heard some very shocking things from members of the group, particularly from young women, as to the absurdity of any one hoping to get to heaven through the blood of Jesus. One who knows the movement well tells how he met a young woman advocate of this movement on shipboard. She was the most careless, worldly, and immodestly dressed of all the women. He said to her, "Tell me, what place

has the precious blood of Christ in this movement?" The answer she gave was too blasphemous for me to repeat here. She ridiculed and ignored it, but he dealt with her from the standpoint that she was a lost, guilty, hell-deserving sinner and that, Buchmanite or not, if she died as she was, she would be damned forever. Before they left that ship he had the joy of having her come to him with tears streaming down her face as she said, "I have come to confess my sin to God and trust Him as my Saviour."

There are some things about this movement that seem very commendable. One is what they call, "Waiting for guidance." They place a great deal of emphasis upon that. Each one is urged in the morning to sit down quietly with the mind emptied of every thought, generally with a pencil in hand, waiting for God to say something to them. They wait and wait and wait. Sometimes they tell me nothing happens, at other times the most amazing things come. Tested by the Word of God many of these things



are unscriptural. They lay themselves open for demons to communicate their blasphemous thoughts to them. That is not the Christian way of getting guidance. What is the Christian way? It is to get alone with God over your Bible. Not to say, "Lord, speak to me in some strange, mysterious way," but to say, "Lord, speak to me as I read Thy Holy Word." And as we read the Book, the Holy Spirit opens it up and reveals the truth of God to us, and perhaps brings such things before us as we have never before seen. Let me say to the glory of God that I am reading this old Book for the fifty-seventh time from cover to cover. You may say, "You ought to know it pretty well." I am ashamed to say that I learn very slowly. But in the morning when I sit down to read, I say, "Now, Lord, I am going to read a little of Thy Word. Let me hear Thy voice speaking to my soul." I never remember a time when I have not seen something that I have never noticed before, something I have passed over, something new, something sweet and

precious, through the guidance of the Holy Spirit who delights to take of the things of Christ and show them unto us.

I do not entirely condemn this Oxford Group Movement—I do not know enough about it—but we have been drinking of the old wine, and when they bring this new wine, we simply say, “If you think it is all right, drink it, but for me the old is better.” The moment I find there is no emphasis upon the blood of Jesus, there is nothing in it for me.

Let me remind you of the place the precious blood of Christ has in the divine plan of salvation. In the Old Testament when it was a question of security from judgment, God said, “When I see the blood, I will pass over you.” When it was a question of making expiation for iniquity, we read, “The life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul” (Lev. 17: 11). When it is a question

of remission of sins, we read in Hebrews 9: 22, "Without the shedding of blood is no remission." When it is a question of drawing near to God, we read in Ephesians 2: 13 that we "are made nigh by the blood of Christ." When it is a question of the fitting of the Church of God to share eternal glory with the Lord Jesus, we read, "The church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20: 28). When it is a question of saving faith, of appropriating faith, we read, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you" (John 6: 53). When it is a question of forgiveness and redemption, we read in Ephesians 1: 7, "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." In Romans 3: 9 we are told that we are "justified by His blood," and in Romans 3: 24, 25 we read, "Being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to

declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." The divine guarantee of our salvation is "the blood of the everlasting covenant" (Heb. 13: 20). In 1 John 1: 7 we read, "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." 1 Peter 1: 2, "Unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." Hebrews 10: 19, "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." In Colossians 1: 20 we read that He has "made peace through the blood of His cross." Hebrews 9: 14, "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" In the book of Revelation, chapter 1, verse 5, we find the saints singing, "Unto Him that loveth us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood," and then the redeemed take up the new song, "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" (Rev. 5: 9). Of that vast company saved in the great tribulation we read, "They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Hebrews 13: 12, "That He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate." This is the old wine, the truth of the gospel; this is the message that has been used for nineteen centuries to bring untold millions to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, and we have no place for any message that comes to us in the twentieth century and says, "We are not concerned about doctrine, we are not interested in the blood; just change your life, and all will be well."

Oh, the folly of the intoxication that comes from this new wine. No, no; the old is better. We have tasted it, we have tried it, we have seen people saved all down through the years because of it. Changed lives? Oh, yes; we have seen changed lives. And today we still rely upon

the old gospel; we are not interested in a new movement. We go back to the real First Century Christianity and come to you in the name of the Saviour, and say if you are lost, guilty, undone, if you want peace, joy, forgiveness, if you want to be right with God, come just as you are, as a poor, needy sinner, put your trust in the Lord Jesus who shed His precious blood for you, and you shall know the blessing of the divine forgiveness and a new life by the power of the Spirit and the Word of God.

“Just as I am, without one plea,  
But that Thy blood was shed for me,  
And that Thou bidd’st me come to Thee,  
O Lamb of God, I come.”

# *The Teaching of the So-called Plymouth Brethren; Is it Scriptural?*

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## REPLY TO AN ATTACK IN DR. STRONG'S "SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY."

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A correspondent lately called the writer's attention to some statements made against so-called "Plymouth Brethren" and their views, by Dr. A. H. Strong, the well-known Baptist theologian, in his "Systematic Theology," 7th edition, pp. 498, 9. Though averse to controversy, and seeing little to be gained by what might look like self-vindication, it seems there is enough in question to demand an examination of the Doctor's remarks with positive denial and refutation of some of them.

First, let me say, that I rejoice in the orthodoxy, as it is commonly understood, of the learned author and preacher whose work is referred to. It is a pleasure to note his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, his apparent loyalty to Holy Scripture, and evident zeal for the gospel. As to the teachings he attempts to expose as unscriptural and heretical, it is charitable to believe he has not familiarized himself with them enough to know what these "brethren" really hold. I take it for granted he has been too ready to credit the statements of heated controversialists like the late Dr.

Reid, from whom he quotes, in place of seriously examining the writings of the brethren criticized—an unwise course for any one to take in determining the exact views of any people, and especially unwise in one whose *ipse dixit* many lesser lights readily accept as authority.

Let us take up the quotations from Dr. Reid first, though these come last in Dr. Strong's summing-up of the case against "Plymouth Brethrenism." He writes: "Dr. Wm. Reid, in *Plymouth Brethrenism Unveiled*,\* 79-143, attributes to the sect the following church principles:

"(1) The Church did not exist before Pentecost; (2) the visible and invisible Church identical; (3) the one assembly of God; (4) the presidency of the Holy Spirit; (5) rejection of a one-man and man-made ministry; (6) the Church is without government.

"Also the following heresies:

"(1) Christ's heavenly humanity; (2) denial of Christ's righteousness as being obedience to law; (3) denial that Christ's righteousness is imputed; (4) justification in the risen Christ; (5) Christ's non-atoning sufferings; (6) denial of moral law as the rule of life; (7) the Lord's day is not the Sabbath; (8) perfectionism; (9) secret rapture of the saints—caught up to be with Christ. To these we may add: (10) pre-millennial advent of Christ."

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\*Dr. Wm. Reid was fully answered at the time by another Wm. Reid, in "Accusers of the Brethren," now out of print, though occasionally to be found in Tract Depots.



Taking these up categorically as given, we beg the reader to lay aside prejudice and examine each statement in the light of Holy Scripture. "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isa. 8: 20).

The "Brethren" are said to hold and teach: (1) *that the Church did not exist before Pentecost.* Can Dr. Strong, or anyone else, prove that it did? Is the congregation of Israel to be confounded with "the Church of the firstborn written in heaven?" Was "the Church in the wilderness," mentioned by Stephen (Acts 7: 38), the same as that which the Lord Jesus spoke of as a future thing, when He said, "Upon this Rock I *will build* my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it?" Mark it well—not "I have built," nor, "I am building," but, "I will build"—future tense. Does Dr. Strong see nothing of the great truth of the formation of believing Jews and Gentiles into "one body" (Eph. 2: 14-16)—the Church of the new dispensation? One can hardly believe that any well-instructed teacher of our day could be in ignorance as to this. Not only "brethren," but so many well-known teachers in evangelical denominations have taught, both orally and in writing, along these lines for so many years that it seems unbelievable that Dr. Strong could be ignorant of the distinct calling of the Church, the body of Christ, as distinguished from both the congregation of Israel and the saved of the nations in past dispensations. "Brethren" make no apology for the teaching here ascribed to them. They do *not* believe the Church existed be-

fore Pentecost. They emphatically believe the Church was formed on that day by the Spirit's baptism, uniting saints on earth into one body (1 Cor. 12: 13), and to their glorified Head in heaven. Without this there could be no Church in the full New Testament sense.

(2) *The visible and invisible Church identical.* At this "Brethren" demur. Where, in all their writings, is such teaching found? Every well-instructed man among them distinguishes carefully between the Church, according to the mind of God, and the Church in its present outward aspect; or, between the Church as the "Body of Christ," including every saved soul in the present dispensation, and excluding all false professors, and the Church as the "House of God," largely committed to man, in which saved and unsaved are sadly mixed together. "Brethren" do not find the terms "visible church" or "invisible church" in the Bible, and consequently seldom use them. They know well what Christians mean when they do use them; only "Brethren" believe the invisible Church *would be everywhere visible* but for human failure. They do not believe that this failure excuses them from responsibility to "depart from iniquity," and to "follow righteousness, faith, love, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (2 Tim. 2: 19, 22), for they have learned from Scripture that separation from evil is ever the path of faithfulness to God.

(3) *The one assembly of God.*—What fault can anyone find with so eminently scriptural an expression? It is well-known that "church" and "assembly" are but different translations of the

Greek word *ecclesia*, "a called out company." Would the Doctor object to the doctrine of "the one *Church of God*?" If not, why object to the other expression which means the same thing? "There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling" (Eph. 4: 4); does not that passage teach that there is but one assembly of God? "For His body's sake, which is the Church," or "the assembly," says Scripture (Col. 1: 24)—how many bodies has Christ? "One," Scripture answers. And what is that body? It replies, "The assembly." What is its full name? Paul tells us, when he says, "I persecuted the Church (assembly) of God;" and again, "Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God" (1 Cor. 10: 32). And, be it observed, as "Brethren" believe in the one assembly of God, when thinking of the body of Christ as a whole, so they believe in assemblies of God when speaking of local companies of believers gathered by the Spirit to the name of Christ. Such assemblies should consist of saved persons only, though evil men may slip in unawares.

(4) *The presidency of the Holy Spirit.*—Can it be possible that any spiritually-minded Christian objects to this? Do Christians in the systems not believe in the presidency of the Holy Spirit? Again and again we have heard ministers pray that the Holy Spirit might take charge of the meeting. Did they not mean this? Were these only deceptive words—not meant as spoken? Granted, that if they are bound to carry out their own programs, people can get on better without

the Holy Spirit than with Him; still, we have supposed it was at least an article of faith that He was on earth to preside in the assemblies of saints. Does Dr. Strong know anyone better fitted to preside than He, the third Person of the eternal Trinity? Yes, "Brethren" *do* believe in and insist on "the presidency of the Holy Spirit," much as they may sometimes fail in recognizing Him practically. To fail, while seeking to walk in the truth, is surely less serious than to substitute human expediency for the revealed will of God.

(5) *Rejection of a one-man and man-made ministry.*—If we mistake not, it was once the boast of Baptists that they too rejected these. Do they now endorse what they once repudiated? The term "a Baptist clergyman," is, we believe, of very late origin. The older was "a Baptist minister," a far better one, to our mind. And "Brethren" believe in the ministry given by the Spirit, and desire to reject all other. They have no clergymen, but in God's grace, many ministers, who labor in word and doctrine. They reject a one-man ministry as well as an any-man ministry; while they thankfully accept ministry, from one or several, if it manifestly accords with the revealed word of God. A man-made ministry they positively refuse. Nor would intelligent men among them designate gifted and godly Baptist ministers as man-made, simply because humanly ordained. With "Brethren" ordination adds nothing to the God-given ministry. A man may be a God-made, and God-given minister, though he has received ordination and wears a surplice, but "Brethren" believe his ministry would be just

as profitable, and more becoming, if he dressed like other Christians, and had not gone through the form of ordination. Real ministers are men called of God, gifted by Christ, and sent forth by the Holy Spirit. "Brethren" rejoice in all such.

(6) *The Church is without government.*—What an astonishing declaration! Some have charged "Brethren" with being all government! The fact is, "Brethren" believe all needed directions for the government of the Church are embodied in the word of God. And in the Church there are "helps, governments," "elders who rule well," etc., who are responsible to seek to guide the saints in ways according to Christ. Because they reject the artificial organizations of the day is no reason to argue that "Brethren" are an unorganized mob. Where the Word is bowed to there will be godly order and scriptural discipline, and these they seek to practise.\*

Now that we have disposed of the "Church principles," let us have a look at the "Heresies." It is an unbrotherly thing to charge people with being heretics who are "of like precious faith;" and it would seem that here, as above, the Doctor has been exceedingly rash and has passed on second-hand information without investigation.

(1) "Brethren" are said to teach the heresy of *Christ's heavenly humanity*. Like some Baptists,

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\*May I suggest that the honest reader, desiring help, consult "The Church and its Order according to Scripture," by S. Ridout, 25c., and "Simple Papers on the Church of God," by C. E. Stuart, cloth, 75c., same publishers. In these he will find what "Brethren" themselves teach as to government in the Church.

“Brethren” have not always been as careful as they might in using terms liable to misconception. The expression, “heavenly humanity,” has been used by some, though not endorsed by “Brethren.” But what was meant thereby? Simply that Christ’s humanity was sinless and holy; heavenly in origin, because brought into existence, not by natural generation, but by the direct operation of the Holy Spirit who prepared that body in the womb of the virgin. Is not this orthodox and scriptural? “The Second Man is the Lord from heaven,” in contrast to the first man, who was “of the earth, earthy.” (See 1 Cor. 15: 47-49.) Christ partook of true humanity, apart from sin, but it was not humanity after an earthly order, for He had no human father—whatever modern theology may say—but was virgin-born. Is there any heresy in this?

(2) *Denial of Christ’s righteousness as being obedience to law.*—The question is too large a one to go into at any length here, but one need only say that Christ certainly became in all things obedient to the law of God as a man on earth; yea, He “magnified the law, and made it honorable.” But we suspect that this is not at all what Wm. Reid meant in the past, nor what Dr. Strong means now. When they write of “Christ’s righteousness,” they probably mean “God’s righteousness,” and we must frankly state “Brethren” do not believe that God’s righteousness, or “the righteousness of God” (Rom. 3: 21, 22), means obedience to the law. It is God’s consistency with Himself, His ways with men in accordance with the holiness of His nature. When divine right-

eousness demanded the punishment of sin, Christ, the righteous One, became the propitiation for our sins, and thus righteousness is now on the believing sinner's side; it demands the justification and not the condemnation of all who trust in Christ. God is just and the Justifier of all who believe in Jesus. This is divine righteousness.

(3) *Denial that Christ's righteousness is imputed.* This links up with what has been touched on. Nowhere does Scripture say *Christ's* righteousness is imputed. Scripture is clear—"God imputeth righteousness." To whom? To all who believe. Such are "made the righteousness of God in Christ;" as saved and justified from all things, they display, they are the proof of, God's righteousness in dealing thus with them; since Christ has taken their place, they are righteously given His place. God is righteous in reckoning them righteous, because full atonement has been made for their transgressions; and freely imputes righteousness instead of guilt to all who believe in His Son. It is not that Christ wrought out a righteousness to cover us as a cloak, but that His death has met every claim that was against us, and God imputes righteousness apart from any works on our part; even as it is written of Abraham: "*Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for [as] righteousness*" (Rom. 4: 3).

(4) *Justification in the risen Christ.*—This expression is objected to even by some "Brethren," but to our mind it well sets forth the truth of Scripture. When Christ died, He took my place,

and died in my stead. I have therefore died with Him. But He is risen; and I am in Christ, having received life through His name. In Him, I am beyond the reach of condemnation. Therefore I am justified. So I am "justified in the risen Christ." If Christ be not raised, my faith is vain and I am yet in my sins. But Christ has been "delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification;" and "there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." Christ is risen for our justification. All that are "in Christ" are uncondemned. They are in Him as risen; therefore they are justified in the risen Christ. Is there anything illogical or unscriptural about that? Why then call it heresy? Theological hair-splitters may quibble over it as they will, but simple Christians will believe it and rejoice.

(5) *Christ's non-atoning sufferings.*—It is very questionable whether Dr. Strong has any conception of the theme he dismisses so curtly. Are there any Christians who do not believe Christ endured sufferings that were not in themselves atoning? Do we not rejoice in a Great High Priest who suffered, being tempted? Is that atoning? Do we not adore Him for His tender, human sympathies, which could not but cause Him to suffer greatly in a world like this? Did such sufferings make atonement? He suffered in the Garden, in view of the Cross. Was that atonement? If so, why go to the cross at all?

The subject is too sacred and holy for controversy. Dr. Strong had better study his Bible on the great theme of Christ's sufferings, until he can distinguish clearly between Christ's sorrows



as the Servant of God and man *on the way to the cross*, and His atoning sufferings when our sins were laid upon Him, and He was made sin *upon* the cross. It will open up a wonderful vein of truth that will stir the heart to worship and move the lips to praise.

(6) *Denial of the moral law as the rule of life.*

—Well, if “Brethren” are heretics because they teach that *Christ*, not the law of Moses, is the rule of life, they are in excellent company—with many devoted and enlightened Baptist ministers who teach the same. Literature on this subject is abundant.\* No one need be in the dark as to what is taught on the important subject of “law and grace.” “Brethren” teach that “the righteous requirements of the law are fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.” We are not under law (Rom. 6: 14). We are neither saved by the law, nor under it, as a rule of life; we are not lawless, but “under law (enlawed) to Christ.” We stand firmly by the apostle Paul when he declares, “I through the law died unto the law that I might live unto God” (Gal. 2: 19). Is Christ Himself a lower standard than the law given from Sinai? Or is the latter needed to complete the former? Surely no intelligent believer would so speak. This is not antinomianism, but its very opposite. It is subjection to Christ as Lord of the New Dispensation and Mediator of the New Covenant.

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\*C. H. M.’s little booklet, “The Law and the Gospel,” 3c., is clear and convincing. Any of the “Brethren’s” expositions on Romans or Galatians are helpful. List sent on application.

(7) *The Lord's day is not the Sabbath.*—If it is, let Dr. Strong produce the scripture that says so. The Sabbath was the seventh day, the Lord's day is the first day of the week. The Sabbath was given to an earthly people, and its observance prescribed under severest penalties for disobedience. The Lord's day is kept by a heavenly people, with no legal requirement or penalties attached. The Sabbath was for Israel; the Lord's day for the Church. They that love the Lord gather together on that resurrection day to remember the Lord's death till He come.

(8) *Perfectionism.*—One is here wholly at a loss to know what is meant. When and where have "Brethren" ever taught the doctrine of perfectionism, save that perfection which all believers have in Christ? But *that* Dr. Strong himself evidently believes; so he must mean "perfection in the flesh." This is a doctrine that "Brethren" have ever *refused*, and constantly confuted. Believing that the sinful nature remains in the believer so long as he is in the body, and is ever ready to act if there be a moment of unwatchfulness, how can they be truthfully charged with holding to perfectionism? Any who so accuse them, are either wilfully ignorant of their real teaching, or utterly fail to understand its import.\*

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\*Having, myself, written a book on this theme, "Holiness, the False and the True," I beg leave to commend it to the inquirer who is anxious for a fuller statement of the subject, 75c., same publishers.

(9) *Secret rapture of the saints—caught up to be with Christ.*—Yes, if this be heresy, “Brethren” are heretics; for they do indeed teach that at the coming of the Lord to the air all His saints will be caught up to meet Him, and the world left to pass through the great tribulation. But he is a bold man who would dub this “blessed hope” heresy in the face of 1 Cor. 15: 51-56; 1 Thess. 4: 13-18, and kindred passages. And again, be it remarked, “Brethren” are in good company, for Dr. Strong need not go outside his own denomination to find a host of honored servants of Christ who believe as thoroughly as “Brethren” do in the “secret rapture of the saints.” But it passes our comprehension how any man, or set of men, with an atom of genuine love for the Lord and His people, can deliberately brand as heretics fellow-believers whose lives are generally fragrant with Christian graces, who stand unflinchingly for the inspiration of the entire Bible, simply because they hold different views on prophecy. Dr. Strong evidently does *not* believe in the secret rapture of the saints, but in the coming of the Lord in judgment at the end of the world. “Brethren” would not brand him as a heretic for this, though they feel he has lost much by his defective views. The same general remarks apply to the last charge of heresy—gratuitously hurled at “Brethren” by the Doctor himself.

(10) *Pre-millennial advent of Christ.* It is true that “Brethren,” without any written creed, have learned from Scripture itself that the descent of the Lord from heaven will precede His

millennial reign. Together with a goodly fellowship of saints in all the centuries since Christ's first advent, they are waiting for His second coming. Seeing no warrant in Scripture to expect a Millennium before He appears, their expectation is for Himself, according to John 14: 3, and they find this glad hope has purifying power, and is a marvelous incentive to Christian life and service. They deeply regret that the Doctor, with many another, unconsciously says, "My Lord delayeth His coming." Is it because of this that such begin to belabor their fellow-servants and to call them heretics and schismatics? But whether or no, "the coming of the Lord draweth nigh," and "Blessed are all they that wait for Him."

Having briefly noticed the charges of heresy brought against those whom Dr. Strong calls "Plymouth Brethren," let us now consider some further remarks he has made concerning them and their teaching.

Dr. Strong believes there is evidence in the Bible "of a developed organization in the New Testament Church, of which," he says, "only the germ existed before Christ's death." He first attempts to trace this out by citing the different names used to denote the children of God or Christ's followers, as "disciples" in the Gospels (and in the Acts, though he overlooks this); then in the Epistles, as "saints," "brethren," "churches." This, he thinks, proves clearly that the Church is not "an exclusively spiritual body, destitute of all formal organization, and bound together only by the mutual relation of each believer to his indwelling Lord."

While his argument is not clear, one can readily admit that his conclusion is correct in measure; for surely the Church is *not* what he describes, either looked at as the Body of Christ, or as expressed by local churches or assemblies.

The "one assembly of God" consists of all believers baptized by the Holy Spirit into one body. Of this Dr. Strong seems to know nothing. It is not here a question of being "bound together only by the mutual relation of each believer to his indwelling Lord;" this is not Paul's doctrine of the Church at all, nor is it what "Brethren" maintain. They believe that before Pentecost believers were individually all children of God, were all possessors of eternal life, were all bound for heaven, and waiting for "the promise of the Father;" and on the fulfilment of this promise, something altogether new was formed. The Holy Spirit having come upon them, He baptized the believing Jews and Gentiles into *one body*. This is the Spirit's unity, and to this body every Christian belongs. There are no unsaved persons in it.

But when believers are gathered locally together, it is evident that some among them may be unreal, and when manifested it calls for discipline. This, as we have seen, is connected with another aspect of the Church—as the "house of God," not as the "body of Christ."

When Dr. Strong attempts to show what "Brethren" hold as to this, his biased mind throws all into confusion. He goes on to say: "The Church upon this view, as quoted above, so far as out-

ward bonds are concerned, is only an aggregation of isolated units. Those believers who chance to gather at a particular time constitute the church of that place or time. This view is held by the Friends and by the Plymouth Brethren. It ignores the tendencies to organization inherent in human nature, confounds the visible with the invisible Church, and is directly opposed to the Scripture's representations of the visible Church as comprehending some who are not believers. Acts 5: 1-11—Ananias and Sapphira—shows that the visible Church comprehended some who were not true believers. 1 Cor. 14:23—‘If therefore the whole Church be assembled together, and all speak with tongues, and there come in men unlearned or unbelieving, will they not say that ye are mad?’ Here, if the Church had been an unorganized assembly, the unlearned visitors who came in would have formed a part of it. Phil. 3: 18—‘For many walk of whom I told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ’ . . . The Plymouth Brethren dislike church organizations, for fear they will become machines; they dislike ordained ministers, for fear they will become Bishops; they object to praying to the Holy Ghost, because He was given on Pentecost, ignoring the fact that the Church after Pentecost so prayed.” Then Dr. Strong cites Acts 4: 31 as a proof-text! I have quoted at length, that his argument may be connected, but one is pained by the irrelevant use he makes of Scripture to prove the unprovable, and to bolster up what had best be torn down.

The Friends can speak for themselves; but so far as those whom Dr. Strong calls "Plymouth Brethren" are concerned, I say unhesitatingly, that he (either through ignorance or malice—the former, I feel sure) completely misrepresents their teaching.

The Church can never be "an aggregation of isolated units," for all believers are united into one body by the Spirit, as we have seen. Has Dr. Strong never learned this? Does he know nothing of the great "mystery" which formed the burden of the apostle Paul's ministry? Has he never read 1 Cor. 12, or Eph. 3 and 4, or Col. 1 and 2? It would be well for him to consider these scriptures if he honestly desires to know what "Brethren" hold as to the Church. Believers everywhere constitute the Church as the body of Christ. All believers in a given place—whether met together or not—constitute the Church of God in that place. Wherever two or three such are gathered together unto His name, our Lord vouchsafes His presence (Matt. 18: 20). What more could be desired? Will formal organization give us anything better than this? *Christ in the midst is enough for every emergency.* It is true that "Brethren" care very little about "the tendencies to organization inherent in human nature." There are a great many other things inherent in human nature we seek grace to judge and mortify. But has God not already organized His assembly? The Church is a *divine organism*; every member is set in its place there by God Himself. Can man improve on that?

As we have said, when believers come together locally, unreal ones may be among them. Such may "creep in" and "feast themselves without fear," but they are only in the assembly in its outward aspect—they are not actually in the body of Christ.

As to Ananias and Sapphira, has the learned Doctor inside information not given to others? Is he absolutely certain they were not true believers? It is true they sinned grievously, and were judged therefor; but how many saints before and since may have to confess sin as grave as theirs?

1 Cor. 14: 23 has no bearing on the case. "The whole Church" is assembled together, and an unbeliever comes in afterwards. How can he be said to be a member of the Church?

"Brethren" are not engaged in building organizations, not because they "dislike" them, or "fear" what they might become, but because they find no scripture for this—only the "inherent tendency in human nature," which they dare not substitute for "Thus saith the Lord." They have no humanly-ordained ministers because, though they have read their Bibles well, they have never been able to find a case of a man being ordained to preach or teach. If the passage is in the Book, let it be produced. Men were ordained to serve tables and ordained as elders, but where were they ordained as ministers of the gospel?

As to Phil. 3: 18, would Dr. Strong include "enemies of the cross of Christ" in his church? "Brethren" believe such have "neither part nor lot in this matter."



His readers are further told that the "Brethren" would "unite Christendom by its dismemberment, and do away with all sects, and are themselves more narrow and bitter in their hostility to existing sects than any other." Again we find complete misunderstanding as to the aims, methods, and spirit of those whom he criticizes. "Brethren" are not attempting to either unite or dismember Christendom. They know too well that outward unity will never be again displayed until "the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together unto Him." Meantime they simply seek to walk together as brethren, acknowledging the Lordship of Christ and the presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church to guide them through the written Word. In believing this, they desire not to judge others who do not see eye to eye with them, but rather to pray for all men, and seek to manifest the compassion of Christ to all His sheep, wherever found.

It must be owned that some may have shown an uncharitable spirit toward fellow-saints remaining in the sects, but this has ever been condemned by the spiritually-minded among them. One whose writings have had a larger place than those of any other in moulding and influencing his weaker and less instructed brethren, wrote once, "I do not believe attacks on anything to be our path, but to be superior, and for the truth in grace." Such was the spirit of J. N. Darby, and such will ever be the spirit of those who endeavor to follow him as he followed Christ.

With only one more quotation and a few brief comments, this already too lengthy paper must be brought to a close.

Dr. Strong tells his readers that "the tendency to organize is so strong in human nature, that even Plymouth Brethren, when they meet regularly together, fall into an informal, if not a formal, organization: certain teachers and leaders are tacitly recognized as officers of the body; committees and rules are unconsciously used for facilitating business. Even one of their own writers, C. H. M., speaks of 'the natural tendency to associate without God—as in the Shinar association or Babel-confederacy of Gen. 11, which aimed at building up a name upon the earth. The Christian Church is God's appointed association to take the place of all these; hence God confounds the tongues in Gen. 11 (judgment); gives tongues in Acts 2 (grace); but one tongue is spoken of in Rev. 7 (glory).'"

To C.H.M.'s apt remarks we add a hearty "Amen!" and are astonished that the Doctor should quote such words and not see how well they answer his own objection to "Brethren's" position. It is indeed ever the tendency of human nature—even in saved and enlightened people—to confederate, and seek by human organization to accomplish what would be better done in simple obedience to the Word. Undoubtedly "Brethren" also have failed in this very thing. But does failure to act on a right principle invalidate or vitiate the principle itself? Surely not. To the C. H. M. referred to, a man once said: "Do you know that Dr.—, the — minister, is lecturing against the Brethren?" To which C. H. M. replied, "Give him my compliments, and tell him I am doing the same in the Brethren's hall. Only

he is lecturing against their principles, and I against their practices.”

As gathered to the name of Christ, “Brethren” thankfully accept all spiritual ministry, and seek to recognize the gifts the ascended Christ has given for the upbuilding of His Church. As they bow to the instruction of Holy Scripture they find no need for human organization nor man-made rules, inasmuch as no eventuality can arise that is not provided for in the Book. They do not claim perfection, however, but mourn over their low estate, desiring grace daily to enter more fully into the mind of Christ, and be sanctified by the truth.

That their fellow-believers and fellow-members of Christ’s body may find the same blessing, is their earnest prayer.

