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EDITED BY  
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# The Christian's Library.



## Notes and Comments.



WE are thankful for the interest taken in the remarks made in the November number of the *Christian's Library* with reference to the free action of the Holy Spirit in the assembly, and earnestly do we desire that this should be a thing of practical power, and not mere doctrine.

Those commonly called "Brethren" have for many years acted upon the truth of the Holy Spirit's presence in the assembly in their meetings for worship on the Lord's Day. It was adherence to this that marked them off from all other Christians in their gatherings for prayer and worship, and great has often been the felt power on such occasions.

It did away with chairman, president, or clergyman. All came together acknowledging that the Holy Spirit dwelt not only in each believer, but also was present in the assembly of believers, which therefore must be left free from human arrangement or interference.

During the Welsh Revival, God used His servant, Evan Roberts, to bring this truth power-

fully forward, and Christians who had never witnessed such a thing as a meeting without visible human leadership, were amazed at the power experienced when the meeting was given up entirely to the guidance of the Spirit.

Personally we can bear our witness that though for many years it has been our privilege to gather for worship where the Spirit has been given liberty to use whom He will, rarely have we been in such an atmosphere of felt power as in those Welsh gatherings. We cannot for a moment allow that it was mere excitement or Welsh temperament.

There was absence of intelligence in much that was said ; there were things done which one familiar with 1 Corinthians xiv. felt were out of place ; but for power we had not often felt the like of it, and could but think of the words of 1 Corinthians xiv. 25 that "God is among you of a truth."

We quite recognise the difference between the presence of Christ in the midst of two or three gathered to His name and the presence of the Holy Ghost in the assembly of the saints. May there not be a danger in too exclusively pressing the former to the neglect of the latter? In 1 Corinthians xiv. 25 it is not said that *Christ* is among you—though, without doubt, Christ is God—but "**God is among you.**" Is it not possible that many of the Lord's people to-day have been experiencing the reality of this latter

## NOTES AND COMMENTS.

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in a manner that some who lay special stress upon the former have never realised?

A correspondent writes with reference to the second paragraph on page 282 of *Christian's Library*, Vol. X.: "Have the saints in your meetings the real active faith which alone could make such a course anything but a dismal failure? . . . Belief in and confidence in the presence and power of the Holy Ghost must be much more active and vivid than I think it is among the saints that I know."

Here is the testimony of one who has known and acted upon the acknowledged truth of the liberty of the Holy Ghost to use whom He will in the assembly of God's people for well nigh half a century. We cannot refrain from appending alongside of this the testimony of another who has only recently seen the importance of this truth, and who yet may have much to learn on other points, as indeed which of us has not?

"The three speakers left for the Wednesday gathering, determined that the 'chair' at the table should be left empty in token of the fact that the Spirit of God was looked to as a Person in control; the messengers ranged each side of the 'chair,' acted in harmony, each in dependence upon Him, leading in prayer, or giving out a hymn as prompted, whilst in the audience there was full liberty for prayer at any moment. On the Monday and Tuesday the messages were visibly taking effect, but on the Wednesday, with the 'empty chair' there was a most marked increase in the consciousness of the presence of the Spirit of God; but it yet remained for us to discover

what the full 'presidency' of the Spirit of God really meant.

"Mr Evan Roberts had been present at every meeting, manifestly watching keenly the steps taken from day to day. At last on the Thursday he was asked if he would take charge, and teach us what he knew to be the 'conditions of revival,' which he clearly saw not yet fulfilled, and even only partially understood. The object-lesson of that Thursday afternoon none who were present will ever forget. The 'empty chair' was in its place, and the speakers and ministers who came took their usual places on the platform. A silent hush rested upon the people, who were told that all were at liberty to obey God in any way He should lead them. One speaker then rose, and definitely handed over the gathering to God the Holy Ghost, asking Him to so fill the place that neither Satan nor the flesh could find entry. The meeting that followed was indescribable in its power, its purity, its 'control,' its sweetness, its joy and victory. Prayer, sweet singing, testimony, texts, and messages flowed from one and the other in harmonious sweetness. Mr Roberts watching with the same keen spiritual discernment he evinced in the Welsh Revival, and taking opportunity at any suitable moment to explain to the audience the meaning of each point as the Spirit of God led on the meeting. Workers who have been in the Lord's service many years, and greatly honoured in spiritual blessing, said that it had been a revelation to them of what the true control of the Spirit of God in a meeting meant, and now at last they saw their ideal fulfilled. 'The most perfect pattern of a meeting entirely led by the Spirit of God I have ever seen,' said a clergyman well qualified to speak."

There is room for much searching of heart amongst us when often there is but little practical liberty in meetings where theoretically that liberty is acknowledged. Long pauses,

painful silences, then, on the other hand, lengthy prayers, more like sermons than supplications, and long addresses, more like lectures (and too long at that) than heart-stirring speakings "to edification and exhortation and comfort."

We acknowledge the fact of the Holy Spirit's presence in the assembly. We profess to act accordingly. Why, then, is there so little felt power? Might we not almost take home to heart and conscience the apostle's warning, "I will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power"? Yes, that is it—**but the power.** Are there not brothers, and many of them, who attend such meetings, year in year out, and never open their lips in prayer or praise? Perhaps these feel they cannot engage in such long prayers as others; but long prayers are for the closet, short ones for the assembly. We feel persuaded that if there were longer praying in the closet there would be more praying in the assembly. And if there were more reading of the Scriptures at home and meditating upon the precious promises of God there would be a stirring of our souls within us which would soon find vent in speaking forth His praise.

Then, too, there must be a walk in the power of an ungrieved spirit. Where the Holy Ghost is grieved through carelessness or sin, there must be a weight and a deadness of soul.

But that God is awakening many of His people to a belief in the presence and liberty of

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the Holy Ghost in the assembly we cannot fail to see, and we thank God for it. Oh, that those who have long known these things were more able to help all such !

ED.

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But a needed warning must be

**A Needed Warning.** given with reference to the leading of the Spirit. There must be the confession of Christ as Lord, and a recognition of His person as God and Man, for evil spirits have in the past sought to turn Christians aside. Hence the tests supplied in I John iv. 1-4 ; I Cor. xii. 1-3. In our times, too, *e.g.*, Irvingism of last century, and more recently the pretended manifestations at Los Angeles, and Cassel in Germany, may well set sober minds on their guard. Of this we may be sure that the Holy Ghost will never lead to do, say, or think what is contrary to the Word of God. We therefore urge implicit obedience to that Word, while seeking the leading of the Spirit.

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At Bologna, on 20th October

**Rome and the Bible.** 1553, three bishops gave the following written answer to Pope Julius III., when desired to furnish their counsel as to the best means of strengthening their Church :—

“Lastly, of all the advice we can give your Beatitude, we have reserved to the end the most important, viz., that as little as possible of the

Gospel—especially in the mother tongue—be used in the countries subject to your jurisdiction. The little which is usually read at Mass is sufficient, and beyond that no one whatever must be permitted to read. When men were content with that little your interests prospered, but when more was read they began to decay. To sum up all, that book (the Bible) is the one which more than any other has raised up against us those whirlwinds and tempests whereby we were almost swept away, and, in fact, if any one examines it diligently, and then confronts therewith the practices of our Church, he will perceive the great discordance, and that our doctrine is utterly different from and often even contrary to it; which thing, if the people understand, they will not cease their clamour against us till all be divulged, and then we shall become the objects of universal scorn and hatred. Wherefore even these few lines must be put away, but with considerable wariness and caution, lest so doing should raise great uproars and tumults.”

The above document is at the British Museum, 7,C.10.11. Fasciculum Rerum, 1690 folio. It is also at the Imperial (but now National) Library at Paris.

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***Future of the Chinese Church.*** In view of the infidel taunt as to mission work amongst the heathen, that all depends upon the presence of the missionaries, and that if they were to leave, all

would crumble away speedily, it is interesting to hear the opinion of a veteran missionary like Dr Gibson of Swatow:—"There are at present 200,000 Chinese who partake of the Lord's Supper, all these being, so far as can be judged, truly converted people. Now these converted Chinese have the same independence of character as the rest of their race, and the progress of the work does not depend wholly upon the missionaries, for the native Christians take a large share in the preaching, teaching, and giving, even to the extent of 80 per cent."

Dr Gibson acknowledges the unfavourable effect upon the non-Christian mind of the divided state of the Church. Alas! that visible oneness for which our blessed Lord prayed has not been maintained, and for this, being all verily guilty we have all to bow the head in shame:—

"That they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."

Asked whether he had a message specially for young people growing up in Christian homes, his reply was: "Any missionary would assure them that his work is so full of interest and happiness that none will ever regret giving their lives to it. I have known many men at home who deeply regretted that they had not gone to the foreign field, but I never met one who regretted having gone."



## SHORT OUTLINE OF REVELATION. 9

Early in 1819, while waiting to *What a Tract* see a patient, a young physician *can do.* in New York took up and read a tract on missions, which lay in the room where he sat. On reaching home he spoke to his wife of the question that had arisen in his mind. As a result, they set out for Ceylon, and later, India, as foreign missionaries. For thirty years the wife, and for thirty-six years the husband, laboured among the heathen, and then went to their reward. Apart from what they did directly as missionaries, they left behind them seven sons and two daughters. Each of these sons married, and, with their wives and both sisters, gave themselves to the same mission work. Already have several grandchildren of the first missionary become missionaries in India. And thus far thirty of that family—the Scudders—have given 529 years to India.