H. A. IRONSIDE.



# THE REAL SAINT PATRICK

By

H. A. IRONSIDE, LITT.D.

"I, PATRICK, A SINNER!" It is thus the devoted and energetic missionary who has been adopted by the Roman Catholic Church as the patron saint of Ireland, begins his own confession. He starts his letter of protest to Coroticus in the same striking way. Whatever others may have thought of him or may think of him today, he knew himself as a sinner and found salvation where only sinners find it, in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Little is actually known of his life and experience except that which he himself has told us. There are, perhaps, three authentic literary works of his that have come down to our day, the "Confession;" the "Letter to Coroticus," and the hymn, "The Breastplate," composed about the time that he appeared before the King of Tara. Even in reading these, translations of which are now available in English, it is difficult at times to discriminate between what appears in the original text and later additions inserted by Roman Catholic adherents, but in the main these documents are so thoroughly transparent and ingenuous that it is unthinkable that any forger could have written them. They show too

intimate a knowledge of the grace and holiness of God to be the work of a conscienceless impostor.

Regarding the various "Lives" of St. Patrick, written by monks of the Middle Ages, they are mostly composed of a mixture of truth and legend, in which the latter greatly predominates. Superstition, miraculous signs, monkish practices, and papal dogmas abound in these books, to all of which the real Patrick was probably a total stranger. They generally tell us that he was sent to Ireland by Pope Celestine in the closing years of the fourth century, but Patrick himself makes no mention of this, as he certainly would have done if he had entered Ireland as a papal representative.

To many it is even a matter of surprise to learn that he was not an Irishman, and certainly that he was not a member of the Roman Catholic Church. He was probably a Scotsman, and found his fellowship in the ancient church of Britain, which had never come under the papal yoke. In his day British and Irish bishops and presbyters were not even permitted to participate with representatives of the Latin Church in the observance of the mass.

Patrick was the son of a deacon named Calpurnius and his wife Conchessa, and was the grandson of Potitus, who was a presbyter. Calpurnius was also a "decurio," or magistrate of noble rank. These facts in themselves are most damaging to the Roman Catholic claims. Here we have a missionary who is the son of one "clergyman" and the grandson of another; surely he could scarcely

be called a Romanist! It is evident that Patrick knew nothing of the doctrine of clerical celibacy. He was born about the beginning of the last quarter of the fourth century. It is scarcely possible to set the date with any certainty. Some say as early as 372, others as late as 397. His native town seems to have been Alcluyd on the River Clyde. Alcluyd means "The Rock of Clyde." It was a Roman stronghold, later called "Dumbarton," where his reputed birthplace, "Kilpatrick," is still shown. Some, however, claim that he was born in Boulogne, France, and while this is possible, as the Irish pirate, Niall, is known to have preyed in that section, yet it is not generally considered probable.

The desire to be a missionary came to Patrick early in life, but whether before or after his enslavement by the Irish, it is hard to say. He might have followed in his father's steps and occupied a position of honor in Scotland, but he writes: "I gave up my nobility for the good of others, that I might be a missionary."

He tells his own story so simply and beautifully that it seems almost superfluous to re-tell it or to elaborate upon it at any length. The following extracts from his Confession will make him live before the reader far better than any words of mine:

"I, Patrick, a sinner, the rudest and the least of the faithful, and despicable among many, had for my father, Calpurnius, a Deacon, the son of Potitus, formerly a Presbyter, who was the son of Odissius, who lived in Bonaven, a village of Tabernia. He had a small farm near where I was taken captive. I was then nearly six-

teen years of age. But I was ignorant of God, and was brought into Ireland in captivity with several thousand men, according to our deserts, because we had departed from God, had not kept His commandments, and were disobedient to our teachers, who admonished us for our welfare; therefore, the Lord brought upon us the anger of His Spirit, and dispersed us among many nations, even to the end of the earth, where my depravity was seen among strangers. And there the Lord gave me a sense of my unbelief, that late I should remember my faults, and that I should be restored with my whole heart to the Lord God, who looked upon my meanness, and pitied my youth and ignorance, and kept me before I knew Him, and before I could discern or distinguish between good and evil, and strengthened and consoled me as a father a son.

“Wherefore, also, I cannot be silent (neither indeed is it expedient), as to the so numerous blessings and great grace with which He honored me in the land of my captivity, because this is my reward, that after my correction and acknowledgment of God, I should exalt and confess His wonders before every nation which is under the whole heaven; because there is no other God, nor ever was before, nor shall be after Him, except God the Father, unbegotten, without beginning, from Whom is every beginning, upholding all things, as I have said; and His Son Jesus Christ, Who alone with the Father, truly we testify, to have existed with the Father, inexpressly begotten before every beginning, and by Whom visible things were created, Who was made



Man, and having vanquished death, exists in the heavens. And He (God) gave Him power over every name, of things in heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth; and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord and God, Whom we believe and expect shall come by-and-by to be the Judge of the living and the dead; Who shall render to every one according to his deed; and Who has poured out upon us abundantly the Holy Spirit as a gift and the pledge of immortality; Who has made us believing and obedient, that we might be the sons of God and co-heirs of Christ; Whom we confess and adore, one God, in the Trinity of the sacred name. . . . I am not ignorant of the testimony of my God, who in the Psalms testifies, 'The mouth that lies shall slay the soul.' And the same Lord: 'For every idle word that men shall speak, they shall render an account in the day of judgment.' Wherefore, then, I should earnestly, with fear and trembling, dread this sentence in that day when no man can withdraw himself or abscond; but we all shall certainly render an account, even of our smallest sins, before the tribunal of Christ the Lord.

"When I was a youth, I was taken captive before I knew what I should desire or seek, or what I ought to shun. . . . Wherefore, I was a chief rustic deserter (or, fugitive), who, untaught indeed, knew not how to provide for the future; but this I know, certainly, that before I was humbled I was a stone which lies in the deep mud, and that He came Who is Almighty, and lifted me up, and raised me on high, and placed me on

His own side, and that, therefore, I ought to shout aloud in rendering thanks to the Lord, both here and for ever, for His great benefits, which the mind of man cannot sufficiently estimate. Wherefore, do ye, both great and small, admire; and ye lovers of rhetoric, assembled on the Lord's day, who fear God, hear and examine Who it was that roused me, a fool, from the midst of those who seemed to be wise and skilful in the law, and powerful in discourse, and in everything, and, indeed, inspired me, detested by the world above the rest, if such I am, but only that with fear and reverence, without complaining, I should faithfully serve that nation to which the love of Christ sent me, and made a gift of me in my life, if I shall live; and that, finally, I shall humbly and truthfully do them service.

“In the measure, therefore, of the faith of the Trinity, it becomes me to utter distinctly, without fear of danger, and to make known the gift of God, and the eternal consolation, and fearlessly and faithfully to spread abroad everywhere the name of God, that after my departure I may leave this knowledge to my Gaelic brethren and children (so many thousand men), whom I have baptized in the Lord. And I was not worthy, nor such as that the Lord should grant this unto His servant, that after sorrows and so many difficulties, after my captivity, after many years among the nation, He should confer this favor upon me, which formerly, in my youth, I never hoped nor thought of.

“But after I came into Ireland, I was daily employed feeding sheep, and frequently in the night I

prayed, and the love of God and His fear increased more and more in me; and my faith and spirits were augmented, so that in one day I have prayed so many as a hundred prayers, and in the night almost the same number; so that also I remained in the woods and mountains, and rose before day for prayer, through snow, through ice, through rain; and felt no injury, neither was there any slothfulness in me, as I now perceive, because then the Spirit was fervent in me."

He relates how he at last managed to escape and took ship for Britain. After a stormy voyage the fugitive and the ship's crew landed in a district which cannot be absolutely identified, but is generally thought to be on the coast of France, rather than in England or Scotland. Patrick continues:

"After three days we landed, and for twenty-eight days we journeyed through a desert, and food failed them, and famine and hunger prevailed over them. And on a certain day the ship-master began to say to me: 'What, Christian, do you say? Your God is great and Almighty, wherefore can you not pray for us? For you know we are in danger of perishing of hunger, for it is difficult for us to see any one.' For I had plainly said to them: 'Be converted from your faith to the Lord my God, to Whom nothing is impossible, that He may send you food in your way, even until you are satisfied; because everywhere there is abundance with Him.' And by the help of God so it happened, that a herd of swine appeared before their eyes in the way, many of which they slew; and they remained there two nights, and

were refreshed. Their dogs also, which were very numerous, were satisfied, otherwise they had been left dying on the road. After this they returned great thanks to God, and I glorified Him before their eyes. They also found wild honey, which they shared with me. And one of them said: 'It is a sacrifice; give thanks to God.' Afterwards I tasted nothing. But the same night I was sleeping, and Satan sorely tempted me, which I shall remember as long as I shall be in this body. There fell upon me, as it were, a huge rock, and it disabled not my limbs. But then it was suggested to me in the spirit that I should invoke *Helia*; and meanwhile I saw the sun rising in the heavens. And while I was calling out *Helia* with all my might, behold, the splendor of the sun fell upon me, and immediately dashed from me the oppressive weight. And I believe that it was from Christ my Lord, from Whom I earnestly sought assistance.

"After many years, again I was taken captive. On the first night, therefore, that I remained with them, I heard truly a divine response, saying, 'You shall be with them but two months;' which so came to pass. On the sixtieth night the Lord delivered me from their hands. Also on the journey He provided food for us, and fire, and dry weather, daily, until the tenth day, when we all arrived. As I have before hinted, we made the journey of the desert in twenty-eight days, and the night on which we arrived we had no food.

"Again, I was in Britain with my parents, who received me as their son, and besought me to promise that,

after the many afflictions I had endured, I would never leave them again. And then, truly, in the bosom of the night I saw a man as if coming from Ireland, whose name was *Victoricius*, with numerous letters, one of which he gave me, and I read the beginning of the epistle, containing the *Voice of the Irish*. And while I was reading the beginning of the epistle I thought in my mind that I heard the voice of those who were near the wood *Focluti*, which is near the western sea. And they shouted thus: 'We beseech thee, holy youth, to come and live amongst us.' And I was greatly pained in my heart, and could not read very much more; and thus I was proved. Thank God, that after many years the Lord performed to them according to their entreaty. And upon another night, I know not, God knows, whether in me or beside me, He spake skilfully with words which I heard, but which I could not understand, unless towards the end of the speech. It was to this effect: 'He gave His life for thee; He it is Who speaks in thee.' And so I waited, greatly rejoiced. And again I saw Him in me praying, and He was as if within my body and I heard, that is, over the inner man, and there He prayed powerfully, with groans. And in the midst of this I was astonished, and wondered and thought who it could be that prayed in me. But at the end of the prayer, it was to this effect, that I might be a bishop. And so I tried and remembered the saying of the apostle: 'The Spirit assists the infirmities of our prayers; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit Himself prays for us with groanings which cannot be

uttered,' which words cannot express. And again: 'The Lord our Advocate prays for us.'

"Therefore, I render thanks to God, Who has comforted me in all things, that He might not restrain me from the journey on which I had determined, nor from the work which I had learned from Christ my Lord. But rather from this I was sensible of courage, not small, and my faith was proved before God and men. Therefore, also, I boldly affirm my conscience did not accuse me then, nor shall it in the future. . . .

"I have a Creator Who knew all things before they came to pass. Because I am very greatly a debtor to God, Who bestowed so great a grace upon me, that multitudes of people should, through me, be born unto God; and that clergymen should be everywhere ordained for the people lately coming to the faith, whom God has taken from the ends of the earth, as He formerly promised by His prophets.

"Wherefore, then, it becomes us to fish well and diligently, as the Lord admonishes and teaches us, saying: 'Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.' And again: 'I will send many fishers and hunters, saith the Lord,' etc. Therefore, it greatly behooves us to spread our nets, so that a numerous multitude and crowd may be taken for God, and there may be everywhere clergymen, who shall baptize and exhort the poor and needy people, as the Lord in the Gospel enjoins. 'Go, therefore, now, and teach all nations, baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy

Spirit, till the end of the world.' And again: 'Go unto all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. Whosoever will believe and be baptized, shall be saved; but whosoever will not believe shall be condemned.'

"Whence, then, is it that in Ireland, those who never had knowledge, but always worshipped filthy idols, have somehow lately been made the people of the Lord, and are called the children of God?

"Behold, I call God to witness against my soul that I lie not; nor is there occasion to do so to you; nor do I hope for honor from any of you. For sufficient for me is the honor of Him Who does not lie. But I see myself in the present world that am exalted above measure by God. And I was not worthy, nor such that He should perform this for me, since I know that poverty and calamity much better suit me than riches and delicacies.

"But indeed I were a wretch and unhappy if I desired riches, which I have not; nor do I judge myself, for I daily expect either massacre, or to be entrapped, or reduced to slavery, or whatever else may happen.

"But I pray for those who believe and fear God. Whosoever shall deem it worthy to look upon, or receive this writing, which I, Patrick, a sinner, and verily untaught, have written in Ireland, that no man should ever say that it is my ignorance, if I have related anything trifling or of an inferior nature. But ye think, and it is most truly believed, that it was the gift of God. This is my confession before I die."

It is generally considered that he began his mission in Ireland in the year 432 and after serving his own generation, by the will of God, for thirty-three years, he entered into the rest that remains for the people of God, on the 17th of March, A. D. 465. Seldom have native ability and spiritual gifts been more remarkably combined than in this Spirit-led, self-denying missionary of the Cross.

His hard experiences as a slave did not tend in any way to embitter him against the Irish, but served rather to stir his heart to the very depth with a sense of their deep need, and thus he gave himself unreservedly to bring them to a knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ and His wondrous salvation.

His first year in Ireland as a preacher of the Gospel was marked by intense opposition, but on the other hand was crowned by wonderful success. Many were brought to know the Lord, and his converts were baptized in the Name of the Holy Trinity.

About a year after he began his work, he was summoned to appear before King Leogaire and his princes, who were celebrating a Druid festival at Tara. The Druid priests were filled with rage against him and declared they would destroy him by enchantment and by magical spells, if he dared to come to Tara. But, nothing daunted, Patrick, with a company of devoted young men whom he was training for the Gospel ministry, came into the King's presence singing a hymn known as "The Breastplate of Saint Patrick," which was in reality a rhythmical statement of his faith. A translation follows:



I bind to myself today,  
 The strong power of the invocation of the Trinity;  
 The faith of the Trinity in unity;  
 The Creator of the elements.

I bind to myself today,  
 The power of the incarnation of Christ  
 With that of His baptism;  
 The power of His crucifixion  
 With that of His burial;  
 The power of the resurrection  
 With (that of) the ascension;  
 The power of His coming  
 To the sentence of judgment. . . .  
 I bind to myself today,

The power of God to guide me,  
 The might of God to uphold me,  
 The wisdom of God to teach me,  
 The eye of God to watch over me,  
 The ear of God to hear me,  
 The Word of God to give me speech,  
 The hand of God to protect me,  
 The way of God to prevent me,  
 The shield of God to shelter me,  
 The host of God to defend me,—  
     Against the snares of demons,  
     Against the temptations of vices,  
     Against the lusts of nature,  
     Against everyone who would injure me,  
     Whether far or near,  
     Whether few or with many.

I have set around me all these powers,  
 Against every hostile, savage power  
 Directed against my body and my soul;

Against the incantations of false prophets,  
 Against the black laws of heathenism,  
 Against the false laws of heresy,  
 Against the deceits of idolatry,  
 Against the spells of women, and smiths, and Druids.  
 Against all knowledge that blinds the soul of man.

Christ protect me today,  
 Against poison, against burning,  
 Against drowning, against wound,  
 That I may receive abundant reward.  
 Christ with me, Christ before me,  
 Christ behind me, Christ within me,  
 Christ beneath me, Christ above me,  
 Christ at my right hand, Christ at my left,  
 Christ in the fort (when I am at home),  
 Christ in the chariot-seat (when I travel),  
 Christ in the ship (when I sail).

Of the Lord is salvation;  
 Christ is salvation;  
 With us ever be  
 Thy salvation, O Lord!

Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me,  
 Christ in the mouth of every man who speaks to me;  
 Christ in every eye that sees me,  
 Christ in every ear that hears me.

Surely no one can read this remarkable confession of his faith and not see how utterly different it is from the superstitious doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church. You look in vain for any reference to the merits of saints, or salvation by sacraments. There is no reference to the invocation of the blessed virgin, and no hint of a

partial salvation which might need to be completed in purgatory after death. It is as different as possible from the papal system.

Patrick believed in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity; in salvation by faith alone, through the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Church was to him the entire body of believers. He knew nothing of a great worldly system with a powerful and haughty hierarchy imposing its rule over the laity. Christ was to him all in all. What can be finer than the last three stanzas of the "Breastplate"?

The result of Patrick's testimony was the conversion of the King of Tara and many of his people, and from there he went to Taitan, where he preached the gospel while the heathen were celebrating a great festival which was reeking with their pagan religion. From place to place he went, throughout Meath, West Meath and the nearby counties, ever engaged in the blessed labor of preaching the gospel, baptizing and teaching the converts and gathering them together in Christian churches of the simplest character. The story of his labors reminds one of the missionary journeys of the Apostle Paul. He was often in great danger of his life and endured much physical suffering, but, nothing daunted, he went on in faith until he had evangelized the greater part of Ireland and had been used of God to the conversion of many thousands of the people. His closing years were spent in Ulster, between Armagh and Sane in County Down, where he died as he had lived, in lowly dependence on the Lord alone for his salvation, on

the 17th of March, A. D. 465. This day which has been observed as a papal holiday for many centuries, is really a memorial of the value of the great doctrine of justification by faith alone, which was the foundation of the Protestant Reformation twelve centuries later.

His letters to Coroticus are as thoroughly evangelical and free from later papal errors as any that an enlightened Christian preacher and teacher might write to-day, and give added proof that this one-time swineherd, who was the greatest missionary of his day, knew and loved the gospel of Christ which alone is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. In this faith Patrick lived and died, leaving behind him a great host to be his "crown of rejoicing" in that day.

(Note:—The above article by Dr. Ironside appeared in 1928 in *The Christian*, a magazine which was edited by Dr. Harold P. Morgan, but which is no longer published: and revised in the present form it appeared in the March, 1938, *Revelation Magazine*).

# Removing Mountains

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## An Address to Young Believers

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**W**E are all familiar with the passages in the New Testament that record our Lord's remarkable statement in regard to the faith that moves mountains. When the disciples saw how soon the barren fig tree had withered away after it was cursed, and expressed their astonishment in regard to this, we are told that,

**"Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, if ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done. And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive"—Matt. 21: 21, 22.**

Mark's account is a little fuller, and I would like you to have that before you also. There we read in chapter 11: 23-28:

**"For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses."**

I do not suppose that any of you for a moment would take our Lord's words literally; that is, you quite understand that He had no thought that any disciples of His would ever, at any time, undertake to level hills and mountains of earth and stone simply by prayer and faith. For these, undoubtedly,

*A Steam Shovel,*

backed by prayer and faith, would be the proper method of procedure, according to a principle that runs throughout the word of God, whereby we learn that those who labor earnestly for the Lord can count on Him to give wisdom and strength for their service. If, therefore, it were necessary to level an actual hill in order, perhaps, to locate a meeting-house or a mis-

sion hall in its place, we would not simply go down on our knees and ask God to clear the ground for us, but

*Faith and Works*

would go together.

Our Lord was accustomed to the use of figurative language. How rich and full are His discourses! And how wonderfully does He illustrate in this way! He is a vine, His disciples are branches. Yet no one supposes that He referred to a literal grapevine, Men were trees, and "every plant that My heavenly Father hath not planted," He said, "shall be rooted up." Yet no one supposes that He was referring to unfruitful trees in orchards. He is the Bread of Life, He gives the Water of Life, He is the Light of the World, His Truth is a candle, not to be hidden under a bushel or a bed; that is, not to be obscured by either business or slothfulness. And so when He speaks of removing mountains, you may be sure He has in mind just such a mountain as is referred to in the book of the prophet Zechariah, chapter 4: 7:

**"Who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubabel thou shalt become a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it."**

The mountain was plainly a mount of difficulty and perplexity. God had brought back the remnant of His people from Babylon to Jerusalem. He had caused the Persian king to give them permission there to live and to rebuild the temple of the Lord. But hardly was the work begun before cruel and vindictive enemies commenced their opposition. They taunted them; they threatened them; they wrote lying letters concerning them to the king himself, and in response to this there came a new commandment causing the work to cease. Yet God had declared it must go on. And, through the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, He encourages the people to judge in themselves whatever is displeasing to His holy mind and contrary to His Word, and then to go on with the work, taking no account whatever of the hindrances. It was simply theirs to labor on in faith. He, on His part, undertook to remove the mountain that seemed so high and so forbidding; it would be but as a plain before them as Zerubbabel and his helpers continued the work in dependence on the Lord. For, after all, they were not to labor in their own power. In the vision of

*The Candlestick, with the Golden Bowl*

upon the top of it, replenished with pure, fresh oil



from the dripping olive trees that stood on either side of it, and whose branches were represented as bending over the golden receptacle, the oil, thus silently and unseen to the eye of men, passed through the centre stem of the lamp-stand and out through its arms to the limbs, thus keeping the light burning, He was illustrating the great truth that all testimony for Him is "not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord."

Nevertheless there were conditions that they must be careful to comply with, and not the least of these was their responsibility to act in grace toward one another, and to show to each other that same mercy and compassion which God had had upon them. See chapter 7:-8-10:

**"And the word of the Lord came unto Zechariah, saying, Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, and show mercy and compassions every man to his brother: and oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart."**

Now in the account given in the Gospels, read in the light of this Old Testament passage, you will un-

derstand that the mountains to be removed by faith are mountains of difficulty, mountains of indifference, mountains of perplexity, such as we all have to face from time to time. Sometimes, indeed, the believer seems to be living in a narrow vale, surrounded on every hand by just such mountains, whose tops seem to reach up to heaven and almost exclude the very light of the sun—so high, so grim, so hard to overcome do they appear. Against mountains like these man's puny little spade or shovel would avail little indeed. All human effort at times becomes useless. The more one tries to remove the mountain, the higher it seems to rise, and the more discouraging do conditions become.

Yet here we have the plain word of the Lord,

**"If ye had faith, ye should say to this mountain, Be thou removed and cast into the sea, and it should obey you."**

There is no trial so great, no difficulty so hard, no perplexity so wearing, no trouble so overpowering but

*FAITH can gain the victory*

over it, and before believing prayer the mountains become a plain. We are told in 1 John 5: 4:

**"This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."**

But observe: There can be no such thing as the prayer of faith if certain clearly-defined conditions laid down in the Word of God are ignored. Only one of these conditions is particularly stressed in the Gospel account, but others are brought before us in various parts of the New Testament. In fact, there is one Old Testament verse that sums them all up:

*"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord  
will not hear me."*

This verse expresses a great principle that runs throughout all dispensations. You cannot *pray* aright, if you do not *live* aright; you cannot *pray* in the Spirit, if you do not *act* in the Spirit; you cannot *pray* in faith, if you do not *live* by faith. It is utterly impossible to so pray as to be assured of an answer from God, unless the life be regulated by the Word of God. He who says, "Call upon Me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me," has also said: "Delight thyself also in the Lord, and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Com-

mit thy way unto the Lord, **trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass.**"

Among the various hindrances mentioned in the New Testament are those of self-seeking, of disobedience, and of wavering.

*"Let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord."*

But here, in Mark's Gospel, our Lord particularly stresses the importance of maintaining an attitude of forgiving love toward all our brethren, if we would pray in such a way that mountains shall be removed. He says:

**"When you stand praying forgive, for if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither shall your heavenly Father forgive you."**

There are those, I know, who have stressed, and it seems to me, unduly, the difference between this command of the Lord and the words given by the Spirit to the Ephesians and Colossians. In Ephesians 4: 32 we read:

**"And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you."**

And then in Colossians 3: 12, 13:

**"Put on therefore as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye."**

It has been pointed out that in Mark the word is,

*"Forgive that you may be forgiven."*

whereas, in the full blaze of the Christian dispensation the word is, "Forgive *because* you have been forgiven."

And yet I do not think the two lines of teaching are in any way opposed, the one to the other. The forgiveness of which our Lord was speaking to His disciples was not the forgiveness of a sinner, but the forgiveness of a failing saint, whereas the forgiveness spoken of by the Apostle Paul was that of the sinner. Addressing His disciples, our Lord says, as it were, "You are failing from day to day; you constantly need your Father's restorative and governmental forgiveness; yet you, at times, cherish feelings of malice and enmity and an unforgiving spirit toward your brethren who offend you. If you do not forgive them,

you cannot count on your Father's forgiveness when you come to Him confessing your failures, and as long as this spirit of malice is cherished by you, you cannot really pray in faith." Paul takes up the other thought. He says, as it were, "You have been forgiven; how can you hold hard feelings against those who have offended you? If God had dealt with you according to your sins, how fearful would your judgment be! Yet He in Christ has graciously forgiven all; He has put away every sin, thus making you fit for His holy presence. Your responsibility now is to forgive as you have been forgiven."

I wonder if we do not have right here *the secret of so many of our unanswered prayers?* May we not learn from these passages just why so many mountains still rise up between our souls and God which might all be levelled to the plain, if we were only exercised about these things in His holy presence?

Some of you will remember the striking incident of

*The conversion of Macdonald Dubh,*

as narrated by Ralph Connor in "The Man from Glengarry." I understand the incident is not merely fiction, but is founded upon actual fact. The black Macdonald, a powerful, burly Highlander, living in

Glengarry country, Ontario, had suffered fearful anguish for years because of an injury inflicted upon him by a French Canadian some years before. He had nursed the desire to take a fearful vengeance upon his foe until it became a perfect obsession with him. Neither God nor eternity had any place in his life. It was in vain that the minister's wife tried to get him to forgive his enemy. She sought to have him repeat the Lord's Prayer, but he always balked at the words, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those that trespass against us." But God wrought in power in the Glengarry country, and there was a great revival, in which *real* Christians were aroused and Christless men and women were reached and saved. The black Macdonald heard the story of the Cross, portrayed in living power in the Gaelic tongue from the lips of the venerable Highland minister. It broke his heart and bowed him in penitence at the Saviour's feet. When next the minister's wife went to visit him and tried to stress the necessity of forgiveness, he sobbed out as he joined with her in what is generally called the Lord's Prayer, "Oh, it's a little thing, it's a little thing, for I have been forgiven so much."

It is this that grips the heart and enables one to

bear in patience the ill-doing and evil-speaking of others, and preserves from bitterness of spirit or any desire for vengeance. How can one, forgiven so much, ever hold an unforgiving spirit against any?

And yet, even as I ask the question, you know, and I know, how many of us have been hindered in our Christian life and experience by this very thing. We know, too, how it has kept us from the place of prayer, or if we prayed with our lips, how it has hindered the heart going out to God in faith. It is, indeed, the secret of many of our unanswered petitions. May God enable us to ever manifest the spirit of His own beloved Son, who died praying for his murderers, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do;" the same spirit that was manifested in the martyr Stephen, who cried, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge;" the spirit that the martyrs manifested; the same gracious disposition that caused the beloved J. N. Darby, whose name means so much to many who have learned to value the truth for which he stood, in his dying hours to say,

*"I die in charity toward all."*

So God would have us ever live. And as we thus live, we shall find a confidence filling our hearts when



we come to God in prayer, and we may know that we shall receive the things that we ask of Him because we do His commandments and love those things that are pleasing in His sight.

**“Oh that when Christians meet and part,  
These words were graved on every heart—  
They’re dear to God!**

**However wilful and unwise,  
We’ll look on them with loving eyes—  
They’re dear to God!**

**Oh, wonder!—to the Eternal One,  
Dear as His own beloved Son;  
Dearer to Jesus than His blood,  
Dear as the Spirit’s fixed abode—  
They’re dear to God!**

**When tempted to give pain for pain,  
How would this thought our words restrain,  
They’re dear to God!**

**When truth compels us to contend,  
What love with all our strife should blend!  
They’re dear to God!**

**When they would shun the pilgrim’s lot  
For this vain world, forget them not;**

But win them back with love and prayer,  
They never can be happy there,  
If dear to God.

Shall we be there so near, so dear,  
And be estranged and cold whilst here—  
All dear to God?

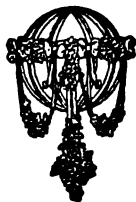
By the same cares and toils oppress,  
We lean upon one faithful breast;  
We hasten to the same repose;  
How bear or do enough for those  
So dear to God!"

The words of this little poem may well speak to the heart of every one of us. We enter so little into the tender, compassionate love of God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ for all His own, and perhaps some of us have never noticed that the Apostle speaks of the *love* of the Spirit. The Eternal Trinity is deeply interested in every one for whom Christ died. Surely we who are indwelt by the blessed Holy Spirit cannot but love those whom God *so* loved. And *love* drives out all malice, all unkindness, and brings every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

We shall not complain that God turns a deaf ear to our cry and does not answer prayer when we plead with Him to level the mountains that have caused

us so much distress, if we are careful to so act and live in His Presence that we can, indeed, ask in faith, nothing wavering, believing that we receive those things for which we make request. Thus shall we have the faith that removes mountains.

—H. A. IRONSIDE.





# IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESURRECTION

*By H. A. Ironside, Litt.D.*

**G**REAT TRUTHS that are stumbling-blocks to the natural man are nevertheless the very foundations upon which the confidence of the spiritual man is built, for “faith gives the assurance of that for which we hope, and convinces us of the reality of the unseen.” Of course, this is only true when our hopes are based upon the testimony of the Word of God.

That Word is forever settled in heaven, and, like God who gave it, the Word is unshakable. Men may cavil or quibble regarding its teachings, but “what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?” It is written in the prophets, “He . . . will not call back His words” (Isa. 31: 2). The reverent Christian will therefore accept without question what has been revealed in Scripture, even though it may be beyond his powers of comprehension.

When Festus, the Roman governor of Caesarea, was explaining his perplexity concerning Paul's case to King Agrippa, he expressed his wonder that the accusers of the apostle had nothing definite to bring against him, "but had certain questions against him of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive" (Acts 25: 19). This to Festus was such a manifest absurdity that he thought it hardly worth considering. He evidently knew that Jesus had died. It was a matter commonly reported, and he accepted that as truth, but that any sane man could believe that Jesus was alive again seemed to the cynical Roman utterly absurd and ridiculous. And yet the entire superstructure of Christianity rests on this great fact.