## Short Outline and Division of the Book of Revelation.—No. I.

(Translated from the French of Dr H. R.)

THE object of these pages is to help young Christians, who are in earnest about the study of the Scriptures, to understand how the Book of Revelation is divided, for there are few books of the Bible where man's work in the

- division into chapters is more defective. No explanation of details will be attempted, as that has been done abundantly by others. We shall confine ourselves as far as possible to enumerating the various subjects of which the book treats, adding here and there a few remarks, which being perhaps less familiar to our readers, may prove useful. It may be well to add, that as these pages can only be a brief summary, many things are asserted, unsupported by proof; they will be justified to the reader by careful study of the Word itself. The writer will rejoice if any are thus stirred up to enter more deeply into the treasures of so inexhaustible a subject.

The Book of the Revelation is **prophetic**. It would seem scarcely necessary to say so, were it not for the incredible interpretations which have been given by its commentators. Every *prophecy of the Scripture* (2 Pet. i. 20) may have its partial fulfilment in the present, but none stop there; all look on to the time of the end.\* The Book of Revelation itself, for instance, treats of the present dispensation in the addresses to the seven Churches, but carries it on to the coming of Christ and the final rejection of the professing Church, neither of which events has yet taken place. All that follows these two

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\* What is not "prophecy of the Scripture" relates often to approaching events, and Bible history affords many instances of this.

## SHORT OUTLINE OF REVELATION. II

events, in other words all that we read of in the third great division of the book, is not occupied with what is taking place during the present time, except by some slight analogy. As a prophetic book, Revelation treats of the final ruin of our dispensation, and of the events that will happen in order to bring in the glorious reign of Christ. It is a book of **judgment**, as we shall abundantly discover. Christ therein reveals Himself as judge of the Church in its responsibility as well as of the world.

In connection with this, another fact may be mentioned. The Apocalypse is, in one sense, the book of *the Lord's coming*. Except very occasionally (for instance in chap. iii. 2, and the last verses of the book, which do not belong to the prophecy) the coming of the Lord *for His Church* is not alluded to, but rather His coming *in judgment*, which is the second stage of His coming in the New Testament. The object of the latter is the establishment of the reign of Christ, which will be ushered in by judgment.

Note another important fact. It is a **symbolic** book. A symbol, as has been said, "contains an infinite thought in a finite form." We need it, therefore, to enable us to grasp in its entirety a vast range of truth which otherwise we could not possibly take in. A symbol is given to us under the form sometimes of a living creature, an angel, a man, a beast, sometimes a group of living creatures, or an inanimate thing, or a

group of things designed to bring out certain moral qualities, the connections of which would otherwise escape us. Everything is symbolic in the Apocalypse; there is no need to multiply examples, for they comprise the whole book.\* It is sufficient to mention the Lamb, the elders, the woman and the man child, the whore, the two witnesses, the 144,000, the four living creatures, the two beasts, the throne, Babylon, the New Jerusalem, &c.

The Book of Revelation, with the exception of the introduction (i. 1-8) and the last verses (xxii. 16-21), is divided, as we all know, into three parts of very unequal dimensions (i. 19).

1. The things seen by the prophet (i.).
2. The things which are (ii., iii.).
3. The things which shall be after these (not merely "hereafter") (iv.-xxii.).

**Introduction, chap. i. 1-8.**—This book is a revelation of Jesus Christ, given by God to Christ, transmitted to John, not by *an* angel, but by *the* angel, the representative of Christ, in order that he might bear witness to the things which he had seen. This revelation of Jesus Christ is not merely one which belongs to Him and which He communicates to us, but it also concerns His Person. Without doubt we know Him in higher and more intimate character than those found in this book, but we should miss

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\* With the exception, however, of chaps. xi. 4-13 and xx. 4-xxi. 4.

## SHORT OUTLINE OF REVELATION. 13

much concerning Him, had we not the Book of the Revelation. Take, for instance, the Lamb, the Lion of Judah in the midst of the throne, the Son of Man as conqueror leading all the armies of heaven to final victory, all His angelic appearances, and many other characters which we shall note as we proceed.

This revelation of Jesus Christ is sent to the seven symbolic Churches, that is to say, to what the Church, as responsible, has become. It is not addressed *to them*, but to the prophet, who makes it known to the angel of the Church and to those *for* whom it is intended, and who have ears to hear. This is widely different from the epistles addressed to the Churches in the New Testament. Those who hear and receive these communications, and who profit thereby, can say, "Unto Him that loveth us." The character of the *coming* of Christ in this book is given in ver. 8.

## A. FIRST PART.

**The things that John saw, chap. i. 9-20.**— For John, as also for us, these things are centred in *one object*, Christ. Besides this we see Christ here under a character hitherto unknown to the prophet in its composite entirety, although the *details* are revealed in the Book of Daniel. It is Christ as Man, with Divine attributes; Christ, but not as intercessor; Christ girded with a golden girdle, but not to serve, for the robe, symbol of His dignity, descends to His feet. It is Christ, Man

and Ancient of Days, giving His priestly estimate of what bears the name of the assembly on earth, searching all things, and walking as Judge in the midst of the candlesticks. John, the beloved disciple, who had never met his Saviour clothed with this character, falls at His feet as dead, unable to bear the full light of the devouring fire of His presence. From the lips of the Judge Himself he receives the assurance that He is the Man once crucified, but risen as conqueror over hades and death, token of the resurrection of His loved ones. The prophet, then, had *nothing to fear*. The object of judgment is not the Church as the body or bride of Christ, nor as the habitation of God through the Spirit and built by Christ Himself; but it is the Church seen from outside, so to speak, entrusted to man's responsibility, and as such from that moment falling into ruins. H. R.

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## Stephen.

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(UNREVISED NOTES OF A LECTURE ON  
ACTS VII., BY J. N. D.)

**T**HIS chapter, though directly applying to Israel, is just man's history. It is a chapter which is the turning point and the closing up of the testimony. They had rejected Moses, rejected the prophets, and rejected Christ,

and now they had rejected the testimony of the Holy Ghost. Stephen goes through the whole course of their history in a perfectly quiet spirit so as to bring the whole thing to an issue. We have often seen how God has gone through the probation of man, trying him before the flood, after the flood, under law, by the prophets, and then, when **all** efforts had failed, there was yet **one** Son—Him they slew. There was a provisional suspension of the judgment in answer to the prayer—

**“ Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.”**

Peter had testified—

**“ I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers,”**

and exhorted them to repent and be converted, and Christ would come back, but the chief priests stopped his mouth. Stephen gives testimony to the glory, and they stop their ears and stone him ! This is the whole history of man as man—his history is over, and so is ours. Our history has to be brought home to our consciences as men before God, and we must know that there is “none good, no, not one.” Grace could bring the consciousness of redemption into the soul, but it is over with man as man. Man may trust in things religiously, provided he has not to do with God's presence ; he cannot stand his conscience being before God.

We get it here in Paul. A man may be exceedingly religious provided it is in the flesh: mere religion lets him go with the stream, and he gets pride out of it.

There were the Pharisees and Sadducees, and in principle there are the same now; both were what is termed orthodox, but both opposed the truth. Paul was a Pharisee. Pharisaism is man's righteousness pitted against God's—the ritualism of man's nature, really **superstition**. The Sadducees, where it was a question of God's power, denied the resurrection; they reasoned about things and believed in nothing, like the rationalism of the present day: it was really **infidelity**.

It is remarkable how in all ages Satan has these two things for different minds: we get them in human nature all through, either religiousness (which is mere formality and superstition) or the rationalism of the Sadducees pretending to judge God's mind, really infidelity.

The moment a soul has got at the root of things, and has to do with God **Himself**, all the snares are broken. What is painted ritualism in the presence of God? It will not be worth one straw in the day of judgment. There may be habits of thought in which we have been educated that cling to us, and which have to be got rid of, but as to the state of heart all the snare is gone when the soul gets really into the presence of God.

What perversity we see in this history of God's



gracious dealing with man—Joseph, they sold away as a slave ; Moses, God had sent to deliver them and they rejected him ; the prophets which showed before the coming of the Just One, they had persecuted and slain, doing with each as they did with Christ, selling, rejecting, or slaying them. Yet with all this they were boasting in Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob ; boasting, too, as a present thing in the temple of God. God founded the temple but He had forsaken it, and you always find that what God has judged man will trust to. The professing Church has not continued in God's goodness and will be cut off, but men trust to it : what God sets aside, man sets up. What we find in general is that those whom God has sent in blessing they had rejected, that is the result of the history, and it is just human nature. They had received the law by the disposition of angels, and had not kept it ; then came the prophets—which of the prophets had they not persecuted ? then Christ comes—they were His betrayers and murderers ; then the Holy Ghost, and they resisted Him. We get these four things in Israel's history, and in ours too :—

**The law given and broken.**

**Prophets sent and persecuted.**

**The Just One come and denied.**

**The testimony of the Holy Ghost resisted.**

Here is every one's history. We have in one way or another had the law, had the testimony

of friends, have in a certain way owned Christ and yet will not have Him, would rather have our money. It is the whole history of every one, and do we not in our natural state, when things have reached our consciences, resist the Holy Ghost? It is the whole condition of man tried and tested in every way. Their consciences were reached by Stephen's word, but their will was not reached; the conscience writhes under it and they gnash on him with their teeth. Where the will is not broken and the conscience is reached, it produces the most bitter enmity; it is a terrible history. Have **we** not been under God's gracious dealings? But now, I ask you, **have you bowed to them?**

There is many a person really converted but who is mixing up things, mixing up some of his own righteousness with God's, who does not accept and own this as the true history of man, **our** history, **your** history. Do you believe it? Have **you** had no word of God and rejected it? What are you going to say to God? When the day of judgment comes and people are judged for what they are, all these things will come out, clear as the sun at noonday. Mark where man gets who does not receive God's testimony.