## **Christ's Resurrection—And Ours**

I purpose noting several implications drawn from the truth of Christ's resurrection, as set forth, not in the four Gospel accounts, but elsewhere in the Word of God. In the well-known resurrection chapter (1 Cor. 15) we are told:

"Now if Christ be preached that He rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.

Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ: whom He raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" (1 Cor. 15: 12-19).

In these verses the Holy Spirit develops for us and vigorously defends this great fundamental truth of Christian testimony. Some in Corinth were denying the physical resurrection of mankind generally. To them it seemed impossible that the dead should be brought again to life, but Paul shows that to deny the resurrection of mankind necessarily involves the denial of Christ's resurrection. If He has indeed been raised, and apart from this fact there would be no gospel to preach, why then should any question the power of God to bring back from the dead the millions who have died through all the millenniums of earthly history?

Surely He who could create a universe out of nought and who brought our physical bodies into existence so marvelously in the first place could resuscitate them even after they had dissolved away into their chemical elements! The miracle of each returning spring bears witness to this. As one looks out upon the apparently lifeless trees of winter, he

might well question the possibility that verdant groves would again dot the landscape, but in some strange, mysterious way the trees are enabled to draw from the earth the life-giving sap with all its chemical elements which causes leaves, flowers, and fruit soon to appear.

Certainly if one had never seen this miracle performed, he would come to the conclusion the first time that winter spread its blanket over the earth, that all things green and lovely had disappeared forever. But in a very short time he would find that his reasoning was based upon false premises.

## **Bodily Resurrection**

Our faith is based on facts as real as the observed processes of nature. There are those who teach today that our Lord Jesus never came out of the grave in His material body. They admit His continued existence in spirit, but deny His physical resurrection. But there can be no question as to the testimony of Holy Scripture. There we learn that our blessed Lord arose from the dead in the very body in which He had suffered and died for our sins, though changed in a most wonderful way. Nevertheless, it was a real, material, human body, and we know that it bore in the palms of the hands the print of the



nails. There was still the mark where the Roman spear had pierced His side, and one can scarcely question but that these evidences of Christ's love for His Church will be seen upon His glorified body throughout all eternity.

We gather from Scripture that no others of the righteous dead will bear similar evidences upon their resurrection bodies of pain and suffering here on earth, for our blessed Lord is going to present the Church to Himself as "not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." But as the everlasting testimony to the reality of redemption, He will bear the marks of His passion throughout all the ages to come. When John the Beloved gazed upon the Throne in glory, he saw in the midst of it "a Lamb as it had been slain" (Rev. 5: 6), or, as Weymouth so tenderly expresses it, "a lamb that looked as though it had once been offered in sacrifice."

"Thy wounds, Thy wounds, Lord Jesus,  
Those deep, dark wounds, they tell  
The sacrifice that frees us  
From sin and death and hell.  
These bind Thee once forever  
To all who own Thy grace;  
No hand those bonds can sever,  
No time those scars efface."

The redeemed of the Lord will see in those scars the testimony to a love that was stronger than death

and which the many waters of judgment could not quench. To Thomas and the other disciples, these were the sure evidences that He who appeared in their midst was actually the same Jesus whom they had known and loved before He went to the cross. He said to them, "Handle Me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have."

The implication of Christ's bodily resurrection is that if the power of God was put forth in raising Christ from the dead, it is folly to question His ability to raise up the dead bodies of His saints as well as of all men generally. In fact, so definite is the apostle as to this that he insists, "If the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised" (ver. 16).

## **Proof of Our Redemption**

What then, would be the next implication? Why, "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins" (ver. 17). In other words, if our Saviour did not come forth in triumph from Joseph's new tomb, then we have no gospel to preach to lost men. A dreaming poet like Arnold may speak of the body of Jesus still sleeping in a Syrian tomb, but that is only the language of unbelief. If it were true then there would be no redemption for lost sinners, no salvation for guilty men.

All our hopes rest upon the fact that He who was delivered up to death for our offenses was really raised again for our justification. During the time that the body of our Lord lay in the tomb, there was no one on earth who could be sure that redemption was an accomplished fact. If He had not risen, it would have been sure evidence that He was either deceived or a deceiver, for He had definitely predicted His resurrection as well as His sacrificial death.

The fact that He rose from the dead is in itself the proof that His great oblation upon the cross has satisfied the claims of divine righteousness and has met every requirement of infinite holiness. God has raised Him from the dead in token of the satisfaction He has found in His work, and He now sets Him forth a Prince and a Saviour.

A simple illustration may help to make clear what I am trying to say. Let us imagine the case of a man convicted of a crime and sentenced to spend a certain period of time in prison. In this particular instance, by some arrangement which of course I recognize would not be an ordinary thing, a substitute takes his place, agrees to serve out his sentence. In accordance with this understanding, the substitute is locked up in prison. Now as long as this man remains behind prison bars, the one in whose stead

he is suffering can never be absolutely sure that the law may not yet lay hold of him and demand that he serve out at least part of the sentence.

But one day as he goes down the street, he comes face to face with the one who so generously agreed to become his representative before the law and to bear the punishment that his crime deserved. He learns that, having served the sentence, his friend is now free. At once the offender's mind is at rest. He knows the law can have nothing further to say to him. Its claims have all been met, and he, the guilty one against whom the original judgment was rendered, is now once more a free man.

Because Christ's payment of the judgment of sin can be evidenced only by His bodily resurrection, then if Christ be not raised from the dead, there is no possible way of knowing that His redemptive work is an accomplished fact. He said He was to be delivered into the hands of sinful men, that they would crucify Him, and that on the third day He would rise again. The first two declarations were fulfilled. If the last has not been fulfilled, He stands convicted of false testimony. He was either Himself deluded in thinking that He was the Saviour and could triumph over death, or else He was a deliberate deceiver. It is His resurrection, the fulfilment of His

own prediction, which proves that His death was the all-sufficient sacrifice for sin which He proclaimed it to be.

And thus the believing sinner can say, "My sins nailed Him to the cross. He, the sinless One, took my place and there died under the judgment of God, enduring that divine wrath which should righteously have been poured out on me." But having settled the sin question, God has declared His acceptance of the work of His Son by raising Him from the dead and receiving Him into heaven at His own right hand as the risen, glorified Man.

## **The Essential for Victorious Living**

"If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." All the millions of saintly souls who have testified to their faith in Christ throughout what we call the Christian centuries were utterly mistaken, if Christ did not rise from the dead. But then the amazing thing to be accounted for is this: What was it that wrought such changes in their lives, that turned them from sin to righteousness, that delivered them from worldliness and selfishness and conformed them to the image of Christ? According to the Word of God, it is as believers are occupied

with the risen One that they become like Him. Let those then who deny His resurrection try to explain the transforming power of this faith in Him, who, according to the unbelievers, has no longer any existence.

The apostle's conclusion is that if Christ is no more than a master teacher, if He is only a guide, if His instruction is only meant to serve as a light for our pathway through this world, if the Christ who died has not been raised, we who profess faith in His name, who gladly give up the things of the world for love of Him, are of all men most to be pitied. In that case we are but following a will-o'-the-wisp, a delusion, for the sake of which we are surrendering much that men of the world value. But the experiences of untold millions of Christians prove that the risen Christ is the joy and satisfaction of the hearts of all who thus yield themselves to Him.

Consider the case of Saul of Tarsus. We see him hastening along the Damascus road, bitter hatred filling his heart for Jesus of Nazareth and for all who confess His name. But suddenly the heavens are opened, and a light brighter than the sun shines upon the wayward persecutor. A voice from heaven cries, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" And in answer to the hitherto rabid Pharisee's amazed in-

quiry, "Who art Thou, Lord?" the reply comes, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest."

At once the tremendous change that Jesus called being "born again" takes place. Saul of Tarsus becomes a new creation and soon goes forth as Paul the Apostle to preach the faith that once he destroyed. It was his contact with the risen Christ that wrought the miracle, as it has wrought similar miracles in the hearts and lives of untold thousands since.

This message was what the early preachers of the cross proclaimed everywhere they went. They preached "Jesus and the resurrection." Notice, it was not enough to preach Jesus. It was not enough to enlarge upon His excellencies. It was not enough to dwell upon the perfection of His life. It was not enough to occupy people with His sacrificial death. There was something more than this. "This Jesus hath God raised up . . . God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2: 32, 36). This was the message of Pentecost. This was the message which has been blessed and used of God throughout the centuries in the salvation of millions of souls, and this is the message for the preacher today, the only message that will insure the eternal salvation of all who believe it.

# Who Will Roll Away the Stone?

By HELEN FRAZEE-BOWER

“Who will roll the stone?” they questioned  
Early on that Easter day;  
But when they had reached the garden,  
Lo! the stone was rolled away:

Angels' hands had been before them,  
Wasted was their anxious dread;  
They, who thought to touch the body,  
Found a risen Lord instead.

In the garden of your worship,  
Does some rock of sad defeat  
Keep a dead Christ sealed before you  
Who was once alive and sweet?

Christian, bring the spice of service  
To the place you left the Lord,  
There to find the tomb forsaken,  
Opened of divine accord:

There to turn and meet, with wonder,  
In that hushed and holy place,  
Jesus Christ, alive and precious,  
Speaking with you face to face.

“Who will roll the stone?” they questioned.  
Christians, question not today;  
Rise up early, seek the garden—  
God will roll the stone away.

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# SALVATION AND REWARD

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There are two lines of truth very clearly distinguished in Scripture which are often confounded by those who do not read discriminatingly and who are not given to "rightly dividing the Word of Truth." I refer to the subjects, "Salvation by Grace" and "Reward for Service." To the casual reader of the New Testament it sometimes seems as though there is apparent contradiction, when in one place we are distinctly told that we are saved by grace alone, apart from works, whereas, in another, we are just as clearly told that we are to be rewarded according to our works. It is only as we learn the mind of the Spirit in regard to these two very different lines of teaching that the soul is set free from self-occupation and given to know the blessedness of peace with God, on the ground of pure grace, thus leaving one free to serve in the happy knowledge that the *sin question* is forever settled, but that *service* is the outflow of a grateful heart to the One who has redeemed us, and yet that He, in His wondrous loving-kindness, takes note of everything we do for Him, and will reward accordingly.

At the very outset it may be well to link together a number of scriptures which present these various phases of truth. In Romans 4: 3-5 we read:

**"For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.**

**Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.**

**But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."**

Here we learn that, just as Abraham was accounted righteous before God on the ground of *faith alone*, so to-day we who believe are justified from all our ungodliness the moment we trust in Christ. Were it otherwise, were it necessary that we should prove ourselves worthy in order to be saved, our salvation would not be of grace, for we would be putting God in our debt. If salvation is a reward for service, then, clearly, God would owe it to the one who faithfully performed whatever service He demanded, to save that soul in exchange for the good deeds done. This, of course, would not be grace. How different is the principle on which we are justified! It is "to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly." Nothing can be clearer than this, and yet how many have stumbled over it.

Now let us link with this Ephesians 2: 8-10:

**"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.**

**For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."**

Here again we have the precious truth manifested, that salvation is altogether of grace through faith; that is, through believing the testimony that God has given. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." Therefore even the faith by which we are saved is in no sense of ourselves; it is God's gift, for it is not until He gives a testimony that we can believe; but when that testimony comes home to us in the power of

the Holy Spirit and we put our trust in it, we are saved. This leaves no place whatever for works as a procuring cause of salvation. Were it otherwise, there would be ground for boasting. If I could obtain a place in Heaven because of my devotion to Christ down here, I would have good reason to congratulate myself for all Eternity upon that very devotion which had led to so blessed a result. But no saint in Heaven will ever give himself credit for anything he has ever done. The song of all the redeemed will be, "Unto Him that loveth us and hath washed us from our sins in His own blood, be glory and honor, dominion, and power and might forever and ever." And yet, in the tenth verse of our passage, we are just as distinctly told that we are created in Christ Jesus unto good works; that is, we did not enter the new creation through good works, but having been brought into this new creation by faith, it is now incumbent upon us, as obedient children, to walk in righteousness before God, living in good works which God has pre-appointed to characterize those who are saved.

In 1 Corinthians, chapter 3, the apostle tells us of the testing which evidently takes place at the judgment-seat of Christ. Notice verses 11 to 15:

**"For other foundation can no man lay than is laid, which is Jesus Christ.**

**Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;**

**Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.**

**If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.**

**If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."**

According to this passage, every believer is a workman building upon the foundation already laid, which is Jesus Christ. His work may be according to the Spirit, likened unto gold, silver and costly stones, or according to the flesh, and likened unto wood, hay, stubble. The day of manifestation will reveal what is of God and what is not. For that work which abides reward will be given, but that which does not abide will disappear in the cleansing fires of judgment, and for the wasted time the believer will suffer loss. His salvation, however, is not in question. He would not appear at this scene of testing if he were not already saved. The destruction of his works does not touch this question. Though everything should be burned up, he, himself, shall be saved, yet so as by fire.

Another helpful passage in this connection is found in Hebrews 10: 35, 36:

**"Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward.**

**For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise."**

It is to persons already saved that the exhortation comes: "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward." This same principle was true in olden times, for we read in chapter 11, of Israel's great leader, that,

**"By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;**

**Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;**

**Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward."**

There can be no question but that Moses was already a quickened soul, a child of God, in whom justifying faith dwelt, when he made his great renunciation and gave up a throne for a wilderness tent, for his eye discerned and his heart was set upon the reward in eternal ages, reserved for the one who put the testimony of God before personal comfort and convenience.

A kindred verse is found in Second John, verse 8:

**"Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward."**

No believer can lose his salvation, for that is not in his keeping. We are told this distinctly in John 10: 27-29:

**"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me:**

**And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.**

**My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand."**

But we may lose at least a portion of our reward.

There are two verses in the Book of Revelation which fit together beautifully in this connection. In chapter 3: 11 the Lord announces His near return, saying:

**"Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."**

In chapter 22: 12 He says:

**"And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be."**

These two verses make one thing very clear, which forms the basis of a most interesting and helpful study

for our encouragement and warning. The *reward* spoken of in the latter passage is evidently synonymous with the *crown* of the other.

Any one can readily see, by turning to the word "crown" in a critical or analytical Bible Concordance, that there are two words so translated in the New Testament. One is literally "diadem," and refers to the regal circlet worn by a king or emperor. This is the word used in Rev. 12, 13 and 19. In the first instance the Great Red Dragon, "that old serpent, which is the devil and Satan," is seen wearing seven diadems. He is the prince of this world. Then we see the wild-beast of chapter 13—the coming prince of Dan. 9—wearing ten diadems. This is Satan's Man, who will some day arise and will accept the offer that our blessed Lord indignantly spurned when shown all the kingdoms of earth and promised their rulership if He would worship the Adversary. In chapter 19 the descending Lord Himself comes to take the kingdom, and "upon His head are many diadems." He is to rule as King of kings and Lord of lords.

The other word—"stephanos," from which the name "Stephen" comes—is, literally, a victor's wreath. It refers to the chaplet of laurel or other leaves placed upon the brow of the triumphant athlete in the games of old, or the golden band worn upon the head of the victorious general as he marched in triumph through the city amid the plaudits of the people. Subject kings wore a crown of this character in contrast to the imperial diadem. When the soldiery mocked Jesus they put upon Him a crown—or, *stephanos*—of thorns, the fruit of the curse. Yet He was indeed the Victor, even in the hour of His apparent defeat, and He is now "crowned with glory

and honor," as He sits at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens.

"His be the Victor's Name  
Who fought the fight alone,  
Triumphant saints no honor claim,  
His conquest was their own.

By weakness and defeat  
He won the meed and crown,  
Trode all our foes beneath His feet  
By being trodden down."

And He, the Overcomer whom the Father Himself has crowned, is the Judge of the contests in which His saints are engaged, and will in due time sit upon the *Bema*—the judgment-seat—and give to the overcomers the crowns they have won in the conflict with sin. We have a list of the heroes of faith who have fought and overcome in Heb. 11, and in chapter 12 we read,

**"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of faith, who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (vers. 1, 2).**

"Bless, bless the Conqueror slain;  
Slain in His victory;  
He lived, He died, He lives again,  
For thee, His Church, for thee."

We likewise are running a race and for us as for Him there is a crown at the end. It is of this the apostle Paul writes when he speaks of

## **"An Incorruptible Crown,"**

in 1 Cor. 9: 24. He has been speaking of service—of his own call to preach the gospel—of the importance of faithfully fulfilling his ministry; and then he uses the striking illustration of these closing verses:

**"Know ye not that they which run in a race, run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain."**

It is not salvation of which he speaks. We do not obtain the gift of God—eternal life—by diligence, or by "running."

**"It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy" (Rom. 9: 16).**

But we are, as Christians, running a race—we are contending in the arena—and for the victors there are fairer crowns than ever were bestowed on the winners in the Olympic games or on the battle-fields of earth. Let us then see to it that we so run that we may obtain the reward.

In the next verse he goes on to remind them that "every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things." The youth who would win the race is careful to subdue his natural appetites, to "train down" to the proper weight, to hold himself in check lest by self-indulgence on any line he unfit himself for the contest.

**"Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible."**

In a few hours the laurel wreath will fade or the metallic circle tarnish and corrode. We are striving for an imperishable prize, a crown that is incorruptible.



All believers who die will be raised in the first resurrection to incorruptibility (as 1 Cor. 15 assures us), but the incorruptible crown is the prize for faithfully running the Christian race. It is the Master's "Well Done!" at the end of the course.

With such a reward in view, what an incentive do I have for holy living—for self-denying devotion to Christ. Into this Paul himself fully entered. He says;

**"I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air; but I keep under my body and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."**

This last word is the negative form of the word that means "approved." It means therefore "disapproved," or "rejected."

The apostle covets above all else the Lord's approval. He would receive the victor's incorruptible wreath at the hands of Him who once wore the crown of thorns. With this in view he will not permit the body to be master. He will hold its tendencies in check that he may not by any possibility bring dishonor on his Lord's name through any carnal indulgence, and so miss His approbation at last.

How many a one has preached to others who has been set aside as a servant and—in some instances—proves utterly unworthy even to bear the name of Christian because he has not held his body under but has given way to fleshly lusts and passions which war against the soul.

To preach well is but to increase one's condemnation if one does not live well. Like the clean beasts of old, mouth and foot must agree, speech and walk must both be according to godliness, if one would win the crown.

The race may seem long, and the way rough and difficult, but the reward is sure for him who keeps his eye on Christ and follows on in the footprints He has left on the wilderness road. To save one's life is to lose it. To lose it now for His name's sake is to keep it unto life eternal, and thus to win the incorruptible crown.

### **"The Crown of Rejoicing"**

In 1 Thessalonians the Second Coming of our Lord occupies the prominent place. It may be said to be the theme of the epistle. In some aspect it is referred to in every chapter. In chapter 1 we read of the Thessalonian believers that they had

**"Turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven."**

Waiting for the Son—and serving while they wait! What blessed and holy occupation was theirs! May it be ours too.

In chapter 3 (for I pass over chapter 2 for the moment) they were exhorted to holiness of life in view of "the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints."

The "blessed hope" is a purifying hope, and an incentive to godly living. "Every man," we are told, "that hath this hope in Him (or, set on Him) purifieth himself even as He is pure."

The rapture—the order of events when the Lord descends to call away His saints—is unfolded most precious in chapter 4, while in chapter 5 we have perfect sanctification reached at last at "the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (ver. 23).

But what of chapter 2? In that particular section the apostle is writing of his own service and the ministry of his fellow-laborers in view of this glorious event. He thinks of the Lord's return as the time of manifestation and reward—the time when the servant's works will all be examined and pronounced upon by the Lord Himself. It will be then that the results of his own years of toil and travail will be fully made known. Of this he is assured: the souls he has led to Christ will be a cause for thanksgiving then. So he writes—and to his own converts, be it noted—

**“What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For ye are our glory and joy.”**

He speaks in a similar strain in Phil. 4: 1:

**“My brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown.”**

They too were the fruit of his ministry, and, like the Corinthians, the seal of his apostleship in the Lord.

How sweet and tender the relationship between the minister of the Word and those he has led to Christ! And when I write “minister of the Word,” I do not mean one in a clerical office, or some official position, but any believer who ministers the truth of the gospel to another and so leads him to Christ.

Those thus saved through our testimony will be to us a crown of rejoicing in that day. To see them safe in the glory, singing the praises of the Lamb who redeemed them, and then to realize that in some sense they are there because of our testimony in weakness while on earth, what a wreath of joy that will be! We shall indeed be crowned with gladness!

Rutherford knew something of this when, on looking back from his dying bed to the scene of his former labors he gave utterance to the beautiful words which have been embalmed in poetry by Mrs. Cousins:

“Oh, Anwoth by the Solway,  
To me thou still art dear;  
E'en from the verge of heaven  
I drop for thee a tear.

Oh, if *one soul* from Anwoth  
Meet me at God's right hand,  
My heaven will be two heavens  
In Immanuel's land.”

Yes, one soul—saved from going down to the pit, plucked as a brand from hell, pulled out of the fire, as Jude puts it—will be for the one used to his deliverance a veritable doubling of the joys of heaven. What will it mean for one like Paul who won thousands to Christ? What for every God-raised-up evangelist who has been the means of the salvation of vast numbers of men and women through the preached Word?

But as intimated above it is not only those divinely called to preach who may win this crown. We are all called to witness for Christ, to seek to win others to know Him “whom to know is life eternal.” And it is written in the Word, “He that is wise winneth souls” (R. V.). Oh, to have the wisdom that will enable us to turn many to righteousness!

Soul-winning is not, in itself, an arbitrary gift. It is something that may be cultivated by exercise and communion with God. He fits us for such blessed and honorable service.

The first requisite is to realize the need of men, their lost condition. Have you ever asked God to give you to

feel the appalling need of the unsaved all around you? And has He answered by burdening you for their souls? Then continue to look to Him for the message. He will give holy boldness, tender compassion, wisdom in presenting the truth, and grace to persist in spite of rebuffs. The joy of seeing one poor sinner changed into a saint will amply repay all the toil and exercise here on earth, and at the Lord's return the crown of rejoicing will be your eternal reward.

“Go on, go on, there's all  
Eternity to rest in,  
And far too few are on the  
Active Service List;  
No labor for the Lord is  
Risky to invest in,  
But nothing will make up  
Should His ‘Well Done’ be missed.”

And let us not forget the other side. It is written, “He that withholdeth corn the people shall curse him.” The unsaved may not relish being spoken to now. But a day will come when they will blame us if we passed them by without a warning word or a kindly message of grace. We have the food for which they are dying. We knew they are doomed without the gospel. And shall we selfishly and coldly leave them to die without an honest endeavor to awaken them to a sense of their need and make them realize a Saviour's love?

Will not the remembrance of such unfaithfulness make us “ashamed before Him at His coming?”

“Must I go and empty-handed,  
Thus my dear Redeemer meet?  
Not one sheaf with which to greet Him,  
Lay no trophy at His feet?”

It need not be. Each one may in his measure be a winner of souls, and thus gain a crown of rejoicing in that day of all days so soon to dawn. What is needed is willingness to be used. Someone has said, "God has wonderful things to display if He could only get the show-cases." Paul was such a "show-case;" "that in me," he says, "Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering." Oh, may we too—you and I, my reader—be used to display the grace of Christ to a lost world and to attract men to Himself. Such will be our joy and crown when He returns to reckon with His servants.

### **"The Crown of Righteousness"**

2 Timothy 4 is a marvelous chapter to have been penned by a worn old man in a Roman death-cell, just waiting for the summons to the last act of a martyrdom that had already lasted half of an ordinary life-time. It was probably written from an underground dungeon in the Mamertine Prison. After a few years' liberty following his first imprisonment, Paul had been re-arrested and sentenced to death for the fearful crime of preaching "another King, one Jesus!" His had been a life of almost incredible hardships for the gospel's sake and now his sun seemed to be setting in a night of darkness and unrelieved gloom.

But the aged apostle did not so consider it. Whatever the then-present sufferings he saw the glory beyond. And his valedictory letter to his companion in many journeys and conflicts ends with a note of triumph such as this world has seldom heard.

"I am now ready to be offered," he exclaims—thinking of himself as a victim about to be placed on the altar

of sacrifice—"and the time of my departure is at hand." The word for "departure" is "exodus," the same word used by Peter in his second epistle (1:15), where it is translated "decease." For these men of God death was not a lapsing into unconsciousness, but a "going-out" of the body in order to be "present with the Lord."

Looking back over his long record, Paul can say without affectation:

**"I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."**

It was not merely that he had fought well. Undoubtedly he had. But he would leave the Lord to say that. What he says is that the fight in which he had been engaged was the good cause—in opposition to the evil. The definite article brings this out more clearly than the indefinite as in the Authorized Version.

And now what of the future? Ah, he sees all bright ahead!

**"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing!"**

May we not say that this last expression gives us the secret of Paul's devotion to the cause of righteousness. He loved—loved passionately—the glorious appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ; therefore he could count all else but dross that he might win Christ's approval in that day of manifestation.

All believers are "made the righteousness of God in Christ." To every one who has trusted Him He is Jehovah Tsidkenu, "The Lord our Righteousness."

But the crown of righteousness is the reward—as distinguished from “the gift of righteousness”—which will adorn the brow of every one who has manifested by a life of practical righteousness and devotion to the Saviour’s interests in this world, that he truly loved the appearing of our Lord Jesus.

**“Every man that hath this hope in Him [or set on Him, i.e., on the Coming One], purifieth himself even as He is pure.”**

Nothing is so conducive to a life of integrity before God and uprightness before men as an abiding sense in the soul of the near coming of the Lord. He who truly waits for God’s Son from heaven will be found serving the living and true God day by day.

To profess to hold the doctrine of the pre-millennial coming of Christ is one thing. To be really held by it is quite another. He whose life is unrighteous, whose spirit is worldly, whose outlook on life is carnal and selfish, has never yet learned to love His appearing. Nor will such ever obtain the crown of righteousness in that day. It is alone for those who, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than all earth’s boasted treasures, live *now* in view of *then*, because, like Moses, they “have respect unto the recompense of the reward.”

Oh, how small and insignificant will the things that worldlings and carnal Christians live for, seem “in that day!” May we then truly so love His appearing as to gladly follow His steps now.

“Unto Thee, the homeless Stranger,  
Outside the camp,  
Forth we hasten, fear no danger,  
Outside the camp.



Thy reproach, far richer treasure  
Than all Egypt's boasted pleasure;  
Drawn by love that knows no measure,  
Outside the camp."

Then when He returns, what joy unbounded will it be to receive from His pierced hand the crown of righteousness, the evidence of His approval and the recognition of a righteous life.

### **"The Crown of Life"**

The next victor's wreath of which I would speak is the crown of life, concerning which we read in two distinct passages. James 1: 12 tells us,

**"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him."**

And in Rev. 2: 10 the Lord comforts the church in Smyrna with the words,

**"Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life."**

It is noteworthy that in each of these passages we have suffering saints in view: children of God exposed to bitter trial, even going to the length of intense, malignant persecution by Satan's emissaries. God *could* easily hinder these cruel foes; He *could* quench the fierce flames of affliction; He *could* turn back these overwhelming floods of sorrow. But He chooses rather to enable His

tested ones to overcome in the day of trial than to free them from trouble. And this not because He takes any delight in the anguish of His distressed people, but because this very tribulation is a means of discipline which results in lasting blessing "to those who are exercised thereby" (Heb. 12: 11). He sits by the fining-pot and watches intently till He sees His own countenance reflected in the melted silver. He walks with His persecuted ones in the furnace, though it be heated seven times more than ordinary. And "He giveth more grace," that they who look to Him may suffer and endure.

Then when the day of manifestation comes He will bestow with His own once-pierced Hand the crown of life, upon all who have fought and overcome.

When afflicted with a thorn in the flesh—"a messenger of Satan" sent to buffet him (lest he should be exalted above measure because of the abundance of the revelation he had received when caught up to the third heaven), Paul tells us he besought the Lord thrice that he might be delivered from the trial. But the answer came, saying in effect: I will not take the thorn out of your flesh, Paul; but I will do something even better for you than that; I will give you grace to bear it, and to glorify Me in it.

**"My grace is sufficient for thee; for My strength is made perfect in weakness!"**

And Paul at once ceases to cry out for deliverance, but exclaims with chastened confidence,

**"Most gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon me."**

He was but living out what he elsewhere tells his fellow-saints when he says,

**"We glory in tribulation also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Rom. 5:3-5).**

Our restless hearts would fain cause us to flee from the trial, hoping for better conditions elsewhere, but we are called upon to be strong in the grace of endurance—to suffer in the flesh rather than yield to sin—to be persecuted even to death rather than to be disobedient to the heavenly vision—to be counted as the offscouring of the earth rather than to court the favor of men by unfaithfulness to Christ.

**"Should we to gain the world's applause,  
Or to escape its harmless frown,  
Refuse to countenance Thy cause  
And make Thy people's lot our own,  
What shame would fill us in that day,  
When Thou Thy glory wilt display."**

How worth while will it all seem then, to have suffered in patience here, when we shine forth with Him when He comes, wearing the crown of life, the sign of His appreciation and approval! And if regrets are possible in heaven, how will we regret every cowardly effort to escape reproach, or every time that we, in weakness, yielded to temptation, preferring present enjoyment rather than future glory.

But the hope of the crown is not, in itself, incentive enough to keep us from unfaithfulness to Christ in this scene of testing. It is only as He, Himself, is the joy of our hearts and the present portion of our souls that we can resist the siren-lures of this false world, and go on in true devotedness counting all but loss in order

that He may be magnified in us. And it is as our hearts are attached to Him *where He is*—up there in the glory of God—that we can spurn this world's empty glory. Some one has truly said, "No one can rightly put this world beneath his feet until he has seen a better world above his head." As we walk in the light of *that* world we shall indeed be able to sing from the heart,

"We wait for Thee, content to share  
In patience, days of trial;  
So meekly Thou the cross didst bear,  
Our sin, reproach, denial.  
How should not we receive with Thee  
The cup of shame and sorrow  
Until the promised morrow?"