Mark, too, a man not resisting—Stephen is full of the Holy Ghost, how different! There may be different degrees of realisation, but the believer now has the Holy Ghost, and heaven is opened to him by faith. Practically man's his-

tory was closed. Christ had been rejected. Christ was in heaven. Stephen could say, "I see heaven opened and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God." It was not as when the Holy Ghost descended on Christ, as a man approved on earth, it was man gone to heaven in the power of redemption. Man has gone into heaven by the righteousness of God, and in virtue of this God is taking the vilest—men like the poor thief on the cross—and taking them to heaven as He took Christ.

The great truth is that the Son of Man is in heaven, and by the Holy Ghost here below an opened heaven is seen and known. The great High Priest standing at the right hand of God is not hidden behind a veil: all is opened to the believer. Christ has been rejected from the earth and our rest is not here; we have a present portion with Christ in the glory. A part with Him, as He said to Peter, "If I wash thee not thou hast no part with Me"; we have a part with Christ now where He is in heaven—we are going there. "Arise, depart, for this is not your rest, it is polluted." Christ has left the earth and gone as our forerunner into the presence of God for us. Where sin abounded grace did much more abound, and God by a sovereign work of grace took Christ to heaven, and, although the world sees Him no more, I see Him in heaven, and this righteousness I have brings me into the presence of God. The Holy Ghost comes down

and gives me the consciousness of it: the work completely done.

Heaven was looking down when the divine person of Christ was on earth, but now it is the believer looking **up**: it is just as much opened to Stephen as it was to Christ. Mark the practical fruit, it is remarkably beautiful! We see it in Stephen—the condition of a soul in the power of the Holy Ghost. He bears testimony and it brings out the enmity.

There was no more cloud and uncertainty with Stephen than there was with Christ, only this difference, Christ was a divine person. The effect of seeing Christ in the glory is to change us into the same image from glory to glory by the spirit of the Lord. This is a strong case, I admit, but a man is either resisting the Holy Ghost or he has got the Holy Ghost and heaven is opened to him. Thus if we look at what is bright and blessed my soul reflects it and there is a practical effect.

**“He that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself even as He is pure.”**

Now, where are **you**? Are you insensible to all this? Has the word never come, so that you have gnashed upon it, or have you received it and got the Holy Ghost? If so, you can look up to heaven; you can see the glory of God and Jesus at His right hand. Rejected by the Jews, Stephen is a partaker of Christ's suffering, and

is also filled with His Spirit of Grace. The Lord could say—

**“Father, forgive them, they know not what they do,”**

and Stephen prays that their sin may not be laid to their charge. He could not say they did not know what they were about; they did know, and **you** know what you are doing. You know that if you have not Christ you have not eternal salvation. You may not have been so wilful as these men, but you **know** the word of God has been before you, and yet you are going on with death before you and **senseless** as to it. Before the judgment seat you will not be able to deny it, but it will be too late then when summoned into the presence of God: it is a question of believing the word **now**.

If the wickedest man saw God in the corner of the room he would not go on wickedly; even the presence of his fellow-man will often deter him, but he saith in his heart, “There is no God.” Then are you going on, indifferent to His word and despising the grace and goodness of God that leadeth to repentance? Heaven was not opened to Stephen because he was a good man, but because Christ was there. His face shone as an angel’s. Is your face shining because of looking at heaven so much? Do other people see so much of Christ in you that you are a testimony, or are the common motives of the world guiding you? To a certain extent the veil is

over all more or less ; it is a false state of things down here ; it will soon be all over with the world. God will destroy the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations.

Now, are **you** living by faith or by sight? It is true I may forget to live by faith for a moment, but what are you living by substantially when you are going right? Are you able to say, "This one thing I do"? As to the substance of the thing, on which side are you? Not in the extremes of the case, perhaps, but we must be either in one position or the other. May the Word of God so come in that if you are not on the ground of Stephen, it may give you to have your eyes open to see this terrible veil that is on the heart, and have it removed by the quickening power of the Spirit of God.

J. N. D.

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## The Bible Class.

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### The Book of Revelation.

**T**HE subject chosen for our study is one that cannot fail to be of interest to both writer and readers.

Whether we think of the serious and critical times in which we live, both in the Church and in the world—whether amongst Jews, Christians, or heathen—whether in Europe, in the Near

East, or the Far East, how should we not thank God for inspiring the writer of this book to give us such an outline of prophetic events, from the times of the apostles themselves right down to the consummation of all things in the eternal state.

In the brief compass of our little monthly magazine it would be impossible to go into any very detailed exposition of the book. We shall not attempt any such thing, but rather set before the reader in a condensed form what others have elaborated more fully. We shall assume that the diligent student of the prophetic Word has already possessed himself of the valuable works of the late J. N. Darby, William Kelly, and F. W. Grant; for no one who desires to understand this portion of the inspired volume can afford to ignore what these servants of His were led to communicate.

But we have specially in view the needs of young beginners, and on these we would urge the paramount importance of **prayer** while they study the Scriptures. Along with prayer a dependence upon the **Holy Spirit** as guide and teacher. While much help is to be had from reading what others have written, more, far more, is got by prayerful study of God's Word in dependence upon the Lord. We would not by any means ignore the help of written ministry which is of especial value in these times of division in the Church, but a young believer may

study such writings and make himself intellectually master of his subject, without coming morally under the power of God's Word, without having the heart and conscience under the sanctifying influence of the truth of God.

To read with prayer, and seeking the help of our divine teacher, the Holy Ghost, necessarily involves a walk in the power of an ungrieved Spirit, if it is to be of any practical value. May this be ever the case with every member of our Bible Class, as with ourselves.

**Introduction, Rev. i. 1-8.**—The first seven verses of chapter i. form a kind of introduction to the whole book.

“The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him.”

These are most remarkable words, and might lead some to ask, “But was not Jesus Christ truly God?” Most certainly He was, but on the other hand, He was as truly Man, and while it is impossible to separate His deity from His humanity, yet in the Gospel of John it is undeniable that the Spirit of God is mainly concerned in bringing out His divine glory; whereas here, in John's Revelation, it is the human glory of His person. In the Gospel which reveals Christ as God from all eternity, it is, nevertheless, clearly declared that He, the Word, “became flesh”; whereas in the Revelation which puts His manhood in special



prominence, language is used describing Him which leaves no doubt that that Man was God. Let us not speculate or reason, but let us believe and adore!

This book, then, is "the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him." We are reminded of another passage which has perplexed many minds:—

"But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father" (Mark xiii. 32).

Here, as in the Revelation, the Lord Jesus Christ is looked at not in His divine character, and hence knowing all things, but in His human, and especially in Mark's Gospel, as the Servant of God. The natural man may here see insurmountable difficulties, but faith beholds divine perfection.

"To shew unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass."

How different is this from the Gospel of John. In the Gospel, believers are viewed in their birth relationship as the children of God, whereas here it is their **servant** character. We are not only children, but sons with the Spirit of adoption, but besides this we are servants; this latter does not convey the same thought of nearness and intimacy. Besides this there will be saints on earth after the Church is removed to heaven, and they will be servants, though not in the relation-

ship of sons ; and to these, much that is in this book applies. We can understand, therefore, why the word *servants* is used.

There are many Christians to-day who entirely ignore the Book of Revelation ; they look upon it as too difficult to understand, and as of comparative unimportance. But to be a true and intelligent servant of God, it is absolutely necessary to make ourselves acquainted with that which is here revealed, for these things **“must shortly come to pass.”** And again, **“the time is near”** (ver. 3); it is not merely that the time is at hand, but it is *near*. We are more convinced than ever that we are drawing very near to the close of this present dispensation, and that very soon the solemn events recorded from chap. iv. onwards will begin to unroll themselves before the eyes of an astonished world.

“And He sent and signified it by His angel unto His servant John.”

Not directly to the assembly were these communications made, nor even directly to John himself, but “by His angel unto His servant John.” We cannot but be struck with the measure of distance here assumed. Such was the fallen condition of things that this distance of intervention is employed, and yet such was the unutterable importance of the subject to be revealed, that not only *an* angel, but *His* angel

was the chosen vehicle. Times of ruin in the Christian dispensation are here supposed analogous to the Lo-Ammi condition of God's earthly people. The Revelation thus closely resembles the Book of Daniel, where the communication of the mind of God is made not to the people as a whole, but to a chosen vessel. So that when all is in ruins, yet individual faith may shine as brightly, and devotedness may be as pronounced as in the best days of the dispensation.

“Who bare record of the Word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, of all things that he saw.”

It will be noticed that the last “and” of this verse as contained in the A.V. is here omitted. This is an important matter to note, for the things which John saw were not a separate subject of his testimony, but rather the character of the whole book. The last clause of the verse explains the force of the first two. The whole book is a divinely given *vision*, as the frequently repeated words “and I saw” make clear, but this vision was none the less “the Word of God, and the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Hence the Book of Revelation is as much inspired as any other portion of the Scriptures, and cannot be neglected without suffering serious loss.

“Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein : for the time is near.”

A special encouragement is given at the very commencement of the book, which may well lead us to enter upon its study with confident expectation of blessing. No one can even *read* it without blessing, little as they may be able to understand it. But to *hear* its words, and surely this involves a moral state of soul, a receptiveness of spirit, and then to *keep* those things, that is to have the whole being controlled and influenced in a practical manner thereby, is indeed to be blessed of God.

And why? Because "the time is near," not because we are actually passing through the circumstances described. Some imagine that the book is more *historical* than *prophetical*; this is not so, as we shall presently see. All was future when John wrote, and all from chap. iv. is future still. But the things described are morally so near that only unbelief and ignorance can despise them.

Judgment is at hand, and if the time has come when it must begin at the house of God, "what shall the end be of them that believe not the gospel of God?" This awfully solemn question finds its answer in the Book of Revelation. May God anoint our eyes to see, unstop our ears that we may hear His voice, and open our hearts to receive His truth, and cause us to walk seriously and "godly in this present age" (Titus ii. 12)!

A. H. B.

## Notes and Comments.

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“Casting out of the Church”  
*Casting out of the Church.* has been handed down from ancient times, but who would care to be a Diotrophes? And yet such things have been, and are still being done. And is it not to check and rebuke such un-Christlike doings that the Third Epistle of John was given?

Gaius was a **well-loved** brother. He prospered in soul, he grew in the truth, and he walked in the truth. Will any charge him with looseness or unfaithfulness to Christ for extending hearty fellowship to brethren, “and that strangers”—for so the passage runs? Far from it, “Beloved, thou doest **faithfully**,” &c., was the aged apostle’s earnest commendation. And again—

“We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellow-helpers to the truth.”

This epistle deserves the closest study in these days. Here were brethren itinerating in the gospel, they were strangers to Gaius, yet with warm and loving heart he receives them; for had they not gone out for His name’s sake? and was it not an honour to be fellow-helpers to the truth by receiving such worthy men? We have heard of an earnest man preaching the gospel as

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a visitor in a country district. His testimony was sound, his labours in the gospel were blessed, his walk was consistent, he was known to some, and he desired to take the Lord's Supper, but was refused because he was "in system"; but was not the refusing of such as great a system?

But Diotrephes—how unlike the beloved Gaius! There was nothing winning or lovely about him. Self was predominant, for he loved to have the pre-eminence. The aged Apostle John was despised by him, malicious words were on his lips, these stranger brethren he would not receive himself; but not only this, such gracious men as Gaius he forbade, as though all authority were vested in himself, and he even went the length of casting them out of the Church. How terrible! and what can be done in such a case?

Many and many a time have saints been cast out that should not have been. Sensitive and loving hearts smarting under the injustice meted out to others have been led unadvisedly to go out in sympathy with the oppressed. Here we feel that they have made a mistake. It is hard to suffer and remain, and yet John does not hint at any such step as to leave. It may be difficult to remain, but yet even where Diotrephes was acting in such fleshly zeal, Demetrius was found walking in a far different manner. Here were three members of one and the same assembly. Gaius, the well-beloved

host; Diotrophes, the tyrannical cleric; and Demetrius of good report.

We are often asked by those who, in various places, are suffering, What is to be done? The God-given answer is this—

“Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God; but he that doeth evil hath not seen God.”

Some may censure us for speaking out plainly; but we owe it to the Lord, and to the many of our brethren who groan in secret over such doings, and to the many who are scattered because of them. Casting out of the Church is an evil thing that we are charged not to follow. Diotrophes cast them out, and Gaius received them. Which of the two was most pleasing to the Lord? Which of the two was keeping the unity of the Spirit? Which was commended? and which was condemned?

ED.

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A pamphlet with this title has been sent to us by several, with a request that it might be reviewed. This we have sought to do in the fear of God, but as the subject and the unavoidable length render it unsuitable for the pages of this magazine, we have published it in separate form under the title “**What is Exclusivism?**”

## Correspondence.

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*28th December 1908.*

DEAR BROTHER IN THE LORD,—In speaking of the Lord's work one would say in the language of the Psalmist, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory."

As far as my memory serves me, the revival of 1859 commenced with a prayer meeting in Tannybrake schoolroom in the year 1857. A lady unknown to me visited Ballymena about that time, and was used in stirring up a young man called James M'Quilken, who found peace and joy in believing. He was used of the Lord in stirring up others, amongst them being John Wallace and Robert Carlisle, who with Jeremiah M'Neely and an old man named Marshall commenced the above-mentioned prayer meeting, which resulted in the great revival.

At that time I was in the neighbourhood of Kells, working in the linen business with Mr James Ross. An open-air meeting had been announced for Tullanamullan, near to where I worked in 1858, at which I was present. Jeremiah M'Neely and James M'Quilken addressed the audience, John iii. 1, 2, being the scripture selected. That was the first time I had ever heard any one say they were a child of God, born again, and knew it. I was convinced I was not a child of God.

Later on Robert Carlisle and Jeremiah M'Neely



had a cottage meeting near to where I worked. I arranged with a companion to go, but Satan tried to prevent me, charging my responsibility of the duties entrusted to me by my employer.

I trembled with the thought, but after a struggle I found myself in the meeting. (I mention this to show Satan's strong opposition to the work just then commencing.) After returning from that meeting I could not rest, and was brought face to face with God and my conscience as a lost guilty sinner. I took up my Bible, and my eye rested on Romans x. 9. I could not doubt for a moment but that God had raised Him from the dead. I then believed that God had justified me by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, and was led to confess with my mouth the Lord Jesus.

My people lived at Ahoghill, so on Christmas Day 1858 I visited them, telling them what the Lord had done for me; one sister found peace, another brother being deeply awakened found peace in a few days, also my mother. My brother felt led to go to Mr Buick, Presbyterian minister of 2nd Ahoghill (a godly man who threw himself into the work), and asked him was it possible for any one to know they were going to heaven, to which he replied, "Certainly so," and inquired what he had been thinking about. He told about my visit, so Mr Buick made arrangements for a meeting to be held in his meeting-house, at which Jeremiah M'Neely, Robert Carlisle, and

I were present. The attendance was very large, and the Lord was working. We then arranged for another meeting in Ballymontua school-house, but found so many gathered that the school was far too small, so we adjourned to Ahoghill to where the previous meeting had been held, this being 22nd February 1859. The whole neighbourhood was stirred up by these two meetings.

The next large meeting in Ahoghill was on 14th March, in Mr Adams' meeting-house, called for inquiring into and studying the revival movement. It was arranged that the converts would give expression to their experiences, which drew out many, about twelve hundred being present. When Mr Adams broke through this arrangement and was addressing the meeting, the audience became impatient. A young man named James Bankhead commenced praying in a rather excited tone; the commotion became very great, and Mr Adams called on the people to clear from the galleries lest the pressure would bring them down, so they adjourned to the square. J. Bankhead mounted the steps and addressed the crowd (many hundreds); the effect was marvellous; many found peace; not till a late hour did the crowd separate, although rain was falling heavily.

From this the movement spread in all directions—Ballymena, Tully, Moneymore, Grange, Longstone, Coagh, Craigmores; it was my privi-

lege to address meetings in all these places. Evidently there were two great powers at work—the Spirit of God and Satan. Many cases were stricken, paralysed, dumb, and others seemed sleeping; but throughout the whole work a deep sense of sin prevailed, which gave way to a deep peace and joy in multitudes.

Every one felt constrained to pray for the work to prosper. The great success of the whole being God laying the burden of prayer on the hearts of His people, resulting in showers of blessing. In looking back we can see Satan's hand hindering, but God overruling. I had wonderful experiences of the Lord's direct leading in connection with the work, but consider it unnecessary to relate here.—Ever affectionately, Yours in Christ,

S. CAMPBELL.

[The above letter is an answer to the editor's request for a short account of the writer's connection with the '59 revival. We rejoice to know that our friend has still the strength to tell out the glad tidings. May the Lord bless him, and still make him a blessing!—ED.]

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“The astronomers, I find, are all on the *qui vive* for the approach of the two comets this and next year they reckon; I think the second one is what is known as ‘Halley's,’ which they have lately identified exactly with the China Government's records back to B.C. some two hundred years. They are busy all

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over the world preparing for it for some time past, as it betokens some coming event of great importance, as previously.

“The Church, the Bride of Christ, as you, dear brother, are well aware, is also looking for a big event to come off. The Spirit is arousing the ‘Bride,’ and both joining in the cry asking the Lord to come. The earnestness of the desire will surely get more and more strong, as we see the day is approaching, and have its purifying and sanctifying effect upon all our quickened spirits, which should result in better testimony. This would be sanctified through the truth, for His Word is the truth, that the world may believe that God sent His Son, and doth still ‘so love,’ lingering to bless, not willing that any should perish, &c.”