That happy morn draws on apace. The only time we shall ever be permitted "to suffer for His sake," is nearly at an end! Let us then stand fast in the closing hours of the age of grace, assured that He for whom we wait is just at hand, and that the joy will be His as well as ours when we receive, if faithful unto death, the crown of life.

Eternal life is the gift of God, and is ours by faith upon believing. The crown of life is the reward for faithfulness, even though involving physical death.

### **"The Crown of Glory"**

Of another crown we read in 1 Peter 5: 1-4. He, who had been specially deputed to feed the lambs and sheep of Christ's flock writes,

**"The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and**

**also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed; feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind, neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."**

Every word in this stirring exhortation is of moment, and may well be carefully weighed.

Note first of all that Peter though one of the chiefest apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, and one to whom a special revelation and particular mission had been given, claims no authoritative place over other servants of Christ. He is "also an elder." That is, he writes of himself as a "co-presbyter"—one with his fellow-presbyters. *If Peter was the first Pope it is clear that he never knew it.* He does not write as "the Holy Father" to whom others are in duty bound to be subject, but he exhorts his fellow-elders, as being himself one of their company.

It is true he had been privileged beyond most if not all of them. He had known the Lord, had companied with Him during His earthly ministry and had known Him after His resurrection. He had seen Him die—He was a witness (not a partaker) of His sufferings. He would share in the soon-coming glory.

Remembering the words of the risen Saviour, spoken so long ago that morning by the seaside, "Feed My lambs, shepherd My sheep," he passes on the exhortation to his brethren engaged in the work of ministering to the people of the Lord. Observe he bids them, "Feed the flock of God"—not, "Fleece the flock." Nothing can be more reprehensible than to think of a Christian church or assembly of believers as owing a living to the preacher

or teacher who imparts the Word of life to them. He who thinks of the "ministry" as "one of the learned professions" and a mere means of livelihood, is on low ground indeed. The true minister of Christ is a man with a shepherd's heart who loves the flock and cares for them for the sake of Him who bought them with His blood. That they have responsibility to him is plain, but he looks not to them but to the Lord for his support.

And be it noted, the elders are not set over the flock (though indeed they are "over them in the Lord") but they are told to "feed the flock of God which is among you." It is true they are to lead the sheep, as in Hebrews 13: 17, where we read,

**"Obey them that have the rule over you (or, literally, that guide you), and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you."**

In the assembly of God, if things are as they should be, there will be neither clerical pretension on the one hand nor anarchy on the other. The Christian company is a brotherhood where each should have in view the best interests of all the rest, and where all the gifts given by the great Head of the Church may be freely exercised for the blessing of the whole Church.

To some is given in a special way the service of oversight, and such are bidden to care for the rest not as by constraint, but willingly; that is, not as being pressed into a position from which a lowly man might well shrink but as gladly serving for Christ's sake, and although those who give their whole time to the ministry of the Word are to subsist upon what grateful saints

gladly give (as unto the Lord) they are not to be controlled by covetousness, nor to serve for "filthy lucre."

Neither are they to "lord it over possessions." Notice that the word "God's" is in italics. The warning is really against regarding the saints as their own allotted portion.

Men speak (thoughtlessly often, no doubt) of "my church," or "my congregation," but this is practically to deny and to forget that it is "His church" and "the congregation of the Lord," to which they may be called to minister.

It has been pointed out often that the word for "heritage" is *kleros*, from which we get our word "clergy." And here, paradoxical as it may seem, *the laymen are the clergy!* All God's people are His clergymen, according as it is written, "The Lord's portion is His people."

What a solemn thing then to lord it over such! But how grateful such should be and how responsive to those who feed them as Christ's under-shepherds who are called upon not only to minister the Word but to be examples (or models of behavior) to the flock.

Alas, that oft-times they find this a most thankless service. Their most earnest labors are frequently quite unappreciated and they can say with Paul, "The more abundantly I love you, the less I [am] loved." But the "pay-day" is coming! When the Chief Shepherd shall be manifested a crown of glory awaits every faithful servant who has cared for His lambs and sheep during His absence. The glory of this age passes away but the crown of glory is unfading and eternal.

Often, down here, the faithful servant is called on to bear reproach and shame, to have his good evil-spoken of, and his motives impugned. Men would crown him with thorns, as they cruelly did to the Good Shep-

herd Himself—but even as He is now “crowned, with glory and honor,” so shall they who follow Him be, in that day.

“Go, labor on; spend and be spent;  
Thy joy to do the Master’s will,  
It is the way the Saviour went,  
Should not the saved one tread it still?”

Then, when called to His judgment-seat to give an account of the souls committed to his care, how will the true under-shepherd rejoice as he hears the “Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!” Then shall the unfading glory-crown encircle the head that often ached because of ingratitude and lack of appreciation here on earth, and the unchanging brilliance of the wreath that tells of divine appreciation will cover the brow that once was worn with care.

### **Striving Lawfully**

Having noticed the various names given to the crowns of reward, I would now desire to emphasize some exhortations and warnings in regard to them which we find in the New Testament.

We have already touched on the possibility of being disapproved at last if not careful to walk before God in self-judgment, keeping the physical appetites in subjection (1 Cor. 9: 27). And we have glanced also at 2 John 8:

**“Look to yourselves that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.”**

It is self-evident then, that the reward is forfeitable,



though eternal life is not. How then may we, perchance, labor in vain and fail of the proffered crown?

Let us notice 2 Tim. 2: 5. In the A.V. we read,

**"And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully."**

The 1911 Version (Oxford) translates this verse as follows:

**"And if a man also contend in the games, yet is he not crowned if he have not observed the rules."**

Here is a principle that is both important and far-reaching. The illustration is plain. In the athletic contests of the Greeks and Romans, as amongst us to-day, there were certain recognized demands to which each contestant must conform. A youth might be strong and vigorous, and display great prowess and ability, but if he failed to go by the rules of the game he was disqualified, and could not receive the victor's wreath.

At the celebrated revived Olympian games held at Stockholm, Sweden, some years ago, a young Indian, James Thorpe, excelled all others in a number of contests of strength and skill. He won many medals and was the envy of scores of white athletes, who tried in vain to defeat him. When the King of Sweden bestowed the prizes upon him he took him by the hand and exclaimed, "You, sir, are the greatest amateur athlete in the world to-day!" It was a moment to be proud of, and the Indian could be excused if a feeling of gratified elation filled his breast at such a time. But after his return to America certain men began an investigation into his past. Finally they discovered that one summer, while still a student in a Government School, Thorpe had

played on a village baseball team for a few dollars a week. This fact disqualified him from entering an amateur contest. When it was put before the King, he had to write to the Indian demanding the return of his trophies. The poor lad was nearly heart-broken, but he sent all back and wrote a straightforward letter in which he begged His Majesty not to think too hardly of him, reminding the King that he was "an ignorant Indian boy," and did not know he was violating any rule in entering the games after having taken money for sport. But his ignorance of the requirements could not save him from losing his wrongly-bestowed honors. While no kindly person could feel other than sympathetic to Thorpe, yet all had to acknowledge the righteousness of the King's ruling.

And so will it be with those who are seeking after an incorruptible crown. The rewards will only be for those who "strive lawfully," who "have observed the rules" laid down in the Word of God.

There may be great self-denial, intense devotion, and deep earnestness, while after all one's entire program of life and service may be thoroughly unscriptural. Therefore the need of knowing the Bible and "going by the Book." Much that passes for Christian service to-day is merely fleshly activity. Much that is dignified as "Church work" is thoroughly opposed to the divine revelation as to the Church and its responsibilities. Much that is counted as evidence of spirituality is simply natural refinement, and in no sense the result of the in-working of the Spirit of God. Much that is "highly esteemed among men" is an "abomination in the sight of God."

The service which will meet His approval, and which

will be rewarded at the judgment-seat of Christ, is that which is of the Holy Spirit in accordance with the Word of God. Nothing else will stand the test.

Men may weary themselves in seeking to "build up the cause," as it is called, and may display most commendable faithfulness to "principles" which they believe to be sound and right, only to find "in that day" that time and labor have gone for nought because they had no "Thus saith the Lord" to warrant the efforts they have put forth. Our thoughts will not change God's Word.

It is of primary importance that the laborer devote much time to the prayerful conscientious study of his Bible, in order that his mind may be directed by the Truth, and that he may thus learn to readily detect what is contrary to sound instruction.

Otherwise he may have to look back with regret on wasted energies and wasted years that might all have been devoted to the glory of Christ, but were devoted to the building up of some unscriptural system instead, and therefore will be consumed when "the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is."

The apostle did not want to "run in vain" nor "labor in vain." Nor should we. Rather let us seek to make every day count for God as we pray: "Order my *steps* in Thy Word."

### **"Respect for the Reward"**

But shall we work with reward in view? Is not this selfish? Is it not better to ignore this matter altogether and to work alone for Christ? These are questions often asked and not to be lightly turned aside.

Surely we would not have so many exhortations to see to it that we do not lose our reward if the Holy Spirit did not intend that we should have the crowns in view.

Of Moses we read that,

**"By faith he, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he HAD RESPECT unto the RECOMPENSE of the REWARD"** (Heb. 11:24-26).

He weighed what Egypt could offer over against what God by His Word had promised to His people, and all Egypt's glory seemed lighter than air in comparison with the praise of God. Nor was it selfishness that thus led him to have "respect unto the recompense of the reward." He knew that God is glorified, as His people learn to esteem His favors in the right light.

Years ago, after the present writer had been speaking along the lines of truth indicated in these papers, a modest Christian woman came up to him and asked, "Am I to understand that you are working for reward, that you are looking forward to receiving a crown?" "Yes," was the reply; "I should rejoice indeed to be crowned by Him whose servant I am, in that day." "Well," she exclaimed, "I am disappointed in you! I hoped you labored unselfishly out of pure love for Christ, and not with any expectation of reward. For myself, I only desire to please *Him*, and I am not at all interested in the crowns." "But, Madam," she was asked, "do you recall what we are to do with the crowns if we are so happy as to win them?" Instantly her face changed. "Oh," was the answer, "I had not thought of that! It does say

somewhere—doesn't it?—that they cast their crowns at His feet!" "Yes, that is it! And how sad it would be to have no crown in that day. You see we do not—we shall not—take any credit to ourselves for work performed, for service rendered here on earth; for when we have done all, we can but say, 'We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which it was our duty to do;' but we shall cast our crowns adoringly at His once-pierced feet as we join in the song of praise, ' 'Tis Thou who art worthy, Lord Jesus. 'Tis Thou!' " Her eyes filled with tears as she softly said, "I should indeed want a crown for that glorious occasion. I have been mistaken. I shall seek to labor for Him in view of the reward." And surely every blood-bought one instructed out of the Word will echo her sentiment.

It is well to remember how, while on earth, He was in the *habit* of saying (as the tense actually implies), "It is more blessed to give than to receive." So it will add to His joy to be able to bestow upon His victorious saints the rewards which He has prepared aforehand for them. He would have each one to be numbered among those who keep the word of His patience and overcome the world, in order that, having suffered with Him, they may reign with Him in the glory of the coming displayed Kingdom.

When He comes forth to reckon with His servants, and "to see what each one hath gained by trading" with the talents or pounds entrusted to him, it will be His delight to recognize what His grace has wrought in them by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. In honoring them He is really glorifying the Father's name and His own name. Who in that day would be willing to miss His "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou

into the joy of thy Lord?" And what satisfaction it will give to the one who has toiled on amid difficulty for Him in the day of His rejection when He says, "Thou hast been faithful in a few things; I will make thee ruler over many."

And yet it is not merely for crowns we labor, but that we may please Him who hath called us to be His soldiers. His approval will make up for all man's misunderstandings and persecutions. "Therefore we labor, that whether present or absent, we may be acceptable to Him."

But sometimes we fail to realize how appreciative He is of little things, of hidden devotion, of faithfulness in the daily round. We are too apt to think we must "do some great thing," serve in some public capacity, to earn the victor's wreath. But this is a mistake. He values all that is done out of love for Him whether it be seen of men or not.

I recall a burdened little mother who said to me once, "I cannot win a crown, for I have no opportunity to serve as I would like. In college I had dreams of a life devoted to Christ's work. I was a 'student volunteer' and expected to become a missionary, but about the time I graduated I met Charlie, and soon we were married. That ended my dreams of going out as a herald of the cross. In the years that have past, ill-health, the rearing of six children, and much ill-fortune financially have made it impossible for me to do anything for the Lord, and so I can never win a crown!" But I pointed out that the godly testimony of a devoted wife and mother, the rearing of a family for God, the example of a holy and consistent life--these were in the sight of God of great price, and for these there is sure reward. And so indeed it is. The busiest mother can run the

Christian race and thus win the incorruptible crown. The feeblest invalid can help to show someone the way of peace and so obtain the crown of rejoicing. The most poverty-stricken saint can love His appearing and gain the crown of righteousness. The humblest sufferer can be so devoted to Christ as to earn a crown of life. And anyone who in any way ministers to the sheep or lambs of Christ's flock will surely receive the crown of glory when the Chief Shepherd shall appear.

What is needed is heart for Christ. He will use all who are willing to let Him have His way with them. He who has saved by grace will surely reward in that day for the least service done for His own.

And now in closing may I affectionately press upon the Christian reader the Lord's own solemn warning to the Philadelphian church:

**"Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown" (Rev. 3:11).**

Observe: *no* one can rob me of my salvation. Of this there is abundant evidence in Scripture. But another may take my crown if I prove faithless to the trust committed to me.

Each believer is a servant as well as a son. To each is given some special gift and some particular line of service. It may be of either a public or a private nature. But it is a stewardship committed to him of the Lord, and "it is required of stewards that a man be found faithful." If I do not exercise the ministry allotted to me, in humble dependence on the Holy Spirit that I may fulfil it faithfully, I may be set aside as a servant, and another be called to complete my work. And so I will lose my crown.

We have read of the tract distributor who, becoming discouraged because of apparent lack of appreciation, gave up his lowly service, and learned twenty years after of one saved through a tract given out on the last day in which he did that work, who had taken it up himself as a ministry to needy men and after that long lapse of time met his benefactor and presented *him* with a tract. As a result a conversation sprang up which showed how the convert had taken the other's place, and the older man exclaimed with regret, "I see: I have let you take my crown!"

Let us remember, God is going to carry on His work in some way and by some instrumentality. May it be ours not to shirk responsibility but to say (and do) with Isaiah,

**"Here am I; send me."**

—H. A. IRONSIDE.



# **"The Stone that will fall from Heaven"**

Notes of an Address by H. A. IRONSIDE

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**"Jesus saith unto them, did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder" (Matt. 21:42-44).**

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**Y**OU will remember the context of these verses. Our blessed Lord, who had already foretold His rejection by Israel and solemnly prophesied His death and resurrection, related the parable of the householder and the vineyard in the hearing of the Pharisees and the chief priests. It is a parable easily read

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and understood in the light of the kindred passage in Isaiah 5 and the striking reference in Psalm 80: 8. The vineyard is the land of Palestine, and the vine God's earthly people Israel. This vine, brought out of Egypt, had been planted in Jehovah's fruitful hill. He had hedged it round about, digged a wine-press in it, built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and gone into a far country. All this spoke of His fostering care of Israel, hedged about by His holy law and dowered with the most blessed divinely-given privileges, such as no other people had ever enjoyed both from a national and a spiritual standpoint. Their nurture was entrusted to divinely-appointed leaders, both kingly and priestly in character, while He Himself, who had been so marvelously manifested in the beginning of their history, withdrew as it were into the silence. He had gone into the far country, shut away from their view in the heaven of heavens, though still deeply concerned about His people in the earth. From time to time He sent His prophets,

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His own personal representatives, to receive the fruit of the vineyard; that is, to see what there was in Israel that He could delight in—what this vine of the Lord's planting was producing for Himself. But these servants were beaten, stoned, killed, and that at times in the most cruel manner, as when Isaiah was sawn asunder and Zechariah slain between the porch and the altar. Last of all, He sent unto them His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, saying, "They will reverence my Son," or as another Gospel puts it, "It may be they will reverence Him when they see Him," but alas when He came full of grace and truth they had neither eyes to see, ears to hear, nor hearts to understand, but they cried, "This is the heir; come, let us kill Him and let us seize on his inheritance." And so they caught Him and cast Him out of the vineyard and slew Him. It was a forecast of the treatment they were about to accord to God's beloved Son, but those to whom our Saviour was speaking did not for the moment recognize Him as the heir who was

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rejected, and so when the Lord put the straight question to them, "When the master of the vineyard cometh, what will he do with those husbandmen?" they condemned themselves, though they realized it not, as they answered, "He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard to other husbandmen which will render him the fruits in their seasons." Then with crushing force Jesus turned to their own Scriptures and from three different Old Testament portions He brought out to them their own sin and doom, until at last we read that they perceived that He spake of them, and they would have laid hands on Him on the spot but they feared the people who took Him for a prophet. They did not rest, however, until they saw Him nailed to a Roman cross, thus fulfilling their own part in the parable.

In the 42nd verse our Lord quotes from Psalm 118: 22, 23. This Psalm is one of those commonly designated "Orphan Psalms," in that it has no heading telling us who the human author

might be. It is not necessary to suppose that it was written by David nor during his life-time. It is the last of the little Hall-El, or, as it is sometimes called, the Egyptian Hall-El, which was sung at the celebration of the Passover, and in all likelihood was on the lips of our Lord and His apostles after the institution of the Lord's Supper, when as we read, "They sang a hymn and went out." The Psalms were not assembled in their present order and number until a much later period than that of David, for we know there are some Post-Exilic Psalms included, particularly among the Psalms of Degrees, beginning with Psalm 120. According to Jewish tradition, Psalm 118 was written about the time of the completion of Solomon's temple and may even have been sung at its dedication.

There is a very striking and beautiful story linked with these verses quoted by our Lord. It is said that they have reference to something that occurred during the building of the temple. It will be remembered that Solomon was seven years

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in constructing this glorious sanctuary, and that he had many thousands of workmen who labored six months at a time and then were superseded by others, consequently very few who were in the early relays were engaged upon the building when it was about to be completed. From the book of Kings we learn that the stones for the temple were all hewn and cut to order in the quarry before being sent up to the great platform on the top of Mt. Moriah where the temple stood. There was no tool or hammer used in the building and the great structure went up in silence. In this it marvelously pictured God's present temple, builded of living stones, quarried out from the pits of sin and builded together for an habitation of God in the Spirit.

"View the vast building, see it rise!  
The work how great, the plan how wise!  
Oh, wondrous fabric; power unknown,  
That rears it on the living stone!"

The Jews say that these stones were practically all of the same size and shape but that

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one stone was sent up which was so different from the rest that they were at a loss what to do with it. It did not seem to fit anywhere. After consultation they decided a mistake had been made, and so they placed it upon rollers and pushed it over to the edge of Mt. Moriah and tumbled it down into the vale below. "The stone that the builders rejected!" But as the time went on the temple was nearing completion the day drew near for the placing of the chief corner-stone. There was nothing suitable on the platform. Word was sent down to the quarrymen to send up this corner-stone as they were now ready for it, but the answer came back, "We sent it to you long ago; you must have it there upon the temple site." But a thorough search failed to reveal it. Then an old workman said, "I remember now there was a stone sent up when we first began to build, but we saw no place for it and we hurled it down into the abyss. Go down below and you will find it." And so they sent a searching-party and eventually discovered

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it almost covered up with debris and overgrown with moss. They raised it with great effort to the platform above and found it fitted exactly in the place prepared for it. Thus the rejected stone became the head of the corner. Now our Lord applies all this to Himself. He came unto His own but His own received Him not. They did not realize who He was, and so they fulfilled their own Scriptures in rejecting Him. The Apostle solemnly charged them after the day of Pentecost concerning this, saying: "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain," but, he adds, "God raised Him from the dead." And in 1 Peter 2: 4 we read, "To whom coming as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious." This is indeed the Lord's doing and it is marvelous in our eyes.

I think it is most striking the way the 24th verse of Psalm 118 comes in here, "This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice



and be glad in it.” It is the resurrection day, the day our Saviour triumphed over death, the day when the rejected stone became the head of the corner, that the Psalmist has in view. Surely this is indeed the Lord’s Day referred to in Revelation 1, and it is not, as some have supposed, that John was caught away in the Spirit unto the Day of the Lord—a supposition which only does violence to the context and which would tend to rob the Christian of the preciousness and the privileges of the first day of the week, the memorial of the resurrection.

In Matthew 21:44 our Lord refers to two other Old Testament passages which speak of this stone and applies both to Himself. In Isaiah 8:14,15 we read, “And He shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken.” And so He says, “Whosoever shall fall on this

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stone shall be broken." He is speaking prophetically of Israel. To them He was a stumbling-stone and a rock of offence, and they stumbled over Him and were broken to pieces. He was not at all a Messiah to their tastes. They looked for a mighty warrior, a worldly king who would triumph by human methods, backed by divine power, over all their adversaries. But in place of a great world conqueror,

"He came a little baby thing  
That made a woman cry,"

as George McDonald so strikingly puts it. They could not see in the Babe of Bethlehem the mighty avenger of Israel, long before depicted in Isaiah's fervid phrases and set forth similarly by other prophets. And so they gave Him into the hands of the Gentiles and cried, "Away with Him; crucify Him, crucify Him." When Pilate asked, "Shall I crucify your king?" they sealed their own doom when they exclaimed, "We have no king but Cæsar," and then by a fearful male-

diction invoked His blood upon themselves and their children. And so in accordance with Daniel's prophecy, Messiah was cut off and had nothing. But in cutting Him off they cut themselves off and the ancient prediction of Moses was fulfilled, their city and temple destroyed, millions slain, and the rest scattered among all the nations of the world. Ask a Jew, "What is the greatest sin your nation can possibly commit?" He will tell you, if he is an orthodox Jew, "It is the sin of idolatry. Because of this sin, God drove our fathers from our land and gave them into the power of the Gentiles for seventy years, and only permitted them to return to Palestine when the demon of idolatry had been cast out." But the Jewish nation has never been idolatrous since the return from Babylon. Why are they not in their land to-day? What sin did they commit 1900 years ago because of which they have been wanderers among the Gentiles for nearly two millenniums? It was the rejection of Christ. He was the stone of

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salvation, but they stumbled over Him, and they have been broken to pieces.

But our Lord adds, "On whosoever it shall fall it will grind him to powder." Now the reference is clearly to the smiting stone of Daniel 2, the stone that will fall from heaven upon the feet of the image of Gentile power, and will destroy all the kingdoms of the nations, which will be superseded by the kingdom of God filling the whole earth. Observe when our Lord came the first time he was the stumbling-stone, not the stone falling from heaven. It is to His Second Coming the latter passage refers. After the Gentile dominions have run their course, He will come in the days of the last great world-confederacy and will set up a kingdom never to be destroyed. In the image seen by Nebuchadnezzar in the night watches, and also by the prophet Daniel, the head of gold is shown to represent Babylon; the breast and arms of silver set forth the Medo-Persian dominion which destroyed the Babylonians; the body and thighs

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pictured the Græco-Macedonian Empire which overturned the Persian; the legs of iron represent the Roman Empire under which our Lord was born as the Virgin's son. Under this Empire He was crucified. It continued in existence for some hundreds of years after His resurrection until destroyed by the barbarians in the 4th and 5th centuries of our era, but this leaves the feet of the image yet to appear. The feet were composed of iron and clay; they represent the last stage of Gentile Government, the iron of imperialism mixed with the miry clay, or brittle pottery, of social democracy. We see this condition prevailing at the present time, but still the stone has not fallen from heaven. The ten toes represent ten kings or dominions which are to appear in the last days and will form a great confederacy, all springing out of the old Roman Empire. When this confederacy is actually formed the people who are then living upon the earth may know that the day of the smiting stone is at hand, for Daniel says, "In the days of those

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kings shall the God of Heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed." It is then that our Lord will be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the gospel. It is then that the ungodly nations will prove how true were the words of our Lord, "On whomsoever it shall fall it will grind him to powder."

Ere that time comes He has made provision to snatch away His Church from the impending wrath. He will descend from heaven with a shout, we are told, "with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we be forever with the Lord." When the stone falls from heaven His saints will shine forth in the same glory with Himself, He will come with all His holy ones to execute judgment on all ungodliness and will establish the long predicted Messianic Kingdom. Then Israel will

look upon Him whom they have pierced, and will mourn for Him as one mourneth for his only son, and as one who is in bitterness for his first-born. Then a nation shall be born in a day, and long years of travel and wandering among the Gentiles will be ended and the kingdom established, given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof—regenerated Israel.





# What Think Ye of Christ? . . . . .

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## I

It is my purpose, God so willing and enabling, to briefly take up some of the more modern forms of error, seeking to point out from the Word of God (avoiding abstruse theological terms, so far as possible) the special way in which these systems deny the truth which the Holy Spirit has revealed for our acceptance, as to the Person and Work of our Lord Jesus Christ. For, be it remembered, all fundamental error is aimed at the truth of His Person and Work, and is intended by its Satanic author to deter anxious souls from trusting alone in our blessed Saviour for their present and final salvation. By detracting from His dignity as the "Word made flesh" they impugn the perfection of His atonement. Where there are differences of opinion that do not reflect on these great themes we may well bear with one another; but the voice of God speaks with no uncertain sound as to our responsibility where the truth as to Christ is assailed. "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine

[or, teaching] of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine [teaching] of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine [teaching], receive him not into your house, neither bid him God-speed; for he that biddeth him God-speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (2 John 9-11). The force of the original is even stronger, for it is really, "Neither greet him; for he that greeteth him," etc. By "the teaching" of Christ we are to understand both what He Himself taught while "in the days of His flesh," and what the Holy Spirit later revealed concerning Him.

It is necessary therefore, ere examining errors, that we should be clear as to what is really involved in the teaching, or doctrine, of Christ.

According to Scripture Christ Jesus is God from all eternity, the ever-living uncreated Word (John 1:1), whose glorious title is the Son, the Creator of the world and all things, who upholds all that exists (John 1:3, 10; Col. 1:13-17; Heb. 1:1-3); and because He underwent no change in all the past ages, He is of necessity "the Eternal Son" (John 1:2). "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son" (John 3:16). He did not become the Son after He was given. He was ever that.

He became Man, the divine glory tabernacling in human flesh, God and man united in one won-

drous Person—a mystery beyond our understanding, but revealed to faith by the Spirit through the Word (1 Tim. 3:16; John 1:14). As such He is Son of God in a new sense, as begotten in the Virgin's womb (Ps. 2). It was of this that the Father said, "Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee." He who had ever been God the Son was henceforth the Son of God as Man born into the world without a human father. "That Holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Lk. 1:35). As Man He was possessed of a spirit and soul and body. Otherwise He would only have had the appearance of a man; but He became truly "the Man Christ Jesus," being made in all things like unto His brethren (Heb. 2:17). But He was both God and Man in one Person, and He so abides for all eternity. Being truly Man, He grew in grace and in wisdom as He increased in stature; yet He was ever the Eternal Wisdom, "the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). That there is great mystery here, utterly beyond human comprehension, we readily confess, but faith believes what God has revealed, although reason may not be able to clearly define it.

His humanity is and ever was, from the incarnation, holy and unspotted. Sin was ever to Him abhorrent. He knew no sin, either inward or outward. Yet in infinite grace He was made

sin for us on the cross, when God's judgment fell on Him that we might be delivered from the coming wrath (Lk. 1:35; Heb. 2:14; 4:15; 2 Cor. 5:21).

Made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, He has been raised from the dead in the same prepared body in which He died, and now, as Man, sits, in that very body, glorified, on the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, God over all, blessed forevermore (Heb. 2:9; 13:20; John 20:27; Acts 1:9; Heb. 1:3; Rom. 9:5).

He is coming again, unchanged and unchangeable forevermore, to be revealed as the Judge of the living and dead (Acts 1:11; 1 Thess. 4:16; John 5:26-29; 1 Pet. 4:5; 2 Tim. 4:1).

This is the Christ who saves. Any other is an Antichrist, and he who proclaims another is anti-christian.

In the light of these truths we shall endeavor, therefore, to examine some of these popular systems.

“‘What think ye of Christ?’ is the test  
To try both your state and your scheme;  
You cannot be right in the rest,  
Unless you think rightly of Him.”

## II.

### *The answer given in the "Millennial Dawn" System, or Russellism*

The great controversy of the fourth century was concerning the acceptance or denial of the Eternal Sonship of Christ. Is He God the Son, eternal and uncreated? Or is He a Son of God, generated before the worlds, and begotten as man in time? Athanasius, that stalwart champion of the truth, stood firmly for the former, and Arius, the gifted and brilliant reasoner, contended for the latter. "How can a son be as old as his father?" he derisively asked, and carried thousands with him, who admired his genius and had forgotten that, "No man knoweth the Son but the Father." It seemed at one time that the truth was about to be lost, but in the end it triumphed, as truth always does, and to-day Christians still confess Christ as the Eternal, Uncreated Son, God over all, forever blessed; while Arianism is espoused only by heretical teachers, and endorsed by evil sects, composed of persons who have never realized the hopelessness of man's estate by nature and the grace that led the Eternal to become Man to meet the need in a way worthy of God and consistent with His righteousness.