J. H.

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“I have just returned from my South Wales journey, and heard of much to make one's heart glad and thank God for saving many recently, and for keeping those who are His in spite of the attacks of the enemy.”

W. R.

“I wonder if you have heard of the great movement of the Spirit of God in the north of China, following the mighty working of God in Korea and Manchuria? To the Lord be all the praise! Join us in prayer that every station in this vast land may know this mighty manifestation.”

H. E. S.

## The Word of God.

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**H**OW difficult it is to bring home to the heart and conscience all that we find in the Word of God. The mind may see it all, but there is still nothing done till God is brought to the soul and the soul takes notice of itself in the **sight of God.**

Where it speaks in Hebrews of the word being "quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword," it passes from the **Word** of God to God Himself, adding, "all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of **Him** with whom we have to do." It is what God speaks, it is Himself who speaks. When the power of the Spirit works, and the Word is mixed with faith in those who hear it, they are before God, all things naked and opened,—they have to do with **Him.**

It is this one looks for; there is plenty of taking up of the things of God by the mind, but conscience is not affected. I then lose the only thing that is real, and it is only real when the **Word** of God judges **us.** Paul, writing to the Thessalonians, states that when they received the word of God, which they heard of him, they received it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of **God**, which **effectually** works in those who believe: the Word takes effect. God is addressing Himself to and occupying Himself with us, and I am affected

by the Word as **God** speaking to **me** ; it is then mixed with faith. Nothing is done till it reaches us thus. We cannot be in God's presence without being subject to God. The Lord said—

**“He that rejecteth Me and receiveth not My words hath One that judgeth him, the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.”**

The same word that is spoken now will judge us then. It is a matter of faith now, and when it is a real work of God this same word reveals us as in God's presence : it is that which has the power of God's judgment upon us : it is God dealing with my soul. So in preaching, reading, exhortation, or the remonstrance of a friend, if the word brings God into the heart there is reality. The question for our souls is whether we have received it ; has this word been applied to your conscience in this day of grace ? The word of God abides for ever—

**“My word shall not pass away.”**

The same word will judge us in the last day if we reject it now : we shall be obliged to receive it then if we slight it now, for—

**“As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me and every tongue shall confess to God.”**

**“God is not a man that He should lie, neither the son of man that He should repent ; hath He said and shall He not do it, or hath He spoken and shall He not make it good ?”**

He that does not believe the record makes God a liar, and where the power of the Holy Ghost is in the word there is the resisting of the Holy Ghost.

J. N. D.

## Short Outline of the Book of Revelation. No. 2.

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### B. SECOND PART.

#### The Things which are—**Chapters II., III.**

**T**HESSE things existed in John's day, and still exist. Admitting Revelation to be a book of judgment, the Church as responsible, both then and now, must be included in it, inasmuch as its history is not yet closed. It has to be shown that judgment begins at the house of God, and true believers need to be aroused amidst the state of things that is ripening for the judgment, and to be encouraged, by promises, to overcome.

The history of the Church as a responsible vessel of testimony is successively unfolded, beginning with the abandoning of its first love. The period when the Church came forth in its pristine beauty, like Eve from the hands of her Creator and Spouse, is not brought out here. The Spirit of God takes up its history subsequent to this, when declension had set in and its state depended not on grace, but on its own responsibility. The same principle comes out in Sardis, with regard to what sprang from the Reformation. It is not this latter which is judged, but what resulted therefrom when it had been en-

trusted to the care of man, and nothing remained but a name to live.

The seven Churches are divided into four and three. The four first comprise the complete history of Christendom until the coming of the Lord and the establishment of His kingdom, the administration of which He will entrust to the faithful. Blessings are not granted to the professing Church as a whole, which is judged, but to "him that overcometh." This is personal. To overcome is to withstand the special tide of evil which carries away each Church, and to oppose it by swimming against the current. Two details of importance may here be noted.

First, in the three first Churches, the exhortation to hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches, is addressed to the Church **as a whole**, although it may be inferred that all will not have ears to hear. The reward promised to him that overcometh follows the exhortation, and is therefore still general in character. In Thyatira, directly a remnant is formed amidst the general apostasy (ii. 24) the exhortation to hear follows, instead of preceding, the promised reward. Exhortation and reward, therefore, concern the remnant.

Secondly, the **name** which the Lord assumes in each Church is in keeping with its state—the **victory**, too, is, as we have said, the counterpart of this state—the **reward** is in keeping with the name by which Christ reveals Himself to each



## SHORT OUTLINE OF REVELATION. 41

Church, and with the victory of him who hears what the Spirit saith unto the Churches. As a matter of fact, **communion** with the Lord, whether public or private, is always that which constitutes the reward.

In the four first Churches, the Lord reveals Himself according to the characters we have seen Him assume in chapter i. In the three last we have, as it were, a fresh revelation of Himself to the hearts of the faithful.

In the four first Churches, **Ephesus** presents to us the primitive Church in its state of declension, a declension which had set in during the days of the apostles and especially accentuated itself immediately after their departure. **Smyrna** is the period of persecution by means of which the Lord sought to check this declension and restore the assembly. **Pergamos** is the establishment (under Constantine) of the throne of Satan in the Church. The faithful witnesses are persecuted in her midst. Finally, **Thyatira** is Popery which marks and will mark Christendom until the Lord comes; the false prophetess with her fornication and her idolatrous worship.\* It is in the state of the Church characterised by Thyatira that a distinct remnant, for the first

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\* Balaam(ch. ii. 14), the Nicolaitanes (ii. 6, 15), and Jezebel (ii. 20) have, in the main, the same characteristics, only **Balaam** works outside, the **Nicolaitanes** form a sect inside, and **Jezebel** is what characterises the Church itself.

time defined as such, is formed. "**The rest in Thyatira.**"

In keeping with a symmetrical order which is found all through Revelation, the three last Churches present something special, outcome of a general state. They differ from the four first in that they are co-existent and only in measure successive. **At their origin** they consist of the remnant mentioned in Thyatira, but two of them, Sardis and Laodicea, are only viewed as the corruption of what at a given moment had been established in power by the Lord. **Sardis** is a lifeless Protestantism consequent on the Reformation. **Philadelphia**, the revival produced in the midst of this state of things, which, on the basis of brotherly love, as the name indicates, keeps the word of Him that is true and does not deny the name of Him that is holy, while having little strength; weakness on behalf of which the Lord, to whom strength belongs, intervenes by Himself opening the door of the gospel. In this Church we see the saints grouped outside the synagogue of Satan in a common expectation of the return of Christ, who acknowledges it and adds no word of blame. For Philadelphia, overcoming means to **hold fast that which she has**, namely, His word, His name, His coming, even though there be but little strength. Every revival so characterised belongs to Philadelphia, and will subsist until the Lord's coming. Philadelphia will have a crown, will be kept

from the hour of temptation, and will be presented in glory. Its blessings will be indissolubly linked up with the glory of God and of Christ. **Laodicea** is, in one sense, the outcome of the revival Philadelphia has produced in professing Christendom; great external activity without life, without heart for the Lord, without knowledge of self, and based on the energy of the old man by which they think to obtain Divine blessings, all of which is repulsive to the Lord, who spews it out of His mouth. In this state, final judgment will overtake her. H. R.

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## Personal Testimony.

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**I**T is the duty, to say nothing of the privilege, of every one who has been brought to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, to declare to his fellows what great things God hath done for him.

“Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul” (Ps. lxvi. 16).

Much may be done in the way of soul-saving work by the personal testimony of those who have experienced conversion, and who are living lives of Christian consecration. No testimony is of any avail, whether in public or private, that is not accompanied by a consistent walk, but given this essentially important element, and we believe

far greater results will be obtainable in definite conversion of souls by such personal witness than by the most eloquent sermons.

In writing thus we have in mind the thousands of villages throughout our land where doubtless scores of true Christians are to be found. It is, alas, only too true that in large numbers of our country districts a simple gospel is never preached. Christians residing in these places mourn over this, but take no steps to seek a remedy. To all such we now most earnestly appeal.

The Lord's people in every section of the Church are uniting just now to pray for a mighty revival to spread over this needy land of ours. Sad indeed it is that we should be obliged to speak of that Church which **is one** in fact, and **should be one** in outward manifestation, as divided into sections. But facts are facts. Humbling facts they may be, and most surely are. God grant a deeper exercise of conscience and greater searching of heart as to this our common shame.

“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (1 Cor. i. 10).

But a sense of common danger, owing to the rapid spread of Romanism, and the alarming development of the apostasy, has had the effect

of banding true Christians together for prayer and intercession. Prayer circles have been formed in many parts of the country, and Christians are meeting in private houses to cry to God for a movement amongst the people. Little can be expected to-day from the humanly ordained ministry. Men trained in the atmosphere of the theological colleges, saturated with "higher criticism" and all the rationalism of the class-rooms and divinity handbooks, instead of being a help, are the chief cause of the lamentable indifference that prevails on all hands. Having abandoned the good old gospel that filled their churches and saved their hearers, they are now confronted with the difficult problem of how to fill their churches again, not, be it well observed, how to lead the people to Christ.

The Ministerial Union at a certain city in the United States "has just been re-organised upon a broader plan, the Unitarian preacher occupying a prominent place, and with the published statement that all ministers are invited to co-operate, regardless of doctrinal belief. At a recent meeting, one of the city editors read a paper in which he took the members to task for trying to compete with entertainment concerns. In the discussion which followed, the pastor of the Baptist Church said that if it would bring the people, he would put a ballet dancer on the platform of his church (!)."

This is, alas! but a sample of much that is going on at the present time.

“The leaders of this people cause them to err; and they that are led of them are destroyed” (Isa. ix. 16).

If, then, revival there is to be, it will have to be independently of all those who, officially or otherwise, are undermining the Scriptures, and denying the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, such as the deity of Christ, the atoning sacrifice of the cross, the resurrection from the dead of the victorious Son of God, the need of conversion, the immortality of the soul, and the dread realities of judgment and eternity to come.

Be it clearly understood that we do not make light of the ministry of the Word in the power of the Holy Ghost. Preaching has its place, its God-given place,

“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

“How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?

“And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things” (Rom. x. 13-15).

Every revival has been accompanied by sound, solid, and scriptural preaching; witness Luther, Wesley, Whitfield, Charles Finney, Moody, Torrey, and others. But these men have been

the exception, and specially raised up of God in their day and generation to move the masses outside of the prevailing deadness and routine of formal religion.

It was so in '59. God had His chosen and honoured instruments. Charles H. Mackintosh in Ulster, J. Denham Smith and Grattan Guinness in Dublin, by their unwearied earnestness and evangelical preaching laid a splendid foundation for the glorious work that burst forth into flame in the summer of 1859. But though these gifted and earnest preachers prepared the people, under God, for what was coming, the immediate instruments of that remarkable movement were four unknown young men, in comparatively humble life. It is our privilege to be acquainted with Mr Jeremiah M'Neely, one of the four, now resident in the neighbourhood of Ballymena. Another, Mr Samuel Campbell, we have only just heard is still alive. These four young men began to pray together that God would awaken their neighbours to serious concern for their souls. This went on for some months without attracting much attention. Then meetings were convened in various schoolrooms in country places, where they recounted how the Lord had saved them. Conversions soon began to take place, and each convert began at once to tell what great things the Lord had done for them. In many cases ministers helped on the work to the utmost of their power, more often they stood

coldly and critically aloof. But God did His work in His own way, and by His own instruments.

What we have at heart to say in these pages is this: Let the Christians get together in some neutral building, such as a barn, a village school-room, or whatever else may open. Let it begin small, but let them be in earnest, and let them persevere in the spirit of Isaiah lxii. 6, 7:—

“I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence.

“And give Him no rest, till He establish, and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.”

No president nor chairman will be required at such a gathering, for the Holy Ghost will lead them in subjection to the Word of God.

When the people begin to come, as we fully believe they will, and no preacher is at hand, let the Christians relate how the Lord saved them. It will do their own souls good, and who knows what great results may not follow. As in '59, and as in Wales, too, preaching may have for the time to give place to the warm and loving testimony of young converts.

In conclusion, we would say that we are collecting some most interesting matter relative to the '59 revival, whose jubilee takes place this year, and which we hope shortly to publish. Meanwhile, should any open their drawing-rooms, or secure the village schoolroom, and gather



together friends and neighbours, we shall be only too pleased to come and give the story of '59, and our own personal reminiscences of the memorable time that immediately followed it.

Everybody should know what God did then, and what He is just as able and willing to do again in even greater measure. The time is short, and the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

A. H. B.

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## The Bible Class.

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### Revelation I. 4-7.

“John to the seven Churches which are in Asia.”

**WE** must not suppose that there were no other assemblies than these in Asia. In Paul's epistles individuals are addressed, as Timothy, Titus, or Philemon; or all the saints in a certain place, as Ephesus, Philippi; or the assembly as a whole in any particular town, as at Corinth, Thessalonica. Then again groups of assemblies in certain districts are spoken of as the assemblies of Galatia, of Judea (Gal. i. 2, 22). But here we find something quite different; a definite number in a district are addressed, namely, seven; and these, besides, are not *all* that were to be found in that district.

The number *seven*, too, is worthy of our notice. It is a symbolic number, no doubt, and implies a full and perfect history of the Church

as God sees it in its sojourn here below. It is *God's* church history, and not man's; and if we call it a *history*, yet is it given *prophetically*.

Doubtless they were actually existing assemblies at the time that John wrote, and they were in these varying conditions, but these were just the very conditions that prophetically described different stages from John's day right down to the coming of the Lord.

"Grace unto you, and peace from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come."

The salutation itself is remarkable, and so unlike what we find in other portions of the New Testament. It does not say, "grace and peace from God the Father," for, as we have seen, it is not the intimacy of the relation of children to a father, as in John's epistles, that is unfolded in the Book, nor the revelation of the Father in the Son as in his gospel. God is here brought before us as a God of judgment and of government. It is God in His own essential being—"Him which is," the self-existing and ever-abiding One. This is the character in which God made Himself known to Israel—the "I am." But not only this—"and which was," for all that God is in His present absolute and essential being He was in ages past to Abraham, Moses, David, &c.—"and which is to come," or "the coming One," for though dispensations may change, God is ever the same in His essential being. He is the "I am," the unchang-

ing One, who can no more tolerate disobedience and iniquity in the professing Church than in Israel before. And He is the coming One who will reckon with those who have stood in the place of privilege and responsibility.

“And from the seven Spirits which are before His throne.”

There can be little doubt that this remarkable expression refers to the Holy Ghost, the third Person in the Trinity, and not to angels or created spirits ; but how unlike the way in which John speaks of Him in his gospel, or Paul in his epistles. It is not here a divine Person operating in new birth as was true in past dispensations, is still true, and will be after the Church is gone ; nor as indwelling the believer, or baptizing into one body, as is peculiar to this present dispensation. In the Revelation it is the Holy Ghost as connected with government on the earth, and that not only as regards the assembly in its present responsibility, but also with reference to the earth after the glorified saints are seen in their place with Christ on high (chap. i. 4, iii. 1, iv. 5, v. 6). The number seven is symbolical, and the combined thoughts seem to be—plenitude of divine power (seven lamps of fire burning before the throne), completeness of spiritual discernment (seven eyes which are the seven spirits), and variety in God's ways (before His throne) in government of the earth (sent forth into all the earth).

“And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth.”

This presentation of Christ is of all importance to the proper understanding of the Book of Revelation. He is introduced here not in His heavenly glory, but as Man on earth. He is not here the head of the body set at God's right hand in the heavens (Eph. i.), nor as High Priest interceding for His people here below. He is here viewed as on earth, God's answer to all the failure of man, be it Jew, Gentile, or Church of God. Jesus Christ was God's faithful witness here below. All else failed, but He remained faithful. “This man hath done nothing amiss,” was the dying malefactor's testimony to Him, confirmed by the centurion's “Certainly this was a righteous man.” And yet He died; nay, this was His perfection of obedience, devotedness, and love, for He came to do the will of God, purposed and decreed before all worlds. He glorified God on the earth, and finished the work He had been given to do. Yes, blessed be His name! before He undertakes the work of judgment, He undertook and accomplished the mighty work of atonement.

And could He be holden of death? No, God stepped in and broke the power of the grave, and He is “the first begotten of the dead.” Carefully note that this too is connected with

the earth ; not a word is said of His exaltation to glory, nor His present priestly activities of grace for His people.

Then as to His future, He is "the prince of the kings of the earth." God is yet going to vindicate Him in the very scene of His rejection, His humiliation and death. Evidence of this we shall see accumulating as our examination of the Book proceeds, and reaching its climax when as King of kings, and Lord of lords, He comes forth from heaven for the overthrow of the Beast and the kings of the earth, and their armies gathered together to make war against Him (Rev. xix.).

"Unto Him that loveth us, and hath washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father ; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

The mention of that peerless name of Jesus draws forth an outburst of praise from the heart of the child of God. "Unto Him that loveth us," it is not merely "loved" ; true He loved us with a perfect love when He laid down His life for us at Calvary, but that same redeeming love continues as deep, and infinite, as when He proved it there. The utter failure and breakdown of the dispensation, the imminence of the appalling judgments about to sweep the earth from end to end, cannot rob the saint of God of the precious consciousness of His Saviour's love. But more : "hath washed us from our sins in His

own blood." It does not say "washeth," for "the worshippers once purged," have "no more conscience of sins" (Heb. x. 2). The believer owes everything to the precious blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son; and in view of judgment so soon to be executed, in the sense, too, of his own unworthiness, with what peace-giving power this thought comes to the heart, "He who is the Judge, Himself loves me with an unchanging love, and He Himself has washed my sins away in His own precious blood." Thank God! we know that precious blood can never lose its power—"once purged . . . no more conscience of sins."

But not only this: "and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father." This had been promised to Israel upon the ground of their obedience (Exod. xix. 6), a condition under which they completely failed; here it is the saints' present position under grace. Some read it, "a kingdom of priests," and the thought seems to be a united company, owning and subject to the government of God, before the day when all shall have to bow in judgment; not "a rabble of independent wills," as another has said, as at one time they had been, but now through grace a subject and united band who draw nigh to God in priestly service of worship and intercession.