Unfortunately, so many abstruse questions arose out of this controversy that for the next two centuries the Church was torn by metaphysical discussions of matters concerning the true nature of the incarnation, which separated even orthodox believers into warring groups, thus giving the Arians increased confidence and greater prestige, as those who should have presented a solid front to the enemy were quarrelling with one another about definitions and attempted explanations of an inscrutable mystery. Some maintained that it was lowering the truth as to Christ to assert He became actually a man in all things, and contended that in Him the Logos (the Eternal Word) took the place that the human spirit does in man. This was called Apollinarianism because its chief advocate was a staunch Trinitarian named Apollinaris. Others insisted that the divine and human natures in Christ were fused into one. These were called Monophysites. Still others insisted that the two natures were so distinct, that one could act apart from the other, and were known as Nestorians. There were many other views, all alike tending to occupy believers with questions instead of with Christ Himself. But when the smoke of battle cleared away, the great outstanding truth that the Church has ever since confessed was more clearly seen than ever. In Christ we have the one Mediator between God

and man who is both Divine and human—very God of very God, yet Man in all perfection. This abides the faith of the "orthodox," that is, of those who "think straight" in accordance with Holy Scripture.

However, Arianism has never died out, but has appeared again and again in various forms throughout the centuries. In our own days there are different systems that maintain these erroneous views, such as some forms of Unitarianism and, generally speaking, all liberal theological groups that do not utterly deny the pre-existence of Jesus.

Among these Arian sects the most notorious is that of the Russellites, known as the "International Bible Students' Association." Their doctrines are fully set forth in a set of seven books formerly called "Millennial Dawn;" but which have been so often exposed that a new edition was put forth some time since innocently entitled, "Studies in the Scriptures." Sold at an astonishingly low price these unholy volumes are purchased by many unsuspecting Christians, who are led to believe they embody truths taught in the Word of God, whereas in reality they contain deadliest error.

Briefly, the teaching of the Russellites as to Christ is as follows: He was created by God before the worlds, but is not the Eternal Son. He

was in His pre-existent state the highest spirit-being in the universe. When born on earth He ceased to be a spirit, and was wholly and solely a man, though born by divine generation. He laid down His human life at the cross. His body was never resurrected, but probably "dissolved away into gases." His soul alone was raised. By virtue of His great self-abnegation He has now been promoted to the divine plane, and is now *a* God, but not *the* God.

"Pastor" Russell taught that Jesus when on earth was not in any sense divine, but that redemption demanded He should be only a man. He blasphemously declared, "It was not only necessary that the Man Christ Jesus should die. It was just as necessary that He should never live again, should remain dead for all Eternity." Think of the awfulness of words like these when weighed in the light of the statements of the Holy Spirit in 1 Cor. 15.

To state these horrible errors is to refute them. If authorities and explanations are required however, the reader is referred to, "How Russellism Subverts the Faith," by R. J. Reid, and "Millennial Dawnism," by A. J. Pollock.

This is indeed a "sect of perdition," and its teaching is rightly labelled "damnable heresy." "From such turn away."



### III.

#### *The Answer of "Christian Science."*

In the earliest days of Christianity, the truth of God was opposed by a system of Satanic deception known generically as Gnosticism, though divided into several warring cults.

Gnosticism was an effort to combine oriental philosophy with the doctrine of Christ. Against this evil combination parts of Colossians and John's first epistle were largely directed, and to this Paul evidently refers when he warns Timothy against "oppositions of science, falsely so-called."

The Gnostics were not all alike in their teachings. They had many sects, and differed widely in their views of Christ. According to some the body of Jesus was not corporeal—not material—but simply an appearance, a phantasm. Christ was a divine emanation who came into the world and appeared to men as a Man, but never actually united Himself to flesh and blood. According to others Jesus was the natural son of Mary and Joseph: Christ was the divine enlightening Spirit who took possession of Him at His baptism and

left Him at the cross. In one of the Gnostic Gospels—a perverted copy of Matthew—the Lord is represented as crying on the cross, “My Power, My Power, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” The Christ, they declared, was deathless; Jesus only could die. They did not confess that Jesus is the Christ, and that Christ had come in flesh. Therefore they were antichristian. This is what John warned the elect lady against, in his second epistle. He was not warning against real Christians with imperfect views, unintelligent as to the divine mystery of the incarnation, but against enemies of the truth who taught what was utterly subversive of Christianity.

Gnosticism, as such, ceased long ago to be a power in the professing church, but the leaven is still working.

Eddyism is one of the modern Gnostic systems, identical in philosophy and equally blasphemous. It is no exaggeration to say that it denies every truth of Scripture; yet in such a way as seemingly to confess them all. Mrs. Eddy, now gone to face the *personal* God she denied on earth, was an unequalled juggler with words.

According to her, Jesus was a man like any other, but an adept Christian Science practitioner (who, however, never collected fees for His treatments!), who was born in ignorance and gradually attained the knowledge that enabled Him to

"demonstrate" science. Christ is pure spirit, altogether distinct from the man Jesus, though dwelling in and controlling Him. To the eye of sense, Jesus died; but Christ could not die, and so, actually, Jesus Himself did not die either, but when His materialistic disciples thought Him dead, He was alive within the tomb, "putting the seal of Eternity on time."

This system really combines within itself both leading forms of Gnosticism. It denies the reality of matter, on the one hand, while acknowledging that Jesus was Mary's son, on the other.

But, according to Mrs. Eddy, His blood had no atoning value. She wrote, "The material blood of Jesus was no more efficacious to cleanse from sin when it was shed upon the accursed tree than when it was flowing in His veins." And this, in the face of His own words, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood which is shed for you, for the remission of sins."

Eddyism makes nothing of the blood of Jesus and denies that Christ had blood to shed! Yet the Holy Spirit speaks of "the precious blood of Christ," and tells us that "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures."

Nor is "Christian Science" alone in advocating and reviving Gnostic blasphemies. The so-called "New Thought" and the "Unity" teaching hold and propagate the same errors.

They all agree that Jesus and Christ are to be distinguished and that the blood of Jesus possessed no atoning value. He did not save vicariously, but He was "the Way-shower," not "the Way," at all, save by example!

Others errors abound, but enough have been specified to warn every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ against this unholy and blasphemous system.

The best book on the whole subject, in the writer's judgment, is Dr. I. M. Haldeman's "Christian Science in the Light of Holy Scripture."

A brief pamphlet that exposes the teaching clearly is "A Few Words on Christian Science," by S. Ridout.

## IV.

### *The answer given by the Christadelphians*

Christadelphian means Christ's brother, and in itself shows the estimate the followers of this system put upon Christ. According to them He is a man like ourselves, though divinely generated. Materialists of the grossest type, they are utterly without any true sense of His Godhead glory. I had occasion some years ago, to take up this question with the editor of "THE MIRROR," a Christadelphian publication now happily discontinued. In doing so I took no notice of his peculiar renderings of divine Names but simply submitted a list of scriptures, beseeching him to weigh them carefully, for a mistake here would have eternal consequences. I here reproduce this list, which to my mind leaves no room for doubt as to the full proper Deity and Divinity of the Son of God.\*

1. He is called God in Isa. 9:6: "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The

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\*It is a joy to me to be able to state that this Editor has long since been delivered from his former position and has been for years in fellowship with believers who adore Christ as God over all, blessed for evermore.

Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."

2. He is directly addressed as God by the Father. Heb. 1:8: "Unto the Son He saith: Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever," etc.

3. In the same chapter He is addressed as Jehovah. "And Thou, LORD, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of Thy hands. They shall perish; but Thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt Thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail" (Heb. 1:10-12).

4. He takes the divine title, "I AM," and declares His existence prior to Abraham. John 8:58: "Before Abraham was, I am."

5. The eternal personal Word is declared to be Jesus. "In the beginning was the Word," declares His eternity of Being. "And the Word was with God"—His distinct personality. "And the Word was God"—His absolute deity. "The same was in the beginning with God"—His eternal existence as a person of the Trinity. "All things were made by Him"—His Creatorship. "And without Him was not anything made that was made"—His absolute equality with the Father in creatorial work. "In Him was life"—the eternal Source of life. "And the life was the light of men"—

the Communicator of life. "And the light shineth in darkness and the darkness apprehended it not"—as all those who deny His Deity and Divinity.

6. He claims the same honor as the Father: "That all men should honor the Son *even as* they honor the Father" (John 5:23). The Father is honored as God. So must the Son be.

7. He declares His oneness with the Father: "I and My Father are one" (John 10:30).

8. He was understood by this to claim Godhead, and He did not correct the thought nor deny the claim (John 10:33). "Thou, being a man, makest thyself God."

9. Isaiah is said to have seen His glory (in chap. 6) when he describes the worship of Jehovah by the seraphim. John 12:40-41: "These things (found in Isa. 6:9,10) said Esaias when he saw His glory, and spake of Him."

10. He is declared to be God over all, in Rom. 9:5: "Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever."

11. Before His humiliation He existed in the form of God: Phil. 2:6: "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God," etc.

12. He was the Creator of all things. Col. 1:16, 17: "By Him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or

principalities or powers; all things were created by Him and for Him; and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist."

13. He was "God manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. 3:16).

14. He is affirmed to be "the true God." 1 John 5:20: "We are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. *This* is the true God and eternal life."

15. He was prophesied of as the everlasting One. Micah 5:2: "Whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting."

16. Worship is only to be rendered to God, and He is worshiped by all the host of heaven (Rev. 5, *et al.*).

In the light of these scriptures how dreadfully solemn it is to deny His glory as the eternal God. All scriptures which seem to give Him a lesser place are clear and simple, and in no wise conflict with this, when it is remembered that "He took upon Himself the *form of a servant*." He was Man as well as God. In this sense He can speak of being the Sent One, etc. Multitudes of other scriptures might be added to the above, proving His Divine attributes of omniscience, omnipresence and omnipotence; but if these be not heard, it is needless to quote others. May the Spirit of truth use the Word of truth.



*The Answer Given by the Seventh-day Adventists*

To many people Seventh-day Adventism is simply a strange Jewish-Christian sect, composed of well-meaning, earnest people, struggling under the law; failing to distinguish between the dispensation of the grace of God and the dispensation of the legal covenant; under the yoke of bondage as to meats and drinks, and particularly laying stress upon the observance of the Seventh-day Sabbath memorial of the Mosaic age. But their real teachings are far more serious and erroneous than even this brief synopsis would suggest; in fact, so far astray are they as to the great fundamental truths of Christianity, that were it not for the fact that their numbers are constantly being augmented by earnest people who have been brought up in the various Christian denominations and who are seeking fuller light, it is questionable whether the doctrines they preach could ever be the means of converting any soul. Mrs. Ellen G. White, their great prophetess, whose writings are put on a par with the Bible itself, was a neurotic, visionary woman, who gave forth her dreams as the veritable Word of God. She

professed to receive a special revelation in regard to what is called "The Sanctuary Theory." This, in brief, involves the amazing conception that our blessed Lord did not enter the Holiest upon His ascension to heaven, but was in the Holy Place until 1844, when, for the first time, He passed within the veil, into the Holiest of all. She taught that Christ's death on the cross did not suffice to put away sin, but that by virtue of His death all who profess faith in Him have their sins transferred to the heavenly sanctuary, and that Christ is now in the sanctuary examining the books of record. Those who have proven unfaithful will have their names blotted out of the books and will eventually be annihilated, while those who have been faithful to all the light given them will be saved eternally on the new earth, and at Christ's return, their sins will be transferred to the Devil, who is pictured as the great scapegoat of the Day of Atonement, who bears these sins away into a land not inhabited. Thus he will be under the curse of them for one thousand years, dating from the rapture of the faithful to heaven, and lasting until the bringing in of the new heavens and the new earth. A weird conception truly! And not only weird but blasphemous, for little as Mrs. White and her followers seemed to realize it, it is a complete denial of the finished work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

What place is there for the doctrine of His vicarious atonement, if Satan is at last to bear the sins of believers?

The position of Mrs. White and her followers as to the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ is equally unscriptural, and positively blasphemous. In years gone by, they taught unequivocally that our Lord was not eternally one with God, but in later years they seem to have accepted His eternal Sonship, though books like Uriah Smith's "Daniel" and "Revelation" are still in circulation, teaching the very opposite. But this by no means entitles them to be considered sound as to the Person of Christ, for they teach the most revolting things as to His humanity. Mrs. White, writing in "The Desire of the Ages," says: "For four thousand years the race had been decreasing in physical strength, in mental power and moral worth; and Christ took upon Him the infirmities of degenerate humanity." "Many claim that it was impossible for Christ to be overcome by temptation . . . . but our Saviour took humanity with all its liabilities. He took the nature of man, with the possibility of yielding to temptation." She teaches the same thing in her early writings.

That her followers have never repudiated this, but have even added to it, is evident, for in a recent number of "The Signs of the Times,"

dated March, 1927, L. A. Wilcox writes as follows: "In His veins was the incubus of a tainted heredity, like a caged lion, ever seeking to break forth and destroy. . . . Temptation attacked Him, where by heredity He was weakest—attacked Him in unexpected times and ways; . . . in spite of bad blood and inherited meanness . . . He conquered." In the issue for December, 1928, the same writer says: "Jesus took humanity, with all its liabilities, with all its dreadful risks of yielding to temptation."

Many similar quotations might be given from Seventh-day Adventist writings. They all unite in proving that these misguided people have no conception whatever of the true nature of our blessed Lord's humanity. What meaning can the angel's words to Mary, "That Holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God," have to people who talk of His sin-tainted humanity? Scripture is perfectly plain: He was ever the sinless One. By the Holy Spirit's direct action His humanity was preserved from every taint of inherited sin. His temptation was not to see if He would fall, but was intended to prove that He would not, that He was the unblemished Lamb of God, who because He had never been under the yoke of sin in any sense could redeem those who were under that yoke and set them free.

It is not only the Seventh-day Adventists who hold the blasphemous views intimated here, but there are not wanting many Protestant preachers and teachers to-day who hold the same revolting conceptions of Christ's humanity. How little do such men realize their own desperate condition, when they can suppose that a sinful being like themselves could save them from the ruin that sin has wrought!

## VI

### *The Answer given by the Latter-day Saints, or Mormons*

Of all the crude and vulgar errors as to Christ, that of the Mormons, or as they generally style themselves, the Latter-day Saints, is perhaps the worst. To what extent the laity recognize the real teaching of their leaders, I cannot say. Generally when I have shown a Mormon what Brigham Young or some other leader had said or written on this theme, they professed utter ignorance of such doctrines and insisted that I must misunderstand their "prophets." But any one who will take the trouble to investigate can readily see for himself the truthfulness of what is here insisted on, however it may be perverted or even flatly denied by zealous "missionaries" or their deluded followers.

The evil sect founded by Joseph Smith is divided into two main branches, with lesser divisions in some parts. These two are generally known among the "initiated" as the Brighamites and Josephites. The former are, by far, the more numerous, and embrace those who accepted the authority of Brigham Young, who seems to be

the father of most of the blasphemous tenets of this branch. The latter are the followers of the son of the "prophet," a second Joseph Smith, and are relatively free from the vilest errors of the Brighamites, but believe in salvation by baptism, the inspiration of Joseph Smith the prophet, the utter rejection by God of Christendom, and hope only in the Re-organized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Because of their refusal of the abominable practice of polygamy they are generally looked upon more favorably than the Utah Mormons; but both systems completely deny many foundation truths of Scripture,

In fact the Josephites are, in some respects, more difficult to deal with than the Brighamites, because they refuse to listen to any ordinary version of the Scriptures, basing their teaching on what they call the "Inspired Translation of the New Testament," supposed to have been divinely given to the prophet Joseph. This perversion of the Word of God is so utterly unbelievable that it is repudiated by all who know anything of the original Greek, as a clumsy forgery.

It is with the Christology of the main branch we have now to do, however; so I shall not attempt further to point out the unholy teachings of the lesser sect, only warning any meeting them to beware of their smooth, plausible statements, as the elders of both branches of Latter-day

Saints are past-masters in the art of using speech to conceal thought.

Brigham Young taught as to Christ that He was the natural son of Mary and Adam, after the latter had been exalted to become the God of this world,—to use his own awful language, “Our God and Father, the only God and Father with whom we have to do.” Parley Pratt says of him, “Our Father Adam shall sit (in the millennium) enthroned as the Ancient of Days,” and then Christ Jesus is his son and heir.

Those arch-heretics teach that Christ (may He forgive the words) was a polygamist, wedded at Cana of Galilee to Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus, and later to Mary Magdalene. They further hold that He was simply a superior-man who, by His devotion and faithfulness in His generation, was exalted to Deity and is now a God, second in glory to Adam. They believe in a vast number of gods, all of whom were once men. A favorite saying is, “As man is, God once was. As God is, all men may yet become.”

Christ's death is said to have made atonement for Adam's sin, though Adam's sin is in itself considered a voluntary humiliation for our sake. “Adam sinned that men might be,” is one of their proverbs.

Since Christ's death has balanced the sin of Adam, all men are now free to save themselves



by repentance, faith, baptism, the laying on of an elder's hands, and complete submission to the authorities of the Mormon church, a tyrannical hierarchy that has only been outdone by that of Rome.

Needless to say, love for Christ is unknown among those fully given up to this doctrine of demons. It throttles all spiritual discernment and makes its dupes sensual and materialistic to the last degree.

When the Mormon elder offers the declaration of faith which they circulate so widely among the "Gentiles" (as all but Mormons are called), it is well to remember that this statement was prepared for proselytizing purposes, and is not a full account of the doctrines of this weird sect. To find these, it is necessary to read the Book of Mormon, The Doctrines and Covenants, The Book of Abraham and The Pearl of Great Price. Extracts, however, are available in tract form which show the true nature of this system and prove its antichristian character. "From such, turn away."

*The answer given by the Modern Critics*

What is called Higher Criticism has had a large place in modern theological literature; and its so-called "assured results" are now generally accepted as truth by unconverted preachers and unsaved professors.

What then is the Higher Criticism? and what has it to say in answer to the solemn query, "What think ye of Christ?"

And, in attempting to answer this in a very limited space, it may be best to explain first another kind of criticism, which no real Christian objects to if properly informed.

The *lower* criticism is that perfectly legitimate system of investigation for which every believer should be unfeignedly thankful, that occupies itself with determining the exact original text of Scripture. By comparing ancient manuscripts, versions, and quotations embodied in early letters and treatises, the reverent critic of the sacred text endeavors to eliminate interpolations and glosses, and to supply any lacking words or phrases. Some of the very best results of this eminently useful investigation will be found in

the translations of the Bible made by J. N. Darby, and later, of the New Testament and parts of the Old by both F. W. Grant and W. Kelly, as found in the commentaries of these able expositors.

It is to this branch of criticism that men like Tregelles, Tischendorf, Griesbach, Westcott and Hort, and many others gave themselves and it is through their painstaking efforts that we now can be assured of a Greek and Hebrew text which is an almost exact counterpart of the original autographs, which have all been lost for many centuries.

But the mis-called *higher* criticism is something very different to this. It professes to determine by a careful examination of the language and phraseology of a given Scripture its authorship, authenticity, and time of production. It began by uniformly rejecting all that the Bible itself says on these subjects, and has been busy ever since its inception substituting ever-varying and contradictory theories of its own for the Scripture declarations.

That the Lord Jesus declared the Pentateuch to have been written by Moses, and attested the inspiration of Daniel the prophet, Isaiah, David, and indeed the entire Old Testament, has no weight with the exponents of this system whatever. Yet some of them profess to believe in Him

as the sent One of God, and pretend to own His Lordship and divinity.

How then do they presume to set aside His statements. On the ground of what is called Kenoticism, based on the Greek word, *Kenosis*, meaning *to empty*.

The 7th verse of Philippians declares that Christ "made Himself of no reputation," or, literally "emptied Himself." These modern critics base upon this the teaching that in assuming manhood, He divested Himself of the omniscience of deity. Hence as a Man, they hold that He was subject to all the limitations and ignorance of the men of His day. He really supposed Moses, Daniel and Isaiah wrote the books assigned to them in the Bible, but He was not a critic. His education was defective. His means for securing information were limited. Consequently He could not speak with the authority of these latter-day professors, who are by no means emptied, but filled as full of carnality and conceit as they well can be!

Others indeed unhesitatingly deny his Deity *in toto* and see in Him only a God-intoxicated man, who was under all the ordinary delusions of the times in which He lived. They read the Scriptures as the "best thoughts of the best men in those ancient times," but spurn the idea of definite divine inspiration in any other sense than

that of a spiritual exaltedness such as characterizes some of our great poets and moralists.

But no soul subject to the Spirit's teaching would ever accept views so derogatory to the Holy Son of God. He emptied Himself of the glory that He had with the Father ere the world was (John 17:5), and of the riches which were His in heaven (2 Cor. 8:9), but He was ever God manifest in flesh, and He spake with all the authority of Deity. He who owns this in his soul is forever delivered from the pretentious blasphemies of the Higher Critics.

## APPENDIX

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Other sects and cults there are, too numerous to mention, but their peculiar attitude toward the Person of the Lord and His redemptive work betrays their Satanic origin. However in the forgoing papers nearly every heresy as to Christ that has vexed the Church is indicated. It does not seem necessary to go into all their varied ramifications as linked with different modern systems of error. Enough has been put forth, I trust, to guard the minds of honest seekers after light from what would only pervert the gospel and rob Christ of His glory.

# WHO WILL BE SAVED IN THE COMING PERIOD OF JUDGMENT?

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ERE seeking to answer this question, which seems to be a perplexity to some, it might be well to state, as briefly as possible, what is meant by the period of judgment; as this paper will probably fall into the hands of some who as yet have given but little attention to prophetic teaching. In doing this it will be necessary to do little more than refer to a large number of passages of Scripture, many of which the lack of space will forbid quoting in full, but it is hoped the reader will refer to any that are unfamiliar to him.

First, then, let it be noted that Old Testament prophecy *never* refers to the dispensation in which we live (extending from Pentecost to the Lord's coming for His own), save in a most indefinite way, as, for instance, in Dan. 9 : 26—a passage which will come before us a little farther down. From Moses to Malachi, Scripture is mainly occupied with one nation, Israel (Amos 3 : 2 ; Deut. 7 : 6 ; Ps. 147 : 19, 20), and the hope of that nation, namely, the raising up of the Prophet (Deut. 18 : 15), Priest (Ps. 110 : 4 ; Zech. 6 : 13), and King (Is. 32 ; Ps. 2 : 6), who is to bring them into everlasting blessing as a people (Ps. 132 : 11-18 ;

Is. 35 : 10 ; 51 : 11 ; 61 : 7), though not until they have been born again (Ezek. 36 : 24-30).

The Gentiles shall share in that blessing (Is. 56 : 6 ; 65 : 1), but not as on the same footing with Israel ; rather in subjection to them (Is. 14 : 1-3 ; 60 : 3-5 ; 62 : 2, 3).

Ere the ushering in of that day of Jehovah's power and Messiah's glory, however, the prophets predicted the rejection of the looked-for Redeemer by Israel to whom He came (Is. 53), and in consequence Israel is set aside by God (Zech. 7 : 13, 14), while the rejected Messiah takes His place in the heavens on Jehovah's throne (Ps. 110 : 1), which He will occupy until the future repentance of the people (Hos. 5 : 15). This setting aside of Israel, however, is not final, as the 30th and 31st chapters of Jeremiah, with many other portions of the Word, plainly declare. But before their restoration to divine favor and the land of Palestine they must pass through a short period of unequalled persecution and chastisement, called "the time of Jacob's trouble" in Jer. 30 : 7. At the close of this time they will be ready to acknowledge the Crucified as their Lord, and will "mourn for Him as one mourneth for his only son" (Zech. 12 : 10-14 ; 13 : 6, 7). In the darkest hour of their sorrow, when Jerusalem is compassed about with armies and they are in direst distress, He will appear as their Deliverer and to the destruction of their enemies, after which the tabernacle of David will be raised up and the reign of righteousness ushered in (Zech. 14 ; Amos 9 : 8-15).

Thus far the Old Testament. Turning now to the



New, we find many new data introduced without which the present working of the Spirit of God in the world would be inexplicable. In Rom. 11 we are told that upon the breaking off of the natural branches (Israel) from the tree of promise, wild branches (Gentiles) are introduced in their place; in other words, Israel's rejection has but made way for unforetold grace to be shown to the nations, though Old Testament prophecy of blessing to the heathen can be quoted as proof that such grace is not in collision with their final blessing. This special work among the Gentiles is not to go on forever though; for if these continue not in divine goodness, they too shall be cut off and the natural branches grafted in again, for God is able.

God then is doing a work, unmentioned in the Jewish oracles, during the time that His earthly people are "Lo-ammi" ("not My people," Hos. 1:9)—unacknowledged by Him; and "blindness in part is happened to Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in" (Rom. 11:25). This is one of the "mysteries," one of the secret things (Deut. 29:29), till now unrevealed. The Lord Jesus confirms this (but rather from the political side) in His prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem, the long period of desolation and Gentile supremacy following it, and, finally, the end in His personal appearing (Luke 21). In verse 24 we read, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles *until* the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

This connects us again with Dan. 9, where we get the great prophecy of the "seventy weeks." A lengthy exposition of this passage cannot be attempted here,

but we briefly notice the main points. From the course of time, seventy weeks (or *heptads*) of years (note the periods before the prophet's mind in verse 2), making in all 490 years, are "determined," or "cut off," and given to Daniel's people—the Jewish nation.

Ere this period of time expires six important events will have taken place: 1st, transgression will be finished; 2d, an end will be made of sins; 3d, atonement (rather than "reconciliation") will be made for iniquity; 4th, everlasting righteousness will be brought in; 5th, vision and prophecy will be sealed up, or finished, i.e., all fulfilled; and, 6th, the most holy, or holy of holies, of the millennial temple at Jerusalem will be anointed (see Ezek. chaps. 40–48).

The seventy weeks are divided into three unequal periods: 1st, seven weeks, or 49 years; 2d, sixty-two weeks, or 434 years; 3d, one week, or 7 years. During the first seven weeks, "the strait times," (see margin,) the city and wall of Jerusalem were to be rebuilt. The date from which to count is found in Neh. 2, when a "commandment went forth to restore and build Jerusalem." The sixty-two weeks seem to have immediately followed, and ended in the coming of Messiah. After the conclusion of this period He was cut off and had nothing, but by this atonement was made. Then comes in the present long interval of Jerusalem's treading down. The city is destroyed, as our Lord foretold also, and "even unto the *end* shall be war," until one arises who confirms a covenant with the mass of the Jews for the last final week. Clearly, then, this week is still future. The prophetic clock stopped at Calvary.

It will not start again till "the fulness of the Gentiles be come in."

The present is a timeless epoch, parenthetically introduced between the 69th and 70th week, in which God is taking out from among the Gentiles a people for His name (Acts 15 : 14). Not that He has utterly given up the Jew now, but both Jew and Gentile stand on one footing; "there is no difference, for all have sinned" (Rom. 3). Both alike are saved through faith in Christ, and all such are made members of the one Body, the Church, and by the Holy Ghost united to the Lord Jesus Christ as Head in heaven (another mystery hitherto unrevealed. (See Rom. 16 : 25-28 ; 1 Cor. 12 ; Eph. 4 ; Col. 1 : 24-29). This began with the baptism of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2 ; 1 Cor. 12 : 13). It will be completed at the coming of the Lord to call His Church to be forever with Himself, an event which may take place at any moment (1 Thess. 4 : 15-18 ; 1 Cor. 15 : 51-54 ; 2 Thess. 2 : 1). Then the long-delayed 70th week will begin to run its course. At its conclusion Daniel's prophecy (as all other millennial prophecies) will be entirely fulfilled. Atonement was made for iniquity after the expiration of the 69th week. Everlasting righteousness will be brought in at the end of the 70th.

This brief period, however, will be one of judgment throughout, and that threefold. It will include judgment on apostate Christendom, on Israel, and on the nations at large. It is to be the awful result of the rejection of the Prince of Peace.

The book of Revelation from chapter 4 to 19 is oc-

cupied entirely with its solemn events. The saints—of all prior dispensations, as well as the Church—are seen enthroned in heaven as the twenty-four elders who have been redeemed with the blood of the Lamb (chap. 5) at the beginning of the week. They ride forth as the “armies of heaven” with “the Word of God” at His glorious appearing at the close. The last three years and a half will be especially the time when Israel shall receive “of the Lord’s hand double for all her sins” (Is. 40 : 2), the “time of Jacob’s trouble” of Jer. 30 : 7 and Dan. 12 : 1, and the “great tribulation” of Matt. 24 and Rev. 7 : 14. The covenant-breaking prince of Dan. 9 is doubtless the Beast, the head of the Roman empire who makes a league with the wilful king of chapter 11 : 36–39—the Antichrist of prophecy (1 John 2 : 18), the idol shepherd of Zech. 11 : 15–17, who will “come in his own name” as foretold by the Lord Jesus in John 5 : 43, and be received by the mass of the Jews as Messiah, but who will become the cruel persecutor of a faithful company designated as “the remnant” (Is. 11 : 11 ; Ezek. 6 : 8 ; Rev. 12 : 17, etc.).

Trusting that the above will be clear to any who “search the Scriptures” to see “whether these things are so,” we will now devote our attention to the subject-proper of the paper. To many the preliminary remarks were doubtless quite unnecessary, but others may find them helpful.

The 7th chapter of Revelation, with its sealed 144,000 of Israelites, and white-robed multitude of saved Gentiles, is proof positive that many will be brought to know the Lord *after* the taking away of the Church,

and before the establishment of the millennial kingdom. These are not saved for heaven, though we have an additional martyred company who are (Rev. 14: 13; 15: 2-4); but the companies of chapter 7 are saved for the earth. They will be "left" to enter into the kingdom as set up in power at the appearing of Jesus Christ, when others are "taken" away in judgment (Matt. 24: 40; Luke 17: 34-36), and are probably identical, as to the Gentiles, with the "righteous" of Matt. 25: 31-46 who "inherit the kingdom."

Where then will they be found? Will any who have rejected the gospel as now presented be among them?

In 2 Thess. 2 we read of the hindrance to the full manifestation of the evil of the period of judgment referred to, which is evidently the presence of the Holy Ghost in the Church on earth. He "lets," or hinders, until "He be taken out of the way." When He goes up with the Church at the Lord's descent into the air, "then the lawless one shall be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus shall consume with the breath of His mouth and shall annul by the appearing of His coming; whose coming is according to the working of Satan, in all power and signs and wonders of falsehood, and in all deceit of unrighteousness to them that perish, because they have not received the love of the truth that they might be saved. And for this reason God sends to them a working of error, that they should believe what is false, that all might be judged who have not believed the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thess. 2: 8-13, J. N. D.'s Trans.).

This is certainly a most solemn passage, deserving to be carefully weighed. It refers to something which may take place very, very soon; a state of affairs many living now may enter upon shortly. The more minutely it is examined, the more clearly it will be seen that it cuts off all hope of any being saved in that coming "hour of temptation" (Rev. 3: 10) who have heard the gospel of the grace of God in this "day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6: 2), but have heard it only to reject it. It puts a terrible responsibility on those who listen again and again to the proclamation of salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, yet have never rested in Him for themselves. To believers' children and unsaved members of their families it speaks loudly and warningly, for soon those who know the Lord will be "caught up;" then dire judgment will rest upon those who trusted Him not for themselves.

All who "believed not the truth," and who "received not the love of the truth" when it was presented to them, are given up to a "working of error," or "strong delusion," that they might be judged. In the day when the truth was preached they turned carelessly from it because they had pleasure in unrighteousness. They were "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God" (2 Tim. 3: 4). Now they are given up to error, and that by God Himself. Like Elymas the sorcerer, who rejected the light of the gospel and was smitten with blindness, so upon these, having turned from the truth, God *sends* the delusion that causes them to believe the lie of the Antichrist.

For former instances of God's sending men delu-

sions and visiting them with judicial blindness, see the cases of Pharaoh (Ex. 11: 10), of Ahab (2 Chron. 18), and of the nation of Israel (Isa. 6: 9, 10; Matt. 13: 13-15). All who hear the gospel and believe it not are "condemned already" (John 3: 18). If the Lord comes while they are still in that state, the condemnation is final, and we note their dreadful doom in 2 Thess. 1: 7-10, together with the contrast of the blessed place that might have been theirs had they but believed the testimony so graciously given. "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that *obey not the gospel* of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power; when He shall come to be glorified in His saints and to be admired in all them that believe (because *our testimony among you was believed*) in that day." There could be no stronger declaration that all who reject the testimony now will be unable to avail themselves of the testimony then, when the outpoured divine wrath upon the scene will only harden, instead of bringing to repentance (Rev. 16: 9-11, 21).

The teaching has become current among many that the taking away of the saved will result in an awakening in nominal Christendom, so that many who now have a name to live, but are dead, will in that day turn to the Lord. As to this, Scripture, as we have seen, states exactly the opposite, which is confirmed by the Lord Jesus in the Gospels. At the end of the

age the tares are gathered in bundles and burned (Matt. 13: 30, 40-42); the man without the wedding garment on is cast into outer darkness (Matt. 22: 13); the unfaithful servant is appointed his portion with the hypocrites (Matt. 24: 48-51); the foolish virgins, though they go for oil, are shut outside the door (Matt. 25: 11); the unprofitable servant has even his profession taken away (vers. 28-30); those who neglected to enter in at the strait gate seek in vain to enter then (Luke 13: 24); even as those who refused to be warned by Enoch and Noah perished in the flood, and those who listened not to Lot were destroyed in Sodom (Luke 17: 26-30).

In short, we search Scripture in vain for one hint that any gospel-rejecter will be saved in that day. Nor does the expression in Rev. 7: 9 militate against this: "Of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues," for manifestly none of Israel will be among them, as we see the 144,000 of the twelve tribes quite distinct from the great multitude. The expression really declares the universality of the response to the everlasting gospel among the heathen nations; but Christendom, as Israel, is not counted, unless, indeed, there be found even there some who never heard the gospel before.

We leave, then, this solemn part of the subject, to look at the other side of the question, Who, then, can be saved?

And, first of all, we are reminded that this will be the period of Israel's awakening, as we have already



seen in several passages. In Dan. 12 : 3 we read, "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever," and this, as the first verse assures us, during the time of trouble; but "at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book."

The hour of their darkest trouble and deepest sorrow will result in the elect among them returning to the Lord. The 144,000 of Rev. 7 picture to us those who will say, "Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for He hath torn, and He will heal us; He hath smitten, and He will bind us up" (Hos. 6 : 1). Zion's sore travail shall result in a great bringing forth of children, as predicted in Micah 5 : 3 and Isa. 66 : 8. We quote the latter passage: "Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed she brought forth her children." The verses following are deserving also of special notice in this connection. See, too, Zech. 12 and 13.

And so the "blindness in part" is to be done away, the "fulness of the Gentiles" having come in, as shown also in Hos. 3 : 4, 5. "For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim: afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days."

This is true not of the nation as a whole (see Zech. 13: 8, 9; Isa. 24: 13; also, Ezek. 20: 31-44), but of the remnant. The mass will be destroyed for their apostasy. The *remnant* will be acknowledged as the nation, "and so all Israel shall be saved" (Rom. 11: 26). To be of the sons of Jacob even, will not ensure an opportunity of grace. None who refuse the truth now, whether Jew or Gentile, can be saved then.

Through the Jew, the gospel of the kingdom will, during this time, be preached in all the earth for a witness ere the end shall come. Sent forth by the Spirit from on high, they will proclaim far and wide the approach of the kingdom, and call upon men to repent, as John the Baptist did of old. See Matt. 24: 14.

The everlasting gospel of Rev. 14: 6, 7 will probably succeed this. It is the calling on the creature to acknowledge the Creator-God in a day when all the world will be wondering after the Beast (Rev. 13). Isa. 66: 18-21 is instructive in this connection: "It shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and see My glory. And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the isles afar off, *that have not heard My fame*, neither have seen My glory; and they shall declare My glory among the Gentiles. And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to My holy mountain Jerusa-

lem, saith the Lord, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord. And I will also take of them for priests and for Levites, saith the Lord." Here we doubtless have the ingathering of all Israel, including the ten tribes, so long hidden from view. Connected with it, however, we see grace going out to the Gentiles who have not heard the truth previously. The great result of this is seen also in Zech. 8 : 20, 23.

A word on the judgment of Matt. 25, and we have done. This takes place at the Lord's coming to the earth. The *living* nations are gathered before Him. The separation is made according to the treatment accorded the Jewish missionaries mentioned above, whom He owns as "My brethren." Intelligence in divine things is not marked in any, but at least they did not reject or neglect the messengers. They are saved, and enter into the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world. They are the "blessed of His Father."

And so, even though the sword of judgment is unsheathed, grace is still exercised, according to the word, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy" (Rom. 9 : 15). From Israel and the Gentiles a countless number will go into the millennial kingdom and acknowledge the sway of the blessed One, once made a curse for them as for us. But not one who has spurned the Lamb of God in the present period will be among them.

As briefly noticed above, some will be numbered with the heavenly saints after the Church is gone.

They will be exclusively Jewish, as evidenced by the fact that they sing "the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb" (Rev. 15 : 3). Their part will be, not with the Church the body of Christ, the Eve of the last Adam, but doubtless with those of old who "desired a better country, that is, a heavenly" (Heb. 11 : 16). In Rev. 20 we see them enthroned with the rest, who live and reign a thousand years. With the Lamb they will be forever, but not theirs will be the special place enjoyed by those who now believe in Him, and who are identified with Him in the present hour of His rejection.



# Wrongly Dividing the Word of Truth



## ULTRA-DISPENSATIONALISM EXAMINED IN THE LIGHT OF HOLY SCRIPTURE



### CHAPTER ONE

#### What Is Ultra-Dispensationalism?

**“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth” (2 Tim. 2: 15).**

**P**AUL’S exhortation to the younger preacher, Timothy, has come home to many with great power in recent years. As a result, there has been a return to more ancient methods of Bible study, which had been largely neglected during the centuries of the Church’s drift from apostolic testimony. Augustine’s words have had a re-affirmation: “Distinguish the ages, and the Scriptures are plain.” And so there has been great emphasis put in many quarters, and rightly so, upon the study of what is commonly known as “dispensational” truth. This line of teaching, if kept within Scriptural bounds, cannot but prove a great blessing to the humble student of the Word of God who desires to know His will or plan in His dealings with men from creation to the coming glory. A careful examination of the volume of Revelation shows that God’s ways with men have differed in various ages. This must be taken into account if one would properly apprehend His truth.

The word “dispensation” is found several times in the pages of our English Bible and is a translation of the

Greek word "*oikonomia*." This word, strictly speaking, means "house order." It might be translated "administration," "order," or "stewardship." In each successive age, God gives to men of faith a certain stewardship, or makes known to them a certain order or administration, in accordance with which they are responsible to behave. A dispensation then is a period of time in which God is dealing with men in some way in which He has not dealt with them before. Only when a new revelation from God is given, does a dispensation change. Moreover, there may be degrees of revelation in one dispensation; all, however, having to do with a fuller unfolding of the will of God for that particular age. This was very definitely true in the dispensation of law, from Moses to Christ. We have the various revelations: of Sinai, both 'the first and second giving of the law; then added instructions during the wilderness years; the covenant with David; and the revelations given to the prophets. The circumstances in which God's people were found changed frequently during this age of law, but the dispensation itself continued from Sinai until Jesus cried, "It is finished." It is important to have this in mind, otherwise the vast scope of an ever unfolding dispensation may be lost sight of, and one might get the idea that every additional revelation of truth in a given age changed the dispensation, whereas it only enlarges it.

One may illustrate a dispensation in a very simple way, remembering that the word really means "house order," and I might add, the Greek word has been Anglicized, and we know it as "economy." Let us suppose a young woman whom we will call Mary, is going out into service. She obtains a position in a humble home belonging to a good family of the working class. There are certain rules governing that home which she must learn to observe. All perhaps is not plain to her at once, but as time goes on, she learns more and more fully the desires of her mistress. We will say she is to rise at five every morning and begin to prepare the breakfast and put up the lunches for those

who go out to work. At six she is to ring the rising bell; at half-past six the family are supposed to be at the breakfast-table; and at seven they leave for work. Dinner of course is at a certain hour at night, and in the meantime she has her different duties to perform in keeping the house in order. She learns quite thoroughly the domestic economy of this particular home and becomes a well-qualified household servant. Now let us suppose that later on she finds that a cook and housekeeper is needed for the large mansion on the hill. She applies for the position and is accepted. Moving in, her mistress undertakes to instruct her in the economy of the new home, but Mary says, "You need not give me any instructions, Ma'am, I know exactly how a house should be run. Just leave it to me and everything will be attended to properly. I have had some years of experience in housekeeping and I would not have asked for the position if I did not know what was required." Her mistress is dubious, but, for the time being, acquiesces.

The next morning, the waking-gong sounds at six o'clock. The family, who are accustomed to banker's hours during the day and are given to very late hours at night, are astonished and chagrined at being aroused so early. The mistress calls down to the housekeeper, "What does this mean?" and learns that breakfast will be on the table in half-an-hour.

"Why, Mary," she exclaims; "we never breakfast here until half-past eight."

"But the breakfast is hot and the lunches are all ready, Ma'am."

"No one carries lunches in this home. You see, Mary, you do not understand the arrangement here. I shall have to instruct you carefully today." And poor bewildered Mary learns the importance of dispensational truth!

The illustration, I know, is crude, but I think any one will see the point. God had one order for the house of Israel. There is another order for the house of God, the Church of the living God today. There will be a different

order in the millennial age, and there have been varying orders in the past.

All this comes out clearly in the pages of Holy Scripture, and is certainly involved in the expression in our English Bibles, "rightly dividing the Word of Truth." Of course, this expression is not by any means to be limited to dispensational teaching. It also implies putting each great doctrine of the Word in its right place. It has been translated, "cutting in a straight line the Word of Truth," that is, not confounding or confusing things that differ. It even suggests the thought of honestly facing the Word of Truth.

It is right here then that we need to be careful, and not read into the Word of God ideas out of our own minds which are not really there. Through doing this, some have ignored dispensational truth altogether. Others have swung to an ultra-dispensationalism which is most pernicious in its effect upon one's own soul and upon testimony for God generally. Of these ultra-dispensational systems, one in particular has come into prominence of late years, which, for want of a better name, is generally called "Bullingerism," owing to the fact that it was first advocated some years ago by Dr. E. W. Bullinger, a clergyman of the Church of England. These views have been widely spread through the notes of "The Companion Bible," a work partly edited by Dr. Bullinger, though he died before it was completed. This Bible has many valuable features and has been a help in certain respects to God's servants who have used it conservatively, but it contains interpretations which are utterly subversive of the truth. Some of Dr. Bullinger's positions are glaringly opposed to what is generally accepted as orthodox teaching, as, for instance, the sleep of the soul between death and resurrection; and it is a most significant fact that while he did not apparently fully commit himself to any eschatological position as to the final state of the impenitent, most of his followers in Great Britain have gone off into annihilation, and there is quite a sect in America who began with his teaching who



now are restorationists of the broadest type, teaching what they are pleased to call universal reconciliation, which to their minds involves the final salvation not only of all men, but of Satan and all the fallen angels. These two views, diverse as they are, are nevertheless the legitimate offspring of the ultra-dispensational system to which we refer.

The present writer has been urged by many for years to take up these questions, but has always heretofore shrunk from doing so; first, because of the time and labor involved, which seemed out of all proportion to the possible value of such an examination; and secondly, because of a natural shrinking from controversy, remembering the word, "The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient; in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth." But the rapid spread of these pernicious views and their evident detrimental effect upon so many who hold them, has led to the conclusion that it would be unfaithfulness to God and to His people if one refused to seek to give any help he could in regard to these teachings.

Briefly, then, what are the outstanding tenets of Bullingerism and its kindred systems? For one needs to remember that a number are teaching these ultra-dispensational things who declare that they are not familiar with the writings of Dr. Bullinger, and repudiate with indignation the name of "Bullingerism." There are perhaps six outstanding positions taken by these teachers:

*First*, inasmuch as our Lord Jesus was "a minister of the circumcision to confirm the promises made to the fathers," it is insisted that the four Gospels are entirely Jewish and have no real message for the Church, the Body of Christ. All might not put it quite as boldly as this, but certainly their disciples go to the limit in repudiating the authority of the Gospels.

*Secondly*, it is maintained that the book of Acts covers a transition period between the dispensation of the law and

the dispensation of the mystery; that is, that in the book of Acts we do not have the Church, the Body of Christ, but that the word "*ekklesia*" (church, or assembly), as used in that book, refers to a different Church altogether to that of Paul's prison epistles. This earlier Church is simply an aspect of the kingdom and is not the same as the Body of Christ!

*Third*, it is contended that Paul did not receive his special revelation of the mystery of the Body until his imprisonment in Rome, and that his prison epistles alone reveal this truth and are, strictly speaking, the only portion of the Holy Scriptures given to members of the Body. All of the other epistles of Paul, save those written during his imprisonment and the general epistles, are relegated to the earlier dispensation of the book of Acts, and have no permanent value for us, but were for the instruction of the so-called Jewish church of that time.

*Fourth*, the entire book of Revelation has to do with the coming age and has no reference to the Church today. Even the letters to the seven churches in Asia, which are distinctly said to be "the things which are," are, according to this system, to be considered as "the things which are *not*," and will not be until the Church, the Body of Christ, is removed from this world. Then, it is contended, these seven churches will appear on the earth as Jewish churches in the Great Tribulation.

*Fifth*, the Body of Christ is altogether a different company, according to these teachers, from the Bride of the Lamb, the latter being supposed to be Jewish.

*Sixth*, the Christian ordinances, having been given before Paul is supposed to have received his revelation of the mystery in prison, have no real connection with the present economy, and therefore, are relegated to the past, and may again have a place in the future Great Tribulation.\*

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\*As to this, these ultra-dispensationalists differ. Most of them reject water baptism entirely for this age. All of them are not prepared to go so far in connection with the Lord's Supper, but many of them repudiate it too.

Besides these six points, there are many other unscriptural things which are advocated by various disciples who began with these views and have been rapidly throwing overboard other Scriptural teachings. Many Bullingerites boldly advocate the sleep of the soul between death and resurrection, the annihilation of the wicked, or, as we have seen, universal salvation of all men and demons, the denial of the eternal Sonship of the Lord Jesus Christ, and, gravest of all, the personality of the Holy Spirit. All of these evil doctrines find congenial soil in Bullingerism. Once men take up with this system there is no telling how far they will go, and what their final position will be in regard to the great fundamental truths of Christianity. It is because of this that one needs to be on his guard, for it is as true of systems as it is of teachers, "By their fruits ye shall know them."

Having had most intimate acquaintance with Bullingerism as taught by many for the last forty years, I have no hesitancy in saying that its fruits are evil. It has produced a tremendous crop of heresies throughout the length and breadth of this and other lands; it has divided Christians and wrecked churches and assemblies without number; it has lifted up its votaries in intellectual and spiritual pride to an appalling extent, so that they look with supreme contempt upon Christians who do not accept their peculiar views; and in most instances where it has been long tolerated, it has absolutely throttled Gospel effort at home and sown discord on missionary fields abroad. So true are these things of this system that I have no hesitancy in saying it is an absolutely Satanic perversion of the truth. Instead of rightly dividing the Word, I shall seek to show that these teachers wrongly divide the Word, and that their propaganda is anything but conducive to spirituality and enlightenment in divine things.

## The Four Gospels and Their Relation to the Church

**H**OWEVER they may differ in regard to minor details of their various systems, practically all ultra-dispensationalists are a unit in declaring that the four Gospels must be entirely relegated to a past dispensation (in fact, according to most of them, they are pushed two dispensations back), and, therefore, are not to be considered as in any sense applying to this present age. It is affirmed with the utmost assurance that the Gospels are wholly Jewish. Inasmuch as we are told in the Epistle to the Romans (15: 8), that "Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers," the position is taken that the records of the Evangelists deal solely with this phase of things, and that there is nothing even in the utterances of our Lord Himself in those books that has any special place for the present dispensation.

Yet a careful consideration of the very passage in which these words are found would seem to negative this entire theory and prove that it is absolutely groundless, for when the apostle is stressing true Christian behavior, he refers the saints back to the life and ministry of our Lord Jesus when here on earth. Notice the opening verses of Romans 15. We are told that the "strong should bear the infirmities of the weak, and not seek to please themselves, but that each one should have in mind the edification of his neighbor," having Christ as our great example, "who pleased not Himself, but of whom it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached Thee fell on Me."

We are then definitely informed that not only what we have in the four Gospels, but what we have in all the Old Testament is for us, "for whatsoever things were written

aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." Here there is no setting aside of an earlier revelation as though it had no message for the people of God in a later day simply because dispensations have changed. Spiritual principles never change; moral responsibility never changes, and the believer who would glorify God in the present age must manifest the grace that was seen in Christ when He walked here on earth during the age that is gone. It is perfectly true that He came in exact accord with Old Testament prophecy and came under the law, in order that He might deliver those who were under the law from that bondage. He was in reality a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, not—observe—to fulfil at His first coming the promises made unto the fathers, but to confirm them. This He did by His teaching and His example. He assures Israel even in setting them to one side, that the promises made beforehand shall yet have their fulfilment.

But, observe, it is upon this very fact that the apostle bases present grace going out to the Gentiles, for he adds in verse 9:

**"And that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy; as it is written: For this cause I will confess to Thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto Thy name. And again He saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with His people. And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud Him, all ye people. And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a Root of Jesse, and He that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in Him shall the Gentiles trust" (vers. 9-12).**

Here, while not for a moment ignoring that revelation of the mystery of which he speaks in the closing chapter, Paul shows that the present work of God in reaching out in grace to the Gentiles, is in full harmony with Old Testament Scripture, while going far beyond anything that the Old Testament prophets ever dreamed of, and then he adds:

**"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost" (ver. 13).**

While there is a change of dispensation, there is no rude severing of Old Testament or Gospel revelation from that of the present age. The one flows naturally out of the other, and the ways of God are shown to be perfectly harmonious. This being so in connection with the Old Testament, how much more does the same principle apply in connection with the four Gospels. While fully recognizing their dispensational place, and realizing that our Lord is presented in the three Synoptics as offering Himself as King and the kingdom of Heaven as such to Israel, only to meet with ever-increasing rejection, yet it should be plain to any spiritual mind that the principles of the kingdom which He sets forth are the same principles that should hold authority over the hearts of all who acknowledge the Lordship of Christ. In John's Gospel the case is somewhat different, for there Christ is seen as the rejected One from the very beginning. It is in chapter one that we read, "He came unto His own and His own received Him not." Then based upon that, we have the new and fuller revelation which runs throughout that Gospel of grace, flowing out to all men who have no merit whatever in themselves.

But in Matthew, which is preeminently the dispensational Gospel, the Lord is presented as the Son of David first of all. Then when it is evident that Israel will refuse His claims, He is presented in the larger aspect of Son of Abraham in whom all the nations of the earth shall be blessed. The break with the leaders of the nation comes in chapter twelve, where they definitely ascribe the works of the Holy Spirit to the devil. In doing this, they become guilty of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, the crowning sin of that dispensation, which our Lord declares could not be forgiven either in that age or in the one to follow. In chapter thirteen, we have an altogether new ministry beginning. The Lord for the first time opens up the mysteries of the kingdom of Heaven, revealing things that had been kept secret from the foundation of the world, namely the strange and unlooked-for form that the kingdom would take

here on earth after Israel had rejected the King and He had returned to Heaven. This is set forth in the seven parables of that chapter, and gives us the course of Christendom during all the present age.

As a rule, the ultra-dispensationalists would ignore all this and push these seven parables forward into the tribulation era after the Church, the Body of Christ, has been taken out of this scene. But this is to do violence to the entire Gospel and to ignore utterly the history of the past 1900 years. Just as in Revelation two and three we have an outline of the history of the professing Church presented under the similitude of the seven letters, so in Matthew 13 we have the course of Christendom in perfect harmony with the Church letters, portrayed in such a way as to make clear the distinction between the Church that man builds and that which is truly of God. In chapter sixteen of Matthew's Gospel, the Lord declares for the first time that He is going to build a Church or assembly. This assembly is to be built upon the Rock, the confession of the apostle Peter that Christ is the Son of the living God. How utterly vain it is to try to separate this declaration from the statement in the Ephesian Epistle where we read:

**"Now therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (2: 19-22).**

Here in the preeminent prison epistle of which so much is made by the Bullingerites, you find that the Church then in existence is the Church our Lord spoke of building when He was here in the days of His flesh. The discipline of that Church is given in Matthew 18: 15-20:

**"Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth**

of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them."

In Matthew sixteen you have the assembly as a whole, comprising all believers during the present dispensation. Here in chapter eighteen, you have the local assembly in the position of responsibility on earth, and its authority to deal with evil-doers in corrective discipline.

The complete setting aside of Israel for the present age is given us in chapter 23: 37-39.

**"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord."**

In the light of the words, "Your house is left unto you desolate," how amazing the presumption that would lead any to declare, as practically all these extreme dispensationalists do declare, that Israel is being given a second trial throughout all the book of Acts, and that their real setting aside does not take place until Paul's meeting with the elders of the Jews after his imprisonment in Rome, as recorded in the last chapter of Acts. The fact of the matter is that the book of Acts opens with the setting aside of Israel until the day when they shall say, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." That is His second glorious coming. In the interval, God is saving out of Israel as well as of the Gentiles, all who turn to Him in repentance.

In Matthew twenty-four, we are carried on to the days



immediately preceding that time when the Son of Man shall appear in glory, and we find the people of Israel in great distress, but a remnant called His "elect" shall be saved in that day.

I pass purposely over chapter twenty-five as having no particular bearing on the outline, because a careful consideration of it would take more time and space than is here available. The closing chapters give us the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and then the commission of His apostles. People who have never investigated Bullingerism and its kindred systems will hardly believe me when I say that even the great commission upon which the Church has acted for 1900 years, and which is still our authority for world-wide missions, is, according to these teachers, a commission with which we have nothing whatever to do, that has no reference to the Church at all, and that the work there predicted will not begin until taken up by the remnant of Israel in the days of the Great Tribulation. Yet such is actually the teaching. In view of this, let us carefully read the closing verses of the Gospel:

**"Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw Him, they worshipped Him: but some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (28: 16-20).**

According to the Bullingeristic interpretation of this passage, we should have to paraphrase it somewhat as follows: "Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw Him, they worshipped Him: but some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto Me in heaven and earth, and after two entire dispensations have rolled by, I command that the remnant of Israel who shall be living two thousand or more years later, shall

go out and teach the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them in that day to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, but from which I absolve all believers between the present hour and that coming age, and lo, I will be with that remnant until the close of Daniel's seventieth week." Can anything be more absurd, more grotesque—and I might add, more wicked—than thus to twist and misuse the words of our Lord Jesus Christ?

In view of all this, may I direct my reader's careful attention to the solemn statement of the apostle Paul, which is found in 1 Timothy, chapter 6. After having given a great many practical exhortations to Timothy as to the instruction he was to give to the churches for their guidance during all the present age, the apostle says,

**"If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself" (1 Tim. 6: 3-5).**

One would almost think that this was a direct command to Timothy to beware of Bullingerism! Notice, Timothy is to withdraw himself from, that is, to have no fellowship with, those who refuse the present authority of the words of our Lord Jesus Christ. Where do you get those actual words? Certainly in the four Gospels. There are very few actual words of the Lord Jesus Christ scattered throughout the rest of the New Testament. Of course there is a sense in which all the New Testament is from Him, but the apostle is clearly referring here to the actual spoken words of our Saviour, which have been recorded for the benefit of the saints, and which set forth the teaching that is in accordance with godliness or practical piety. If a man refuses these words, whether on the plea that they do not apply to our dispensation, or for any other reason, the

Spirit of God declares it is an evidence of intellectual or spiritual pride. Such men ordinarily think they know much more than others, and they look down from their fancied heights of superior Scriptural understanding with a certain contempt, often not untinged with scornful amusement, upon godly men and women who are simply seeking to take the words of the Lord Jesus as the guide for their lives.

But here we are told that such "know nothing," but are really in their spiritual dotage, "doting about questions and strifes of words." The dotard is generally characterized by frequent repetition of similar expressions. We know how marked this symptom is in those who have entered upon a state of physical and intellectual senility. Spiritual dotage may be discerned in the same way. A constant dwelling upon certain expressions as though these were all-important, to the ignoring of the great body of truth, is an outstanding symptom. The margin, it will be observed, substitutes the word "sick" for "doting;" "word-sickness" is an apt expression. The word-sick man over-estimates altogether the importance of terms. He babbles continually about expressions which many of his brethren scarcely understand. He is given to misplaced emphasis, making far more of fine doctrinal distinctions than of practical godly living. As a result, his influence is generally baneful instead of helpful, leading to strife and disputation instead of binding the hearts of the people of God together in the unity of the Spirit.

The well-known passage in the closing chapter of Mark's Gospel, which gives us another aspect of the great commission, having to do particularly with the apostles, is a favorite battleground with the ultra-dispensationalists. Ignoring again the entire connection, they insist that the commission given in verses fifteen and eighteen could only apply during the days of the book of Acts, inasmuch as certain signs were to follow them that believe. As the commission in Matthew has been relegated by them to the Great Tribulation after the Christian age has closed, this

one is supposed to have had its fulfilment before the present mystery dispensation began, and so has no real force now. They point out, what to them seems conclusive, that in this commission, as of course that in Matthew, water baptism is evidently linked with a profession of faith in Christ. They are perfectly hydrophobic as to this. The very thought of water sets them foaming with indignation. There must on no account be any recognition of water baptism during the present age. It must be gotten rid of at all costs. So here where we read that our Lord said, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16: 15, 16), which would seem to indicate world-wide evangelism, looking out to the proclamation of the glad glorious Gospel of God to lost men everywhere, this commission must nevertheless be gotten rid of somehow. The way they do it is this: The Lord declares that certain signs shall follow when this Gospel is proclaimed. These signs evidently followed in the days of the Acts. They declare they have never followed since. Therefore, it is evident that water baptism is only to go on so long as the signs follow. If the signs have ceased, then water baptism ceases. The signs are not here now, therefore no water baptism. How amazingly clear (!!), though, as we shall see in a moment, absolutely illogical. The signs accompanied *preaching the Gospel*. Why continue to preach if such signs are not now manifest?

The Matthew commission makes it plain that baptism in the name of the Trinity is to go on to the end of the age, and that age has not come to an end yet, whatever changes of dispensation may have come in. Now what of this commission in Mark? Observe first of all that our Lord is not declaring that the signs shall follow believers in the Gospel which is to be proclaimed by the Lord's messengers. The signs were to follow those of the apostles who believed, and they did. There were some of them who did not believe. See verse eleven: "And they, when they had heard that He

was alive and had been seen of her, believed not." Then again, notice verse thirteen: "They went and told it unto the residue; neither believed they them." And in the verse that follows, we read: "Afterward He appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen Him after He was risen." Now our Lord commissions the eleven, sends them forth to go to the ends of the earth preaching the Gospel to every creature. There is nothing limited here. It is not a Jewish commission. It has nothing to do with the restoration of the kingdom to Israel. It is a world-wide commission to go to all the Gentiles, and to go forth preaching the Word. Responsibility rests upon those who hear. They are to believe and be baptized. Those who do are recognized among the saved. On the other hand, He does not say, "He that is not baptized shall be damned," because baptism was simply an outward confession of their faith, but He does say, "He that believeth not shall be damned."

Then in verses seventeen and eighteen, we have what Paul later called "the signs of an apostle."