"To Him be glory and dominion unto the ages of ages"—oh, what joy to contemplate the

eternity of praise and worship of which our blessed Redeemer is worthy, which even now the redeemed ascribe to Him, and with which high heaven will ring, and earth, too, when all God's ways are consummated. **Amen!** is the glad response of faith.

“Behold, He cometh with clouds ; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him : and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him.”

Not only are there the songs of salvation, but the solemn warnings of judgment. Alas! alas, there are those who refuse the Saviour, and these must meet the Judge. There are those, to-day, who despise and trample under their feet the blood of Christ, and these are verily as guilty in God's sight as those who shed it—“every eye shall see Him, and **such as have pierced Him,**” for thus the passage should be translated, and thus, too, it embraces not only the Jews in the past, but all who since have through their sins and rejection of His precious blood, crucified Him afresh as it were.

“**Behold He cometh with clouds.**” Yes, the warning has gone forth, whether men will heed it or not. This is not the coming of Christ for His own, but His revelation in power and glory for judgment. Everything points to the nearness of these solemn events, as the Spirit testifies in this very passage—the things “must shortly come to pass,” and “the time is near.” Men may scoff, and boast, and plan, but the

hour of their judgment has struck, and a wail of despair will rend the earth from living men and women, for "every eye shall see Him." It will then be too late for repentance, for the door will be shut. Oh, how the reality of these things should move every Christian to separation from the world which is hurrying to its doom! and should impel them to redoubled efforts to rouse the slumbering and the careless, for "now is the accepted time" and "**now is the day of salvation.**"

"Yea, Amen : I am Alpha and Omega, saith the Lord God, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."

The Church's testimony has been given ; the outburst of praise, followed by the solemn warning of approaching judgment has been heard, the certainty of His coming in power and glory, who had been pierced and nailed by wicked hands to the tree, has been announced, when lo! a voice is heard rising above the sceptical reasonings, and vulgar scoffings of the world—"Yea, Amen." It is His whose voice once shook the earth, and who has declared, "Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven" (Heb. xii. 26). Unbelief may scorn the warning, but the Alpha and Omega, the Eternal God, the Almighty, has set His seal upon it, and pronounced His solemn "Amen."

"**Alas, who shall live when God doeth this!**" (Num. xxiv. 23).

A. H. B.



## Notes and Comments.

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The note in our January issue on "Rome and the Bible" has found its way into the *Sheffield Telegraph*, and a leading Romanist in that city writes expressing ignorance of the "historical fact," and surprise, if fact it be, at the advice given by the three Bishops. As the writer of the letter casts a doubt upon the accuracy of the information, and others, less acquainted with the tactics of Rome, might well be sceptical, it may be well to add that there is no doubt whatever upon the subject.

There in the library of the British Museum the book is to be found from whence the information was drawn. We have ourselves verified the quotation, and compared it with the Latin original.

The lesson to be drawn therefrom is this: **Rome is afraid of the Bible.** That this is just as true to-day as in 1553 is proved by the sorrowful history of the Lasserre version of the Gospels which was published in 1886. Briefly the facts are these:—

M. Henri Lasserre was a devout Romanist. He was a brilliant writer, but he had sore eyes. Recommended by a Protestant (!) friend to try the waters of the Lourdes Grotto, and to pray to the Virgin, he did so, and was quickly well.

CXI.

“Our Lady of Lourdes has cured my sore eyes,” he exclaimed, and forthwith wrote the book entitled, “Notre Dame de Lourdes,” which has produced the most gigantic fraud that has ever been perpetrated under the name of religion.

M. Lasserre one day came across a copy of the four Gospels. He felt their power, and was captivated by their beauty. He longed that the French people should be able to read them. It struck him as strange and deplorable that professed Christians should be so utterly ignorant of the history of Christ; that not one in a hundred of those who partook of the sacrament of the Romish Church had ever held the Gospels in their hands, or read a line of them. He communicated these, his serious regrets, to many bishops and dignitaries of the Church. They agreed. So he set himself to the task of translating the four Gospels. This he accomplished in the most beautiful French. This translation, with his own preface, was submitted to the Archbishop of Paris, and to the Pope himself. It was published late in 1886, bearing on its first page the following letter of the Archbishop, containing the approval and benediction of the Pope:—

[*Translation.*]

“*To M. Henri Lasserre, of Paris.*”

“MOST ILLUSTRIOUS SEIGNEUR,—The Holy Father has received in regular course the French translation of the Holy Gospels which you have undertaken and accom-

plished, to the delight, and with the approval, of the Archiepiscopal authority.

“His Holiness commissions me to express to you his approval of the object with which you have been inspired in the execution and the publication of that work, so full of interest. He thanks you for the homage of filial devotion which accompanies the volume which you offer to him; and he charges me to make known to you his earnest desire that the object which you pursue, and which you indicate in the preface of your book, may be fully attained.

“Yielding most willingly to your desire, His Holiness sends you, from the bottom of his heart, his apostolic benediction.

“And I myself profit by this opportunity to declare myself, with much esteem, your very affectionate servant,  
“ L. Cardinal JACOBINI.

“ROME, 4th December 1886.”

The work thus launched poured from the press as fast as machines could produce it. Edition followed edition so rapidly that within one year twenty-five editions had been published, and still the people clamoured for more, when lo! the following Decree was fulminated from Rome:—

[*Translation.*]

“DECREE.

“Monday, 19th December 1887.

“The Sacred Congregation of the Most Eminent and Reverend Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church—by OUR MOST HOLY LORD POPE LEO XIII. and the Holy Apostolic See appointed and delegated for the Index of books of degraded doctrine, and for proscribing, ex-

purgating, and sanctioning the same throughout the whole Christian States—held in the Apostolic Palace of the Vatican on 19th December 1887, hath condemned and doth condemn, hath proscribed and doth proscribe, or if otherwise condemned and proscribed, hath commanded and doth command, the following works to be put on the Index of forbidden books :—

“Les Saintes Evangiles, traduction nouvelle, par Henri Lasserre, Paris, 1887.

“And so let no one of whatsoever rank or condition dare in any place or in any tongue, either to publish in the future, or if published to read or to retain the fore-mentioned condemned and proscribed works, but let him be held bound to deliver them to the Ordinaries of the place, or to the Inquisitors of heretical iniquity, under the penalties proclaimed in the Index of forbidden books.

“These having been referred to OUR MOST HOLY LORD POPE LEO XIII. by me the undersigned Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of the Index, HIS HOLINESS approved the Decree and ordered it to be issued. In token whereof, &c.

“Granted at Rome on 20th December 1887.

“Fr. THOMAS MARIA, Card. MARTINELLI,  
&c. &c.”

The darkness of Rome and the light of God's Word cannot walk together. Rome in 1887 is the same as Rome in 1553. It is not hard to discern the similarity between the harsh and damnatory Decree of 1887 and those tyrannical fulminations of the sixteenth century which consigned its thousands of helpless victims to torture and the stake for reading the Holy

A PRAYER WE OUGHT TO PRAY. 61

Scriptures. If she had but the power to-day  
——?

Our interested readers are referred to a striking pamphlet, "The Power behind the Pope," by William Wright, D.D. (James Nisbet & Co.), for a full account of the Lasserre version.

ED.

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"Ye also, as lively stones, are being built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. ii. 5).

"Thine ageless walls are bounded  
With amethyst unpriced ;  
Thy saints build up its fabric,  
The corner-stone is Christ.  
The cross is all thy splendour ;  
The Crucified, thy praise,  
His laud and benediction  
Thy ransomed people raise."

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## A Prayer We Ought to Pray.

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"Search me, O God, and know my heart : try me, and know my thoughts : and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."—Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24.

**T**HIS is the prayer of a saint of God. In the fourteenth verse the same person is found praising God. If we read the Psalm through, we see that the writer has deep spiritual ex-

perience, that God's thoughts are precious to him, and that he has true zeal for Jehovah. Yet, notwithstanding all this, he is distrustful of himself, and cries to God to search his heart. He is humble enough to know that he cannot search his own. We know that God only is able to do this for any one of us. For,

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked” (Jer. xvii. 9).

Only God can know it.

Assurance of salvation is the great privilege of all true Christians. Every believer knows, or ought to know, that he is justified freely by God's grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, and he joys in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom he has received the reconciliation. At the same time, the Scriptures do not assure any one of salvation who is living in sin.

“We know that we know God, if we keep His commandments” (1 John ii. 3).

But the Christian trusts to God's grace through the death of Christ for everlasting salvation, and not to the state of his heart, nor to the correctness of his ways. He comes to the light of God's Word, not to inquire if he be really a saved man, but if he, as a child of God, be walking as such; and on this ground, in the words of the Psalmist, he is prepared to cry to God to search his heart and try his ways.

## A PRAYER WE OUGHT TO PRAY. 63

For is there not in all an extreme liability to self-deception? It is true that God keeps His elect from those who would, if it were possible, deceive them. Yet they learn to distrust themselves, and to own their liability to err. God's choicest servants have often been deceived and misled for the time being. Even the Apostle Paul is careful not to claim to have perfect ability to judge himself. Thus he wrote—

“I know nothing against myself, yet am I not hereby justified, but he that judgeth me is the Lord” (1 Cor. iv. 4).

No one perfectly understands his errors, and all need to be cleansed from secret faults. One of the marks of the Laodicean state is self-deception. According to themselves the Laodiceans are—

“rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing.”