**"These signs shall follow them that believe: In My name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."**

During all the period of the book of Acts, these signs did follow the apostles. More than that, if we can place the least reliance upon early Church history, the same signs frequently followed other servants of Christ, as they went forth in obedience to this commission, and this long after the imprisonment of the apostle Paul. We should expect this from the closing verses of Mark:

**"So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the Word with signs following" (Mark 16: 19, 20).**

In this last verse, Mark covers the evangelization of the world (not merely a message going out to the Jews), during all the years that followed until the last of the apostles, John himself, had disappeared from the scene. I do not mean to intimate that Mark knew this, but I do mean that the Spirit of God caused him so to write this closing verse as to cover complete apostolic testimony right on to its consummation. They preached everywhere, not simply in connection with Israel. Yet in the face of this, the statement has been made over and over again by these ultra-dispensationalists, that the twelve never went to the Gentiles, excepting in the case of the apostle Peter and a few similar instances. The statement has also been made that all miracles ceased with Paul's imprisonment, that there were no miracles afterwards. What superb ignorance of Church history is here indicated, and what an absurd position a man puts himself in who commits himself to negatives like these! An eminent logician has well said, "Never commit yourself to a negative, for that supposes that you are in possession of all the facts." If a man says there were no miracles wrought in the Church after the imprisonment of the apostle Peter, it means, if that statement is true, that he has thorough knowledge of all that has taken place in every land on earth where the Gospel has been preached, in all the centuries since the days of Paul's imprisonment, and knows all the work that every servant of Christ has ever done. Otherwise he could not logically and rationally make such a statement.

What then is the conclusion? It is wrongly dividing the Word of Truth to seek to rob Christians of the precious instruction given by our Lord Jesus in the four Gospels, though fully recognizing their dispensational place. It is an offense against Christian missions everywhere to try to set aside the great commission for the entire present age. It is not true that a definite limit is placed in Scripture upon the manifestation of sign gifts, and that such gifts have never appeared since the days of the apostles.

## CHAPTER THREE

### The Transitional Period

#### Is the Church of The Acts the Body of Christ?

**T**HERE is perhaps nothing about which the ultra-dispensationalists are more certain, according to their own expressions, than that the book of the Acts covers a transitional period, coming in between the age of the law and the present age in which the dispensation of the mystery has been revealed. They do not always agree as to the name of this intervening period. Some call it the Kingdom Church; others the Jewish Church; and there are those who prefer the term Pentecostal Dispensation. The general teaching is about as follows: It is affirmed that the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost and His baptizing the one hundred and twenty and those who afterwards believed, did not have anything to do with the formation of the Church, the Body of Christ. On the contrary, they insist that the Church throughout all of the book of Acts up to Paul's imprisonment was of an altogether lower order than that of the Epistle to the Ephesians. Assemblies in Judea, Samaria, and the various Gentile countries, were simply groups of believers who were waiting for the manifestation of the kingdom, and had not yet come into the full liberty of grace. The ordinances of the Lord's Supper and of baptism were linked with these companies and were to continue only until Israel had definitely and finally refused the Gospel message, after which the full revelation of the mystery is supposed to have been given to the apostle Paul when he was imprisoned at Rome. From that time on a new dispensation began. Surely this is wrongly confounding the Word of Truth. How any rational and spiritually-minded person could ever come to such a conclusion after a careful reading of the book of Acts, and with it the various epistles ad-

dressed to the churches and peoples mentioned in that book, is more than some of us can comprehend. Let us see what the facts actually are.

In the first place, it is perfectly plain that the Church, the Body of Christ, was formed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Very definitely this term is used of that great event which took place at Pentecost and was repeated in measure in Cornelius' household. In each instance the same exact expression is used. Referring to Pentecost, our Lord says, "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence" (Acts 1: 5). Referring to the event that took place in Cornelius' household, Peter says:

**"Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that He said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as He did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?" (Acts 11: 16, 17).**

In 1 Corinthians 12: 12, 13, we read:

**"For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."**

Here we are distinctly informed as to the way in which the Body has been brought into existence, and this is exactly what took place at Pentecost. Individual believers were that day baptized into one Body, and from then on the Lord added to the Church daily such as were saved. It is a significant fact that if you omit this definite passage in 1 Corinthians, there is no other verse in any epistle that tells us in plain words just how the Body is formed; although we might deduce this from Ephesians 4: 4, where we read: "There is one Body and one Spirit." Undoubtedly this refers to the baptism of the Holy Spirit, by which the Body is formed, in contradistinction to water baptism in the next verse. But this is simply interpretation, and all might



not agree as to it. But there can surely be no question as to the application of the passage in 1 Corinthians 12: 13. Yet, singularly enough, the very people who insist that the Body is formed by the Spirit's baptism, declare that these Corinthians were not members of the Body, nor did that Body come into existence until at least four or five years afterwards.

A careful reading of the book of Acts shows us the gradual manner in which the truth of the new dispensation was introduced, and this is what has led some to speak of this book as covering a transitional period. Personally, I have no objection to the term "transitional period," if it be understood that the transition was in the minds of men and not in the mind of God. According to God, the new dispensation, that in which we now live, the dispensation of the grace of God, otherwise called the dispensation of the mystery, began the moment the Spirit descended at Pentecost. That moment the one Body came into existence, though at the beginning it was composed entirely of believers taken out from the Jewish people. But in the minds even of the disciples, there was a long period before they all fully entered into the special work that God had begun to do. Many of them, in fact, probably never did apprehend the true character of this dispensation, as we shall see further on.

The position is often taken that the twelve apostles were very ignorant of what the Lord was really doing, and that their entire ministry was toward Israel. Have not such teachers forgotten that during the forty days that the Lord appeared to His disciples before ascending to Heaven, He taught them exactly what His program was, and the part they were to have in it? In Acts 1: 3, 4, we read:

**"He also showed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: and being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith He, ye have heard of Me."**

And it was then that He distinctly told them of the coming baptism of the Holy Spirit. According to the divine plan the Gospel message was first to be proclaimed in Jerusalem, then Judea, then Samaria, and then unto the uttermost parts of the earth. This is exactly what we find in the book of Acts. The earlier chapters give us the proclamation in Jerusalem and Judea. Then we have Philip going down to Samaria, followed by John and Peter. Later Peter goes to the house of Cornelius, and he and his household, believing the Gospel, are baptized by the same Spirit into the same Body. The conversion of Saul of Tarsus prepares the way for a world-wide ministry, he being specifically chosen of God for that testimony.

But before Saul's conversion, there were churches of God in many cities, and these churches of God together formed *the Church of God*; churches signifying local companies, but *the Church of God* taking in all believers. Years afterwards, Paul writes, "I persecuted the Church of God and wasted it" (Gal. 1: 13). And again, "For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God" (1 Cor. 15: 9). The Church of God was to him one whole. It was exactly the same Church of God as that of which he speaks in 1 Timothy 3: 15, when, writing to the younger preacher, he says: "That thou mightest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." In the meantime he had been cast into prison and had written all the rest of the so-called prison epistles, with the exception, of course, of Titus, which was written while he was at liberty, between his imprisonments, and 2 Timothy, which was written during his second imprisonment.\* There is no hint of

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\* I make this statement on the supposition that the note at the end of 1 Timothy is correct, namely that the epistle was written from Laodicea, a place not visited by Paul before his first imprisonment. If written earlier the argument does not apply, except to show that Paul ever recognized the Church of God as one and undivided.

any difference having come in to distinguish the Church of God which he says he persecuted, from the Church of God in which Timothy was recognized as a minister of the Word. It is one and the same Church throughout.

Going back to Acts then, we notice that after his conversion, Paul is definitely set apart as the apostle to the Gentiles, and yet everywhere he goes, he first seeks out his Jewish brethren after the flesh, because it was God's purpose that the Gospel should be made known to the Jew first, and then to the Gentile. In practically every city, the same results follow. A few of the Jews receive the message; the bulk of them reject it. Then Paul turns from the Jews to the Gentiles, and thus the message goes out to the whole world. Throughout all of this period, covered by the ministries of Peter and Paul particularly, both baptism in water and the breaking of bread have their place. The signs of an apostle follow the ministry, God authenticating His Word as His servants go forth in His Name. However, it is perfectly plain that the nearer we get to the close of the Acts, the less we have in the way of signs and wonders. This is to be expected. In the meantime various books of the New Testament had been written, particularly Paul's letters to the Thessalonians, the Corinthians, and the Romans. In all likelihood, the Epistle of James had also been produced, though we cannot definitely locate the time of its writing. The Epistles of Peter and of John come afterward. They were not part of the earlier written ministry.

Everywhere that Paul goes, he preaches the kingdom as the Lord Himself has commanded, and finally he reached Rome a prisoner. There, following his usual custom, though not having the same liberty as in other places, he gets in touch first with the leaders of the Jewish people, gives them his message, and then tells them that even though they reject it, yet the purpose of God must be carried out, and the salvation of God sent to the Gentiles. This is supposed by many to be a dispensational break, but we have exactly the same thing in the thirteenth chapter of

Acts. There we read from verse 44 on, how the Jews in Antioch of Pisidia withstood the Word spoken by Paul, and Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said:

**"It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set Thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that Thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth."**

I ask any thoughtful reader: What difference is there between this account of Paul's dealing with the Jews, the proclamation of grace going out to the Gentiles, and that found in chapter 28 of this same book? In the light of these two passages, may we not say that if Paul was given liberty, as we know he was, to preach for several years after his first imprisonment, he undoubtedly still followed exactly the same method of proclaiming the Gospel to the Jew first, and then to the Gentiles? It is passing strange that these ultra-dispensationalists can overlook a passage like Acts 13, and then read so much into the similar portion in chapter 28. According to them, as we have pointed out, the dispensational break occurred at this latter time, after which Paul's ministry, they tell us, took an entirely different form. It was then that the dispensation of the mystery was revealed to him, they say, which he embodied in his prison epistles. He was no longer a preacher of the kingdom, but now a minister of the Body. The theory sounds very plausible until one examines the text of Scripture itself.

Let us look at the last two verses of Acts 28:

**"And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him."**

Now observe in chapter one, verse three, our Lord is said to have spoken to His disciples during the forty days of "the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." In the very last verse of the book, after Paul's supposed later rev-

elation, he is still "preaching the kingdom of God;" certainly the next phrase, "teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ," implies continuance in exactly the same type of ministry in which he had been engaged before. There is no hint here of something new.

Now let us go back a little. In chapter 20 of the book of Acts, we find the apostle Paul at Miletus on his way to Jerusalem. From there he sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church. We have a very touching account of his last interview with them. Among other things, he says to them:

**"I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Take heed unto yourselves and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20: 27, 28).**

And then he commends these elders in view of the coming apostasy, not to some new revelation yet to be given, but "to God and the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified." Note particularly the breadth of the statement found in verse 27. "All the counsel of God" had already been made known through Paul to the Ephesian elders before he went up to Jerusalem for the last time. There is not a hint of a partial revelation, not a hint of a transitional period, but they already had everything they needed to keep them until the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I venture to say that the better one is acquainted with the book of Acts, the clearer all this will become. It is truly absurd to attempt to make two Churches out of the redeemed company between Pentecost and the Lord's return. The Church is one and indivisible. It is the Church that Christ built upon the rock, namely the truth that He is the Son of the living God. It is the Church of God which He purchased with the blood of His own Son. That Church of God, Saul in his ignorance, persecuted. Of that same

Church of God, he afterwards became a member through the Spirit's baptism. In that Church of God, Timothy was a recognized minister, not only before, but after Paul's imprisonment.

In regard to the statement so frequently made that God was giving Israel a second chance throughout the book of Acts, it is evident that there is no foundation whatever for such a statement. Our Lord definitely declared the setting aside of Israel for this entire age when He said, "Your house is left unto you desolate. Ye shall not see Me again until ye say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord!" It was after that house was left desolate that the glorious proclamation at Pentecost was given through the power of the Holy Spirit, offering salvation by grace to any in Israel who repented, and to as many as the Lord our God shall call, which, of course, includes the whole Gentile world. Not once in any of the sermons recorded of Peter and of Paul do we have a hint that the nation of Israel is still on trial, and that God is waiting for that nation to repent in this age. On the contrary, the very fact that believers are called upon to "save themselves from that untoward generation" is evidence of the complete setting aside of Israel nationally, and the calling out of a select company of those who acknowledge the claims of the Lord Jesus Christ. By their baptism, they outwardly severed the link that bound them to the unbelieving nation, and thus came over onto Christian ground. To this company, Gentile believers were later added, and these two together constitute the Body of Christ. It is perfectly true that the Body as such is not mentioned in the book of Acts, and that for a very good reason. In this book, we have the record of the beginning of the evangelization of the world, which involves, of course, not the revelation of the truth of the Body, but the proclamation of the kingdom of God, which none can enter apart from the new birth.

A careful study of the epistles, taking particular note of the times at which, and the persons to whom, they were written, will only serve to make these things clearer.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### When Was the Revelation of the Mystery of the One Body Given?

**I**T IS contended by Bullingerites, and others of like ilk, that Paul did not receive the revelation of the mystery of the one Body until he was imprisoned in Rome, 63 A. D. Generally, too, the ground is taken that this revelation was given to him alone, and that the twelve knew nothing of it. Let us see if these assertions will stand the test of Holy Scripture.

We shall turn, first of all, directly to the writings of the apostle Paul, and examine the passages in which he refers to this subject. The first one is found in the Epistle to the Romans which was written, according to the best authorities, in the year A. D. 60, at least three years before Paul's imprisonment, and certainly some time before he reached Rome, as in that letter he tells the Romans that he is contemplating the visit to them, and asks them to pray that it might be a prosperous one. It might seem as though his prayer was not answered inasmuch as he reached Rome in chains, a prisoner for the Gospel's sake. But God's ways are not ours, and we can be sure that in the light of eternity, we shall see that this was indeed one of the most prosperous voyages that anyone ever made. Now in closing this epistle to the Romans, the apostle says in chapter 16, verses 25 to 27:

**"Now to Him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: to God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen."**

Here we have the plain statement that Paul's preaching throughout the years had been in accordance with the revelation of the mystery previously kept secret, but at that time made manifest. Moreover, he intimates that it had been already published abroad in writing, for he says, "It is made manifest (not exactly by the Scriptures of the prophets, as though he referred to Old Testament prophets, but) by prophetic writings," that is, his own and others. And this proclamation of the mystery had been made known to all nations for the obedience of faith.

Does anyone ask, How can any ultra-dispensationalist dare to say in the face of such a Scripture as this, that the mystery had not been made known and had not been previously preached before Paul was imprisoned at Rome? If a simple believing Christian, he will probably be amazed at the answer. Dr. Bullinger and others who follow him suggest that in all likelihood the last three verses of the Epistle to the Romans were not written by Paul when he sent the letter from some distant Gentile city, but that they were appended to the letter after he reached Rome and received the new revelation. Is this unbelievable? Nevertheless, it is exactly what these men teach. It is higher criticism of the worst type and impugns the perfection of the Word of God. For, even supposing their contentions were true, how absurd it would be for Paul to add these words after he reached Rome, to an epistle purporting to be written before he got there! And how senseless it would be for him to speak while he was in prison, of a Gospel and a revelation which he was supposed to have preached in all the world, if he had never yet begun that proclamation. Needless to say, the contention of Dr. Bullinger is an absolute fabrication. It is the special pleading of a hard-driven controversialist, bound to maintain his unscriptural system at all costs, even to destroying the unity of the Word of God.

Error is never consistent, and even the astute Bullinger has overlooked the fact that earlier in this very epistle, Paul declares the truth of the one Body just as clearly and



definitely as he does in Ephesians or any later letter. Notice particularly Romans 12: 4, 5:

**"For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and everyone members one of another."**

Could we have a clearer declaration than this of the truth of the mystery? What ultra-dispensationalist will dare to say that this passage is an interpolation added in after years in order to make Romans fit with Ephesians? God's Word is perfect and always exact. These unspiritual theorists invariably overlook something that completely destroys their unscriptural hypotheses.

When then did Paul get this revelation of the truth of the one Body? He tells us he had been preaching it throughout the world among all nations. The answer clearly is, he received it at the time of his conversion, when he cried in amazement, "Who art Thou, Lord?" and the glorified Saviour answered, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." This was the revelation of the mystery. In that announcement our Lord declared that every Christian on earth is so indissolubly linked up with Him as the glorified Head in Heaven, that everything done against one of them is felt by the Head. This is the mystery—members of His Body, of His flesh, and of His bones.

And moreover, this is in exact accord with certain statements elsewhere made in the book of Acts. For instance, in chapter 5, verse 14, we read:

**"And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women."**

This was before Paul's conversion. Observe it does not simply say that they were added to the company of believers, nor even added to the assembly alone, but they were added to the Lord. This is only by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Quite in keeping with this, when we turn

to chapter 11: 22-24, we read concerning the character and ministry of Barnabas that,

**"He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith: and much people were added unto the Lord."**

Now no one was ever added to the Lord in any other way than by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. So that clearly we have the Body of Christ here in the Acts, although the term itself is not used.

When we turn to 1 Corinthians, the only epistle which gives us divine order for the regulation of the affairs of the churches of God here on earth, we have the plain statement of this mystery as we have already seen, in chapter 12: 12-14.

**"For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one Body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many."**

It is absurd to say, as these ecclesiastical hobby-riders do, that the Body referred to here is not the same thing as the Body of Ephesians and Colossians. It is a Body made up of those who formerly were Jews or Gentiles, bond or free, but are now all one in Christ. And this Body has been formed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. In no other way was the Body of Christ brought into existence. Objection has been raised that when the apostle goes on to apply practically the truth of our responsibility as members of the Body in our relation to each other, he uses the illustration of the eye and ear as members of the head, which, they tell us, he could not use if he thought of Christ as the Head of the Body, and was thinking of believers as one Body with Him. But he tells us distinctly in the previous chapter that the Head of every man is Christ. This could only be said of those who were linked with Him in this

hallowed fellowship and members of this divine organism. The great difference, of course, between the Body as presented in Corinthians and as in Ephesians is this: the Body in Ephesians embraces all saints living or dead as to the flesh, from Pentecost to the Rapture, whereas the Body in Corinthians embraces all saints upon the earth at any given time. Seen thus in the place of responsibility, it is quite in keeping that the apostle should use the illustration that he does. It is in vain for these ultra-dispensationalists to fight against responsibility.

Recently I overheard a leader among them make this statement: "Whenever you get commandments of any kind, you are on Jewish ground, and you have given up grace." Yet in every epistle of the New Testament, we have commandments and exhortations insisting upon the believer's responsibility to recognize the government of God in this way. Grace and government are not opposing principles, but are intimately linked together. He who refuses the truth of responsibility does not thereby magnify grace, but rather is in danger of turning the grace of God into lasciviousness and becomes practically an antinomian, throwing off all restraint, professing to be saved by grace, but refusing to recognize the claims of Christ.

Coming back then to consider the passage in 1 Corinthians, we have the truth of the Body clearly set forth, and are shown how it was brought into existence in a letter written at least four years before Paul's imprisonment; and he writes that letter to a group of believers who had been brought to a knowledge of Christ through his preaching some years before. To them he says in verses 26, 27:

**"And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it, or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the Body of Christ, and members in particular."**

Verse 26 only emphasizes what we have referred to above, that here we have the Body in the place of responsibility on earth. Members in Heaven do not suffer.

All members on earth do. But it is objected again that in the Greek there is no definite article before the word "body," and therefore the passage should simply read, "Now ye are *a* Body of Christ," and so we are told this refers only to a local church. This does not touch the question. Every local church in apostolic days was the Body of Christ representatively in that place. It would be so today if it were not for the fact that so many unsaved people have been received into the membership of the local churches. According to the Word of God, there was only the one Body, and in any city where the Gospel had been preached and believed, that Body could be found as a local company.

When we pass on to 2 Corinthians, we find the same precious truth ministered by the apostle long before he was imprisoned at Rome. He tells us, in chapter 5: 16, 17:

**"Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature (or literally, this is a new creation): old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."**

Could words more plainly set forth the truth of the mystery than these? Old relationships ended and every believer brought into a new place altogether before God, and a new condition, so that Christ is now his Head, and he a member of the new creation. And this was part of the preaching that the apostle had been declaring wherever he went during all the years of his ministry.

We turn next to Galatians, a letter written, according to the best authority we have, a year earlier than Corinthians, and the ultra-dispensationalists are very sure that when Paul speaks of being baptized into Christ in this letter, there can be no reference to water baptism, but that he refers solely to the baptism of the Holy Spirit. I am not in agreement with them on this; but allowing for the moment that they are correct, then notice where it puts their theory. Note carefully chapter 3: 26-29:

**"For ye are all the children (sons) of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."**

Here again we are distinctly told that all the children of faith, Abraham's seed spiritually, are sons of God, and that all such as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ, and that in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, nor any of the other distinctions according to nature, but all are one in Him. Is there anything in the revelation of the mystery as given in Ephesians or Colossians that goes beyond this? It is a clear definite statement of the absolute unity in Christ of those who before their conversion occupied different positions here on earth, some being Jews, some Gentiles, some free men, some slaves, some men, some women, but every distinction now obliterated in the new creation.

If any are foolish enough to object, as some have, that Abraham's seed is altogether different from the Body of Christ, then we turn to Ephesians itself, the epistle which they claim, above all others supports their unscriptural theory, and find their entire position is there completely disallowed. In the first chapter of this glorious epistle, the apostle reminds the Ephesians of things that they have learned through his ministry in days gone by. There is no hint that he is opening up to them something new, but he simply puts down in writing for permanent use, precious things already dear to them. He reminds them that they have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ; that they have been chosen in Him before the foundation of the world in order that they might be holy and without blame before Him; that in love, He has predestinated them unto the place of sons by Christ Jesus, having taken them into favor in the Beloved. Theirs is redemption through His blood, sins all forgiven according to the riches of His grace, and to them He has abounded in

all wisdom and prudence, having made known the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He hath purposed in Himself (see vers. 3-9). He points them on to the full consummation of this mystery when in the administration of the completed seasons, that is, the last dispensation, He will head up in one all things in Christ, both heavenly and earthly, and He reminds them that we have already obtained an inheritance in Him, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things according to the counsel of His own will. We need to notice the pronouns used in verses 12 and 13. He first speaks of converts from Israel, when he says, "That we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ." Then he refers to the Gentiles, such as these Ephesians had been, when in the next verse he says:

**"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory."**

Now observe carefully, he is far from intimating that he is at this time unveiling something of which they had never heard before. He carries them back in memory to the hour of their conversion, and declares that these things were true of them then. And, because of this, he prays that they may have deeper understanding, not of new truth about to be revealed, but of blessed and wonderful things already made known. In the second chapter, he deals specifically with the new creation, reminding them in verse 12 that they in time past were Gentiles who were called uncircumcision, and were in themselves without Christ and aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and literally atheists in the world. But now they have been made nigh by the blood of Christ. The result is that they became members of that same Body into which their converted Jewish brethren had already been assimilated. Notice carefully verses 14-18:

**"For He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us: having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments, contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father."**

The distinction between Jew and Gentile was abolished in the cross, not after Paul's imprisonment in Rome. From that time on all who believed were brought into the Body of Christ through the one Spirit of verse 18. What were the means used to effect this? The preaching recorded in the book of Acts, for it is only that to which he can possibly refer, when he says (vers. 16, 17):

**"That He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby, and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh."**

It was necessary that the message should first go to them that were nigh, as it did in the early chapters of Acts, and then to those that were afar off; but the result of that preaching was that all who believed were reconciled to God in one Body.

In the last four verses of the chapter he shows the unity of the Church from the beginning. The Church is the household of God. It is also a great building, and he declares:

**"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets (New Testament prophets, of course), Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth (note the tense; it is not yet completed, it is still in process of construction, but it is growing) unto an holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."**

How blind must he be who can see in such a passage as this, disassociation of the Ephesian saints from the work

which God began at Pentecost! They are builded into the same temple and rest upon the same foundation.

This is made even clearer in the next chapter, where Paul gives us probably the fullest information concerning the one Body that we have anywhere in the New Testament, and, therefore, we must devote considerable time and space to it. First, he tells us that he was a prisoner of Jesus Christ because of the Gentiles, and he explains that in the next few verses. It was his devotion to the revelation of the mystery which is part of the dispensation of the grace of God, that resulted in his imprisonment. He did not get this dispensation after he was in prison. Then he insists that this revelation was not made in previous ages unto the sons of men, that is, it was not made known in Old Testament times. But he tells us it is "now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit." Now if I believed in over-emphasis as some do, I should like to print these words in very bold type, but to do so would be an insult to the intelligence of my readers. I simply desire to ask their most careful attention to these words. The Bullingerites tell us that the mystery was only made known to the apostle Paul, not to other apostles. The apostle himself tells us here that "it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets." Note not only the plural, but that others besides apostles had this revelation. How utterly absurd would words like these be if he were referring to something that had just been secretly made known to him! But is it true that other apostles and prophets had already known of the mystery? It is. This he declares in these words. What is that mystery? Verse six is the answer.

**"That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same Body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel."**

Thus they too become Abraham's seed, because they are children of faith.

The mystery then is not simply centered in the term "Body," but whatever expression may be used, the mystery



is that during the present age all distinction between believing Jews and believing Gentiles is done away in Christ. Was this mystery made known by other servants besides the apostle Paul? It was. The apostle John makes it known in his account of our Lord's ministry as given in the tenth chapter of his Gospel. There we read that the Lord Jesus, as the Good Shepherd, entered into the sheepfold of Judaism to lead His own out into glorious liberty. And cryptically He adds,

**"Other sheep I have which are not of this fold. Them also I must bring, and there shall be one flock and one Shepherd."**

This is perhaps the earliest intimation of the mystery that we have. It was not committed to writing, of course, until some years after the epistle to the Ephesians was written. But it shows us that John, as an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, had received the revelation of the mystery even before the apostle Paul did.

Then what of the apostle Peter? We dare to say this same mystery was made known to him on the housetop of Simon's residence in Joppa, when he had the vision of the descending sheet from Heaven and saw in it all manner of beasts and creeping things, and heard the word from Heaven,

**"What God hath cleansed call thou not common," or unclean.**

This was to him an intimation that in Christ the distinction between Jew and Gentile was henceforth to be done away, and he makes it perfectly clear that this was his conviction when he stood up to preach in the household of Cornelius (Acts 10: 34 to end). Moreover, his epistles emphasize the same fact, though not in the full way that those of the apostle Paul do. John and Peter are apostles. Are there any prophets who give evidence of having in measure at least understood this truth? The greatest of all the New Testament prophets is Luke himself, and in his

book of the Acts, the mystery is plainly made known, though not taught doctrinally. We see God working in grace to unite Jew and Gentile into one Body.

Turning back to Ephesians three, we find in verse seven that the apostle tells us that he was made a minister according to the gift of the grace of God for the very purpose of making known this mystery. He says in verses eight and nine,

**“Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ.”**

This had been his great responsibility throughout the years. Because of this, he had suffered bitter persecution, on account of which he was even then in prison, but he is the more concerned that after his death there should be left on record such a full statement of this truth that no one could lose sight of it.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Further Examination of the Epistles

**P**ASSING over for the present the Apostle Paul's presentation of the sevenfold unity of Christianity in Ephesians 4, and his identification of the Body and the Bride in chapter 5, which we shall discuss later, we turn now to others of the prison epistles to see if we can find the slightest intimation of a new revelation given after Paul reached Rome. Unquestionably, Philip-  
pians was written during the Roman imprisonment. But we search its four precious chapters in vain for the least suggestion that he has received anything new to unfold. In chapter 1, where he presents Christ as the believer's life, he shows how thoroughly the evangelistic spirit had taken possession of him, so that even in his prison-cell he was rejoicing that Christ was being preached whether in pretence or in truth, and his own desire is that this same Christ may ever be magnified in his body, whether in life or in death. He urges the saints to stand fast in one spirit contending for the very faith which he had already made known to them. There is not a hint that he has now something new to reveal; that is, that the old dispensation to which they had hitherto belonged had come to a close, and that a new one had begun. In chapter 2 he dwells on Christ as our Example, and shows how he himself and Timothy and Epaphroditus during the years had sought to follow in Christ's steps, and this is still before his soul. In the third chapter he recounts his past experiences and self-confidence in the old days before he was saved, and then shows how the change was brought about by a sight of the risen Christ. From that moment on, he counted all things as loss for the One who had won his heart, and he was press-

ing on toward the mark for the prize of the calling of God on high in Christ Jesus. He calls upon them whom he designates as "perfect" to be thus minded. "Perfect" here means "mature," or we might even say well-rounded, or well-balanced. Nothing is needed to give them this perfection in addition to what they already had. Surely, if anywhere, this was the place to show them that hitherto they were but babes, and had only received an initial revelation, but that now he had something for them of an altogether new character which would perfect them in Christ. But there is no word of any such added truth. Nor yet in the last chapter where he exhorts to unity and peace among themselves. May we not say that Paul is singularly remiss in not sharing with his old converts at Philippi the new revelation he had received, if such a thing were really true?

But it was not true:—all the reasoning of the ultra-dispensationalists to the contrary notwithstanding;—for when we turn over to Colossians we find him once more reiterating the same truths he had proclaimed for a generation. He shows that two ministries had been committed to him from the first. He had been made a minister of the Gospel. That Gospel has been preached in all the creation which is under heaven. He had also been made a minister of "the mystery which hath been hidden from ages and generations, but now," he says, "is made manifest to His saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in (or, among) you, the hope of glory: whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: whereunto I also labor, striving according to His working, which worketh in me mightily" (Col. 1: 26-29).

Let it be carefully observed that he is here covering his entire ministry. He had no such opportunity to preach to multitudes while he was in his Roman, or as some think, his Cæsarean prison at the time he wrote this epistle.

But he tells us what had characterized his ministry throughout the years. Other saints there were whom he had not met personally, as well as those at Colosse. He thinks of the Laodicean believers, and he longs that they all may be brought into the knowledge of this mystery. But it is not something new. It is that which has ever characterized his teaching.

The Epistle of Titus is not of course a prison epistle at all, but it was written later than any of those that are so designated, excepting Second Timothy. In this letter Paul instructs the younger preacher, Titus, as to the divine order for local churches, the work of a true pastor, and the testimony committed to the servants of God. Surely here, if anywhere, we should expect him to put before Titus the fact that the "transitional period" has now come to an end and Titus must ring the changes as the ultra-dispensationalists do to-day, on "body truth," "closed doors," "Jewish Gospels," "Kingdom Age," etc., etc., *ad nauseam*. But, no; none of these terms so frequently used and played upon until one is wearied, are suggested to Titus. He is simply to go on preaching and teaching the very same things that have been taught during his earlier association with the Apostle Paul.

The brief letter to Philemon we may pass over, as we would hardly expect to find anything doctrinal in it; and yet even here if Paul's heart were throbbing with the joy of some absolutely new opening up of truth, we would almost wonder how he could help saying a word about it, at least to his friend Philemon.

Hebrews was undoubtedly written very shortly before the apostle's martyrdom, granting that it is from the pen of Paul. That this is so, I have tried to make clear in my book on the Epistle to the Hebrews, and I shall not attempt to go into it now. But in any case, it was undoubtedly written very shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem, and here if anywhere, one might expect these Hebrew believers to be told that the "kingdom age" is now over, "the

transition period" has now been finished, and it is for them to accept the new revelation of "body truth." But we search in vain for anything of the kind. It is simply a normal presentation of the precious things of Christ, showing how completely Old Testament types have had their fulfilment in Him and His finished work, and that all who believe now come under the blessings of the new covenant.

Probably later than Hebrews is the second letter to Timothy. It was penned during Paul's second imprisonment, very shortly before his death. As this occurred in A. D. 66 or 67, we may see how far along we have come and still no mention of any new revelation. So far as the truth that is dealt with is concerned, Second Timothy might have been written any time before the first imprisonment. It is in perfect harmony with all the apostle's previous ministry.

But now there are other Epistles to be considered. We have already seen that Paul makes no claim to being the sole depository of the revelation of the mystery. He says it was made known to Christ's holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit, and so we turn to consider the writings of other apostles and prophets asking, "Have we in them any intimation of a new revelation after Paul went to Rome?"

We may dismiss the Epistle of James as not touching on this question. It is addressed definitely to the twelve tribes scattered abroad, and is God's last word, as it were, to those of Israel who were still more or less linked in spirit to the synagogue. Bullingerites generally tell us that James was the first epistle to be written, but this is absurd on the face of it. It is quite evident that James is a corrective epistle. It must have been written after the doctrine of justification by faith, as proclaimed by Paul, had been widely preached, for James writes to check those who were abusing that doctrine and using it as an occasion for the flesh. No one can read chapter 2 thoughtfully without seeing that it is based upon, and has in view throughout, Paul's teaching in Romans 4. James does not contradict

Paul in the slightest degree, but he does show that there is another justification than that of which Paul speaks. The great apostle to the Gentiles deals particularly with justification by faith before God. James, the apostle to the twelve tribes, emphasizes justification by works before men.

First Peter was probably written before Paul's second imprisonment. Second Peter was certainly written afterwards, and all of Paul's letters were already in circulation when this epistle was penned. Note Peter's own words: "And account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction" (2 Pet. 3: 15, 16). It is impossible to understand these verses excepting in the light of the fact that all the Epistles of Paul were already in circulation. Does Peter then tell us that a new dispensation had come in, and that the middle wall between Jew and Gentile having now for the first time been broken down and the one Body formed, the believers to whom he writes, who were of Jewish extraction, are to recognize this new revelation? Not at all. Peter has never heard of any such thing. He puts Paul's writings on the same plane as the other Scriptures, but warns against the danger of misunderstanding, and so wresting them.

Long years after all the other apostles had gone home to heaven, we find the aged John still preserved in life and caring for the churches of God. According to apparently reliable Church History, he made his home in Ephesus, and moved about in old age among the other churches mentioned in the first three chapters of the Book of the Revelation, those churches which the Bullingerites declare never existed in the past but are still to arise as Jewish Assemblies in the Great Tribulation! Could anything be much more grotesque?

John's Epistles were written, according to the very best authority we have, some time in the last decade of the first century of the Christian era. Weigh this well. Paul had been in heaven for nearly thirty years. John was an inspired apostle, and surely would know, if any one did, of the new revelation and its importance. But we search his letters in vain for the least reference to anything of the kind. In fact, we find the very opposite. False teaching had come in, and he writes to garrison the hearts of the saints against it. In order to do this, he refers them back to that which was from the beginning, namely, to the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and His apostles, as a careful reading of his first Epistle makes abundantly clear. There is not the slightest basis for the thought that a fuller unfolding of truth had been vouchsafed to Paul and others about thirty years after Christ's ascension. It is the message that they had heard from the beginning which he again commends to them.

Let us imagine the late Dr. Bullinger, or some of his lesser satellites, living, not in the twentieth century, but in the closing days of the first century of the Christian era. Filled with their ideas of a new revelation given to Paul in prison, can you by any stretch of the imagination think of them writing epistles or treatises in which no reference whatever is made to the supposedly new doctrines? The fact of the matter is that these men today can scarcely open their mouths without speaking of these things. No matter what text they begin to expound, they almost invariably wind up with something about their system of rightly dividing the Word of Truth, and the importance of making the fine distinctions which they imagine they see in the Word. Yet inspired men like Peter and John, and without particularly going into it, we may add Jude, can expound and apply the Truth of God in the fullest possible way without any reference to anything of the kind. What is the only legitimate conclusion? It is that this whole ultra-dispensational system is an idle dream unsupported by the testimony of the inspired writings.



Error is never consistent. It always over-emphasizes some point generally unimportant and fails to recognize other things of great importance. Heresy is simply a school of opinion in which something is particularly pressed out of proportion to its logical place. Who would dare to say that this system we have been attempting to refute is not therefore heretical? Mark, I do not mean to class it with what Peter calls "damnable heresies," but it is certainly schismatic, and its votaries constitute a special school of opinion within the professed Church of God, a school that attaches great importance to something which after all is not evident to the vast majority of devoted and godly believers. That the effect of this can only be division and harmful, is not only self-evident, but has been abundantly manifest in many places. The Holy Spirit says, "A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself" (Titus 3: 10, 11). This is as certainly the Word of God as anything else revealed in the Scripture of Truth.

## Is the Church the Bride of the Lamb?

**O**NE of the first positions generally taken by the ultra-dispensationalists is that it is unthinkable that the Church should be the Body of Christ, and yet at the same time be identified with the Bride of the Lamb. They insist that there is a mixing of figures here which is utterly untenable. How, they ask with scorn, could the Church be both the Bride and a part of the Body of the Bridegroom? Some even go farther and suggest that Christians who all down through the centuries have had no difficulty as to the two figures (recognizing the fact that they *are* figures, and therefore that there need be no confusion in thought when it comes to harmonizing both), are actually guilty of charging Deity with spiritual polygamy! I would not put such an abominable thought in writing, but it is their own expression which I have heard again and again. They point out, what all Bible students readily admit, that in the Old Testament, Israel is called the bride and the wife of Jehovah. "Then," they exclaim, "how can the Lord have two wives without being guilty of the very thing that He Himself condemns in His creatures here on earth?"

In view of such absurd deductions, it will be necessary to examine with some care just how these figures are used. In the first place, we find God using a number of different figurative expressions in speaking of Israel. He declares Himself to be their Father, that is, the Father of the nation, and Israel is called His son. "Out of Egypt have I called My son" (Hosea 11: 1), and, "Let My son go, that he may serve Me" (Exod. 4: 23). In other places similar expressions are used, and yet the prophets again and again speak of Israel as the wife of Jehovah, and the later

prophets depict her as a divorced wife because of her unfaithfulness, some day to be received back again, when she has been purged from her sins. But it is important to see that a divorced wife can never again be a bride, even though she may be forgiven and restored to her wifely estate. What incongruity do we have here if we are to interpret Scripture on the principle of the Bullingerites. Here is a son who is also a wife. What utter absurdity!

Then again we have Israel depicted as a vine. "God brought a vine out of Egypt" (Ps. 80: 8), and, "Israel is an empty vine; he bringeth forth fruit for himself" (Hosea 10: 1). In many other places, the same figure is used. Elsewhere we have this favored nation spoken of as the priests of the Lord, occupying a special position throughout all the millennium, as though they were intermediaries between the Gentiles and Jehovah Himself. Other similitudes are used, but these are enough to show that there is no attempt made in Scripture to harmonize every figure. Each one is used as suits God's purpose for the moment. So the nation which at one time is viewed as a son is seen on another occasion as a vine, and elsewhere as a wife, and again as a nation of priests.

This being so in connection with Israel, why need we be surprised if a similar diversity of terms is used in connection with the Church? When our Lord first introduces the subject of the new order, He speaks of the Church as a building: "Upon this rock I will build My Church" (Matt. 16: 18). The apostle Paul views the Church in the same way in 1 Corinthians 3: 9, 10), "I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. Ye are God's building." Again in Ephesians 2: 19-22: "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God: and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of

God through the Spirit." In regard to this passage, please take note that if the Bullingerites are correct, we have here a building suspended in the air with a great gap between the foundation and the superstructure; for this building is said to rest upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, but according to the views of those we are discussing, we must separate in a very definite way the New Testament apostles and prophets of the book of Acts from the Ephesian church, which is supposed to be a different company altogether. The absurdity of this becomes the more apparent as we see how we would have to do damage to the picture of the building as used here by the apostle Paul. The fact is the Church of Acts and that of the prison epistles is one and indivisible. In 1 Timothy 3: 15, he speaks of "the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." The apostle Peter looks at the Church in exactly the same way, as a company of living stones built upon the Living Stone, our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 2: 5).

We have already seen that the figure of the Body is used in a number of Paul's writings, not only in the prison Epistles, but in Romans and 1 Corinthians, to set forth the intimate relationship subsisting between Christ in glory and His people on earth, whereas the house expresses stability, and tells us that the Church is a dwelling place for God in this world, as the temple was of old. The Body speaks of union with Christ, by the indwelling Spirit. But Paul sees no incongruity whatever in changing the figure from that of the Body to the Bride. In the fifth chapter of Ephesians he glides readily from one to the other, and no violence whatever is done to either view. He shows us that a man's wife is to be regarded as his own body. And in the latter part of that chapter, where he goes back to the marriage relationship as originally established by God, he says:

**"Therefore as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and**

gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church: for we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself: and the wife see that she reverence her husband" (vers. 24-33).

Surely nothing could be plainer than that we are to understand the relationship of Adam and Eve at the very beginning was intended by God to set forth the great mystery of Christ and the Church. Writing to the Corinthians at an earlier date, he said, "I have espoused you as a chaste virgin unto Christ," and Christian behavior is shown to spring from the responsibility connected with that espousal. The Church is viewed as an affianced bride, not yet married, but called upon to be faithful to her absent Lord until the day when she will be openly acknowledged by Him as His Bride. It is this glorious occasion that John brings before us in the nineteenth chapter of the book of Revelation. It is of no earthly bride he is speaking, but of the heavenly. After the destruction of the false harlot, Babylon the Great, the marriage supper of the Lamb is celebrated in the Father's house, and all saints are called upon to rejoice because the marriage of the Lamb has come and His wife hath made herself ready. At the judgment-seat of Christ, she receives from His hand the linen garments in which she is to be arrayed at the marriage feast. Notice that on this occasion we have not only the Bride and the Bridegroom, but we read, "Blessed are they that are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb." These invited guests are distinguished from the Bride herself. They of course are another group of redeemed sinners, namely, Old Testament saints,

and possibly some Tribulation saints who have been martyred for Christ's sake. These are the friends of the Bridegroom who rejoice in His happiness when He takes His Bride to Himself.

All down through the Christian centuries believers have revelled in the sweetness of the thought of the bridal relationship, setting forth, as no other figure does, the intensity of Christ's love for His own. How truly we may sing:

"The bride eyes not her garment,  
But her dear Bridegroom's face;  
I will not gaze on glory,  
But on my King of grace;  
Not at the crown He giveth,  
But on His piercèd hand;  
The Lamb is all the glory  
Of Immanuel's land."

How much we would lose if we lost this! And yet one is pained sometimes to realize how insensible Christians who ought to know better, can be as to its preciousness. I remember on one occasion hearing an advocate of the system we are reviewing exclaim, "I am not part of the Bride; I am part of the Bridegroom Himself. I belong to Christ's Body, and His Body is far more precious to Him than His Bride." I replied, "You mean then that you think far more of your own body than you do of your wife!" He was rather taken back, as he might well be.

But after all, if Israel is a divorced wife to be restored some day, and the Church is also a bride, is there not ground for what some have called "spiritual polygamy?" Certainly not. Similar figures may be used in each dispensation to illustrate spiritual realities; and then it is important to see that Israel is distinctively called the wife of Jehovah, whereas the Church is the Bride of the Lamb. Israel's nuptial relationship is with God Himself apart altogether from any question of incarnation. The Church is the Bride of the Incarnate One who became the Lamb of God for our redemption. Who would want to lose the blessedness of this?

In the last chapter of the book of the Revelation, we have added confirmation as to the correctness of the position taken in this paper. In verse 16, our Lord Jesus declares Himself as the Coming One, saying, "I am the Root and Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star." In the very next verse we are told, "And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come." Here we have the Church's response to our Lord's declaration that He is the Morning Star. The morning star shines out before the rising of the sun. It is as the Morning Star Christ comes for His Church. Unto Israel, He will arise as the Sun of Righteousness with healing in His wings. And so here the moment the announcement is made which indicates His near return, the Spirit who dwells in the Church, and the Bride actuated by the Spirit, cry with eager longing, "Come," for the word is addressed to Him. How truly absurd it would be to try to bring Israel in here as though the earthly people were those responding to the Saviour's voice during this present age!

But so determined are these ultra-dispensationalists to take from the Church everything that is found in the book of Revelation, that they even insist that the letters addressed to the churches in chapters 2 and 3 are all for Israel too. Ignoring the fact that the apostle John had labored for years in the Roman proconsular Province of Asia, that he was thoroughly familiar with all these seven churches, they nevertheless even go so far as to deny that some of these churches had any existence in the first century of the Christian era, when John wrote the Apocalypse, although Sir William Ramsay's researches have proven the contrary. On the other hand, they declare that all of these churches are to rise up in the future after the Body has been removed to Heaven, and that then the seven letters will have their application, but have no present bearing upon the consciences of the saints. I cannot conceive of anything more Satanic than this. Here are churches actually raised up of God through the preaching of the Gospel. Ephesus we know well. Laodicea is mentioned in the letter to the

Colossians. The other churches we may be sure existed at the time and in exactly the state that John depicts, and the risen Christ addresses these churches in the most solemn way, and seven times over calls upon all exercised souls to give heed to what he says to each one, crying, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." In these letters, we have depicted every possible condition in which the churches of God can be found from Apostolic days to the end of the Christian era. More than that: we have in a mystic way the moral and spiritual principles of the entire course of Church History portrayed. All this should have immense weight with us as believers, and should speak loudly to our consciences; but along comes the Bullingerite and, with a wave of his interpretative wand, dismisses them entirely for the present age, airily declaring that they have no message for us whatever, that they are all Jewish, and will only have their place in the Great Tribulation after the Church is gone! And thus the people of God who accept this unscriptural system are robbed of not only the precious things in which these letters abound, but their consciences become indifferent to the solemn admonitions found therein. Surely this is a masterpiece of Satanic strategy, whereby under the plea of rightly dividing the Word of Truth, the Scriptures are so wrongly divided that they cease to have any message for God's people today, and the Word of the Lord is made of no effect by this unscriptural tradition. And yet the Lord in instructing John, says, "Write the things which *are*." It is the present continuous tense. It might be rendered, "The things which are now going on." "Not at all," exclaims the Bullingerite. "These are the things which are not going on, neither will they have any place so long as the Church of God is on earth." Others may accept this as deep teaching and advanced truth. Personally, I reject it as a Satanic perversion calculated to destroy the power of the Word of God over the souls of His people.



## **Do Baptism and the Lord's Supper Have Any Place in the Present Dispensation of the Grace of God?**

**I**T is most distressing to one who has revelled in the grace of God for years, but has recognized on the other hand that grace produces loving obedience in the heart of the believer, to read the puerile and childish diatribes of the ultra-dispensationalists, as they inveigh against the Christian ordinances as though observance of these in some way contravened the liberty of Grace. Insisting that Paul had a new ministry revealed to him after Acts 28, and that this ministry is given only in the so-called prison epistles, they make a great deal of the fact that in these epistles we do not have any distinct instruction as to the baptizing of believers, or the observance of the Lord's Supper.

We have already seen, I trust clearly, that Paul himself disavows any new revelation having been given him after his imprisonment, but insists that the mystery was that very message which he had already made known to all nations for the obedience of faith. It was but part of that whole counsel of God which he had declared to the Ephesians long before his arrest. These brethren, by a process of sophistical reasoning, try to prove that baptism belonged only to an earlier dispensation and was in some sense meritorious, as though it had in itself saving virtue, but that since the dispensation of grace has been fully revealed, there is no place for baptism, because of changed conditions for salvation. To state this argument is but to expose its fallacy.

Let one point be absolutely clear: No one was ever saved in any dispensation on any other ground than the finished work of Christ. In all the ages before the cross, God

justified men by faith; in all the years since, men have been justified in exactly the same way. Adam believed God and was clothed with coats of skin, a picture of one becoming the righteousness of God in Christ. Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness. Nevertheless, afterwards he was circumcised; but that circumcision, the apostle tells us, was simply a seal of the righteousness he had by faith. And throughout all the Old Testament dispensation, however legalistic Jews may have observed the ordinance of circumcision and thought of it as having in itself some saving virtue, it still remained in God's sight, as in the beginning, only a seal, where there was genuine faith, of that righteousness which He imputed. The difficulty with many who reason as these Bullingerites do, is that they cannot seem to understand the difference between the loving loyal obedience of a devoted heart, and a legal obedience which is offered to God as though it were in itself meritorious. No one was ever saved through the sacrifices offered under law, for it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin. Nevertheless, wherever there was real faith in Israel, the sacrifices were offered because of the instruction given in the Word of God, and in these sacrifices the work of Christ was pictured continually.

When John the Baptist came in the way of righteousness, he called on men to confess their sinfulness and their just desert of death by baptism, and so we read that the publicans and sinners "justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John." There was no merit in the baptism. It was the divinely appointed way of acknowledging their sinfulness and need of a Saviour. Therefore it is called a baptism "unto repentance for the remission of sins." They were like men in debt, giving their notes to the divine creditor. A note does not pay a debt but it is an acknowledgment of indebtedness. Christ's baptism was simply His endorsement of all of these notes. When He said to John, who would have hindered Him from being baptized, "Suffer it to be

so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness," it was as though He said, "In this way I pledge Myself to meet every righteous demand of the throne of God on behalf of these confessed sinners." And this is surely what He had in mind when, three years later, He exclaimed, "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" (Luke 12: 50). On the cross He met the claims of righteousness and thus fulfilled the meaning of His baptism.

Christian baptism has its beginning in resurrection. It was the risen Christ about to be glorified who commissioned His apostles to go out, not simply to Jews, observe, nor yet to proclaim a second offer of the kingdom, as some say, but to carry the Gospel to men of all nations, baptizing those who professed to believe, in (or, unto) the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. This we see them literally doing throughout the early days of the Church, as recorded in the Book of Acts. Wherever the Gospel is preached, baptism is linked with it, not as part of the Gospel, for Paul distinctly says, "Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel," but as an outward expression of faith in the Gospel. It is evident in the Book of Acts that there is a somewhat different presentation of this, according as to whether the message is addressed to Jews in outward covenant relation with God or to Gentiles who are strangers to the covenants of promise. Paul calls these two aspects of the one Gospel, the Gospel of the circumcision and the Gospel of the uncircumcision. The Jew being already a member of a nation which, up to the cross, had been recognized as in covenant relationship with God, was called upon to be baptized to save himself from that untoward generation. That is, to step out, as it were, from the nation, no longer claiming national privilege, nor yet being exposed to national judgment. With the Gentile, it was otherwise. He was simply called upon to believe the Gospel, and believing it, to confess his faith in baptism. And this abides to the end of the age as our Lord

Himself clearly declared in the closing verses of Matthew 28. There has never been any change in the order.

It has been said that the baptism of the Holy Spirit superseded water baptism, but Scripture teaches the very contrary. Cornelius and his household were baptized with the Holy Spirit when they believed the Word spoken by Peter. But the apostle, turning to his Jewish brethren, immediately asks: "Who can forbid water that these should not be baptized which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" And they were at once baptized by authority of the Lord Jesus, which is what the expression "in the name of" involves. This was not a meritorious act. It was a blessed and precious privilege granted to this Gentile household upon the evidence of their faith in Christ.

It has been objected that the apostle Paul himself makes light of baptism and was really glad that he had not baptized many at Corinth. It is surely a most shifty kind of exegesis that would lead any one to make such a statement. In the record in Acts, where we read of Paul's ministry in Corinth, we are told that many of the Corinthians hearing, believed and were baptized. Paul did not himself do the baptizing, save in a few instances, but he certainly saw that it was done, and the Holy Spirit evidently quotes the record with approval. Why then did Paul thank God in First Corinthians 1, that he had baptized so few? The answer is perfectly plain. Because the Corinthians were making much of human leaders and he saw the tendency to glory in man. He knew that if there were many there who had been baptized by him, they would be likely, under the prevailing conditions, to pride themselves upon the fact that he, the apostle to the Gentiles, had been the one who baptized them. But far from making light of baptism, when he chides them for their sectarian spirit, he shows them that the only name worthy of exaltation is the name of the One by whose authority they had been baptized.

As to the various disputed scriptures in Romans 6: 3, 4; Colossians 2: 12; Ephesians 4: 5; and Galatians 3: 27,

where baptism is mentioned without any definite indication as to whether it is water or Spirit, one thing at least is perfectly clear. Water baptism is necessarily implied, because Spirit baptism is but a figurative expression, and water baptism was the act upon which the figure was based. This comes out in the first mention of Spirit baptism. "I indeed," says John, "baptize you with water" (this then was the actual literal baptism), "but He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire." It is not literal baptism in the Holy Spirit. It is not literal fire, but figurative. If this be but kept in mind, there would be no confusion. Baptism in water pictures both burial and resurrection. On this Paul bases his instruction in Romans 6 and Colossians 2: 12. Thus water baptism marks people out as belonging to Christ by profession, and therefore is the basic thought in Galatians 3: 27, even though it is by the Spirit's baptism that people are actually united to Christ.

There has been much disputation regarding the passage in Ephesians 4, but without laying special stress on the importance of water baptism, it is very evident that the passage would have no meaning if water baptism, as well as that of the Spirit, were not in view. Let me try to make this plain. In the opening verses, the apostle calls upon the Ephesian believers, and of course all Christians, to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they have been called, and he lays stress on the importance of endeavoring to keep the Spirit's unity in the bond of peace. Then he explains this unity as being sevenfold. In verse 4 he emphasizes three special things, one Body, one Spirit, and one hope. Now there can be no question that the Spirit is brought in here as forming the Body, and the Spirit forms the Body by what is called elsewhere the baptism of the Spirit. Then in verse 5 we have another trio, one Lord, one faith, one baptism. Here it seems to me clearly enough we have, not a duplication of what we have already had in verse 4, but something that is more outward. One Lord in whom we believe; one faith that we confess; and one baptism by

which we express our allegiance to that Lord and that faith. In verse 6 we have God Himself as the Father of all, the Founder of this blessed unity.

Now without going into any disputation as to whether the term "one baptism," is to be confined to the baptism of the Spirit, or the baptism of water, it is certainly evident that it at least implies water. No man confesses his faith in Christ by the baptism of the Holy Spirit alone, for millions have been baptized by the Holy Spirit, and yet the world knows nothing of it. On the other hand, of course, many have faith in Christ who have never been baptized in water, but that does not alter the fact that, according to the Lord's own instructions, water baptism should follow confession of Christ. The Lord has never rescinded this order, and for men to attempt to do so is but to substitute human authority for divine.

The statement has been made that inasmuch as all carnal ordinances were abolished in the cross, this includes baptism and the Lord's Supper. However, to merely state this is to refute it, inasmuch as Christian baptism was not given until just before the Lord's ascension, and the Lord's Supper was given from heaven to the apostle Paul by special revelation, long after Christ's ascension (1 Cor. 11: 23, 24). To read into such a passage as Hebrews 6: 1, 2 any reference to Christian baptism, is ignorance so colossal that it does not even deserve an answer. The apostle there is definitely referring to Judaism in contrast with Christianity. The "doctrine of baptisms" is the teaching of washings under law.

To the lover of the Lord Jesus Christ there can be nothing legal about baptism. It is simply the glad expression of a grateful heart recognizing its identity with Christ in death, burial, and resurrection. Many of us look back to the moment when we were thus baptized as one of the most precious experiences we have ever known.

All ultra-dispensationalists do not reject the Lord's Supper, but those who are rigidly tied up to the prison epistles

and have practically no other Bible, set this blessed ordinance aside in the same curt way that they dismiss water baptism. We are told that in a spiritual dispensation there is no place for outward observances. And yet, singularly enough, these brethren meet together for worship and prayer, and that very frequently upon the first day of the week, though they are almost a unit in denying that this is the Lord's Day. They insist, though the Holy Ghost has Himself changed the term; that the Lord's Day is identical with the Day of the Lord; and so the observance of the first day of the week is with them simply gross legality. Think of parting with all the holy privileges of the Lord's Day on the plea that it is a mark of higher spirituality to make this a common day like any other. I know that some quote as authority for this, Paul's words in Romans 14: 5: "One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." But an examination of the entire passage in which this verse is found, will make it clear that the apostle is here referring to Jewish distinctions between clean and unclean meats, and holy and common days, and he would have Gentile believers respect even the legal feeling of their Jewish brethren in these matters. The enlightened Christian of course in a very real sense esteems every day alike, that is, every day is devoted to the glory of God, but this does not mean that he fails to differentiate between days on which he participates in the ordinary activities of the world, and the first day of the week, which is largely set aside for spiritual exercises. We have known men to glory in their liberty, as they called it, who could take part in Christian service on Lord's Day morning and spend the afternoon golfing, or in some other more worldly way, and this on pretence of a higher spirituality than that of those who are supposed to be legal, because they use the hours of the entire day either for their own spiritual up-building or for the blessing of others.

It is strange that many, who insist that there are no or-

dinances or commandments connected with the dispensation of pure grace, should take up collections in their services and urge people to give as unto the Lord to support their ministry. Logically, they should tell people that giving is legal and belongs to the old dispensation, but has no place in the present age, when we simply receive but give nothing in return! The passage already referred to in 1 Corinthians 11 makes it clear that though the apostle Paul did not receive his instruction concerning the observance of the Lord's Supper from the twelve, it was given to him by special revelation from heaven, thus indicating what an important place it has in this age. Surely one is guilty of gross perversion of Scripture who dares to teach that since Paul's imprisonment, the Lord's Supper should no longer be observed, when the Holy Ghost has said, "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come."

The most sacred hours that many of us have ever known have been those spent with fellow-believers seated at the table of the Lord, recognizing in the broken bread and poured-out wine, the memorials of our Saviour's death, and thus in a new way entering into and appropriating the reality of which the symbols speak. We may be thought legal, because we refuse to surrender such precious privileges at the behest of some of our self-styled expositors of pure grace, but we remember "that the grace of God salvation bringing for all men, hath appeared, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ," and until He come, by His grace, to remember Him in the way of His own appointment.



## Concluding Remarks

**I**N closing this review of the system of teaching which we have had before us, I do not think it necessary to go into the questions at any length of Soul-sleeping and Annihilation (conditional immortality), or the opposite view of the final restoration of Universalism. As already mentioned, the followers of the late Dr. E. W. Bullinger have largely taken up with the first type of teaching in Great Britain; whereas in America many of them have supported Universalist views. But these heretical teachings have been so ably answered on many different occasions by other writers, that it would seem like a work of supererogation to go into them now. I only mention them, in fact, as a warning to those who are dabbling with this system, for that which looks so innocent in the beginning often ends up in complete departure from "the faith once delivered to the saints."

One who was a leading advocate of Bullingerism on the west coast for many years, has put out literature recently which denies the Eternal Sonship of the Lord Jesus Christ, the true personality of the Holy Spirit, and many other important truths. In order to support his restoration system, he has put out a private translation of the New Testament which, by his disciples, is generally accepted as absolute authority. Making no pretence to scholarship myself, but simply seeking to be a reverent student of the English Bible with whatever help I have been enabled to glean throughout more than forty years of studying the Word, I hesitated to pronounce upon many of the peculiar translations in this new New Testament, but several years ago it was my privilege to spend some time in company with the late Dr. A. T. Robertson, undoubtedly the foremost Greek scholar in America, and possibly without a peer

elsewhere. I asked him if he had ever examined the Version in question. With a look of disgust, he said, "I certainly did. The editor had the impertinence to send me a copy, and asked me to commend his ignorance to others."

I said, "Doctor, would you give me in a few words your real estimate of this work, and give me the privilege of quoting you as occasion may arise?"

He replied, "I can give it to you in two words, Piffle and Puffle, and you may tell any one that that is my estimate of this vaunted translation."

In giving publicity to this conversation, my desire is to warn those who are carried away by great pretence to learning, who may not themselves be familiar with the original languages in which the Bible was written, and are therefore easily impressed by a parade of assumed scholarship.

Generally speaking, I have sought to avoid personalities in this discussion. Many otherwise excellent men have taken up these new views. I have no quarrel with men. I do not desire to reflect upon or belittle any of them. It is the Truth of God that is in question, and my appeal is therefore to the Word itself.

Singularly enough, since these papers began running serially, I have received abusive letters from a number of different teachers accusing me of attacking them. One such writes that he is neither a Bullingerite nor an ultra-dispensationalist, and resents being so designated. Each one must draw his own conclusions as to whether he holds the views I have endeavored to refute. "I speak as unto wise men. Judge ye what I say."

In bringing these papers to a close, I would urge interested readers to remember the exhortation of the apostle, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."