But, according to the Lord of all, who “searcheth the reins and hearts,” they are—

“wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” (Rev. iii. 17).

The judgment of the Lord as to their final state will come as a surprise to some persons. They will expect a different pronouncement to the one He gives. They will almost be prepared to challenge His judgment. The language which He, in His teaching, attributes to not a few in the coming day, intimates that some will

be, in their own opinion, almost ready to show Him He has made a mistake. Thus they are said to ask :—

“Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works?” (Matt. vii. 22).

And again :—

“When saw we Thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto Thee?” (Matt. xxv. 44).

But just as the wicked will be slow to realise their own wickedness, so the righteous will be lowly and slow to own the good that the Judge of All sees to be in them (see Matt. xxv. 37-39). There is danger, however, of being “hardened through the deceitfulness of sin,” and of deluding our ourselves! Surely thoughts like these ought to constrain us to cry, “Search me, O God!”

Let us remember, too, that we are in danger from mixed motives. It is not enough to be **doing** right things, they must be done from the right motive. Less than purity of motive will not satisfy God, and less than this ought not to satisfy the conscience of any Christian. But as a matter of fact, the Word of God, which is a “discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart,” is welcomed by the child of God. True Christian giving, if it be but a cup of cold water, is **for Christ's sake**. The same motive, which includes the glory of God as an object, must



## A PRAYER WE OUGHT TO PRAY. 65

regulate our prayers, our praises, our sufferings ; and direct our eating, drinking, and whatsoever we do. It is being persecuted **for righteousness' sake** that counts, and those that are reviled **for the Lord's sake** He tells us are "blessed." It is not enough to leave home and kindred to preach the gospel in foreign lands, unless it be **for His sake and the gospel's**.

Let us consider, too, how "any wicked way" in us would involve others. Achan's sin brought defeat, dishonour, and humiliation upon the whole camp of Israel. It is a heart-searching thought that the individual sin may implicate, disturb, and render powerless an assembly of saints. But it goes further, it affects the whole Church of God. Hence the apostle asks the unsectarian question :—

"Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?" (2 Cor. xi. 29).

We can see, in Joshua vii., the hosts of God turning their backs on their enemies because of an individual sin. We can read how Jehovah said unto Joshua, "Israel hath sinned," when the sin had been committed by a single person. We can read, too, in what way God withheld for the time being His presence and strength from His people, as a whole, because of the sin of one man. Sin in its evil consequences is difficult to measure. In fact, who is competent to trace it to its ultimate result? Let the reader

read carefully the whole of Joshua vii., and in view of the terrible consequences of a wicked way in Achan, he will be led to cry, "Search me, O God!"

Is it possible to tell how the work of God may be hindered at the present time through sin?—sin in the labourers, sin in the saints. God did not say, Israel hath **failed**. He said, "Israel hath **sinned**." We are sure He calls things by their right names. The Psalmist tacitly admits the possibility of a wicked way in himself. Are we sufficiently awake to see the awfulness of this possibility in our own case?

One sees, while thanking God for revivals here and there, a sad lack of conversions in many places. It is no good ignoring this. Further, there is moral weakness and lukewarmness in true Christians. There is not power in many assemblies, such as the Scriptures and the presence of the Holy Ghost would lead us to expect. Saints, too, are being scattered rather than gathered. Yet God and His Word are unchanged. He is always waiting, and ready to bless. It becomes us to ask ourselves if we are in no way to blame for all the deplorable departure from the truth, of which many earnest servants of the Lord continually complain. The times in which we live are perilous. It is the wisdom of a wise man to look well to his going. He must want to know the truth about himself continually. He does not question his standing,

## A PRAYER WE OUGHT TO PRAY. 67

but he is bound to be concerned for his own state and that of others, and must be characterised by an earnest longing to be cleansed from secret and hidden faults.

No doubt many have been impressed, if not amazed, at the distance one can go in what is really at bottom a false profession of Christianity. Scripture shows that persons may be enlightened even to a miraculous extent without being quickened. We read of apostates "who tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost." They tasted, too, "the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come," and then fell away (Heb. vi. 4, 5).

Now all such scriptures as these are wholesome for the Christian to read, and to read without any necessary darkness or fear. His trust is in Christ. He knows he must fall away, too, unless the sovereign grace of God prevent. And all this makes him desire to be searched by the Word and Spirit of God. He would rather by far have this than belong to that generation—

"Pure in their own eyes, and yet not washed from their filthiness."

But this prayer, so important for us to pray, is essentially a prayer for our own individual selves. It is right to pray for others. It is sin not to do so. We must ask God to search the assemblies of His saints. It is part of our work to implore God to save souls. It is love to think of our brethren, and humbly, at the same time

considering ourselves, tell out to the Lord of All in our closets what we see to be unlike Christ in those that bear His name. There are many things waiting to engage our most earnest supplications. But none of these things are before the Psalmist in this cry. He prays:—

“ Search me, O God, and know my heart : try me and know my thoughts : and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

May we, as individuals, be enabled to truly utter these words before the Lord, regardless of the consequences, and may He lead us in the way everlasting !

T. H.

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## Short Outline of the Book of Revelation.

### C. THIRD PART.

#### The Things which shall be hereafter— Chapters iv.-xxii.

This is the chief part, the subject, properly speaking, of the Apocalypse, and begins with the words, “after these things,”\* that is to say, after the close of the period of the Church as responsible here on earth.

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\* Note, however, that this term does not *always* signify that the events spoken of necessarily follow those which precede (compare vii. 1-9, xv. 5, xviii. 1, xix. 1). It is used more than once, as a specific term, to indicate the actual period of this third division, during which the events transpire.

## SHORT OUTLINE OF REVELATION. 69

## I. FIRST DIVISION.

**Course of Prophetical Events until the  
Establishment of the Reign of Christ—  
Chapters iv.-xi. 18.**

1. *First Subdivision.*

**The Heavenly Scene: the Throne and the  
Lamb.**

**T**HE history of the Church responsible on earth is now closed. The overcomers have been taken to heaven, according to the promise to Philadelphia. The prophet is invited by the voice of the Son of man, revealed in chapter i., to come and view the heavenly scene. He now sees (chapter iv.) the throne of divine government in heaven, for it is no longer on earth. He who is seated on the throne, the Lord God Almighty, at a certain moment identifies Himself with Christ, by whom He has created all things (this assimilation of the two Persons is characteristic of John's writings). The accompaniments of the throne are judicial; but the covenant with creation (the rainbow) is strongly maintained at the moment when judgment is about to fall on the earth. On the throne itself divine glory is manifested in a Person, but not in Him as unapproachable and alone, for other thrones are associated with Him, and on them are seated as kings the elders, the heavenly saints of every dispensation. Finally in the midst of

## 70. THE CHRISTIAN'S LIBRARY.

the throne and round about it, that is to say, a component part of the throne itself, are seen the four living creatures (angels or saints as the case may be), having the necessary attributes (power, endurance, intelligence, swiftness of action) to execute divine judgment on the earth.

In chapter v. we have the Lamb slain in the midst of the throne. The title of Lamb (*αρνιον*) is peculiar to the third division of Revelation. It occurs twenty-nine times, and *only once* elsewhere in the New Testament (John xxi. 15).\* The Lamb is without doubt the One who suffered in accomplishing redemption, but above all things He is *the Messiah* who, because He suffered and was slain, becomes, in the midst of the throne, the centre of all God's counsels; the One whose work is the foundation of a glorious eternity; the One also who alone is worthy to open the seals of the book for the carrying out of God's ways which will usher in His kingdom and the manifestation of His glory on the earth.

As in chapter iv., so here again the Lamb is not seen alone. Before Him are the four living creatures, also the elders with the priestly symbols of praise and intercession (harps and golden vials), as they were in chapter iv., with those of royalty (crowns of gold). The Lamb "came and took the book," written within and on

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\* *Αρνιος* (John i. 29, 36; Acts xiii. 32; 1 Pet. i. 19).  
*Αρνος* (Luke x. 3).

## SHORT OUTLINE OF REVELATION. 71

the back side, the book of God's counsels and ways, which He only has the right to give effect to, in order to enter upon His inheritance after they have run their course.

2. *Second Subdivision.*

**General Prophetic History of God's Ways towards the World.**—Chapters vi.-xi. 18.

This great subdivision divided into parentheses comprises the general history of God's ways toward the world during the future prophetic period, and closes at chapter xi. 18. The seven seals and the seven trumpets are the judgments appointed to bring in the reign of Christ, and under them man has an opportunity for repentance up to the last.\* The judgments take us up to the beginning of the millennial reign, and by the mention of the judgment of the dead, even to the threshold of the eternal state (chapter xi. 17, 18).

a. *First Section.*

**The Six First Seals**—Chapter vi.

The **four first seals** are providential judgments, the causes of which may appear natural, and do not exceed the limits of earthly events in the past, such as wars of conquest, strife, and mutual extermination, famine, in fact the four "sore judgments" of the Almighty (Ezek. xiv. 21).

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\* This does not apply to Christendom, upon whom God sends "strong delusion."—ED.

The **fifth seal** shows that persecution and martyrdom of saints goes on during this period, which is not yet the last half week of Daniel (comp. Matt. xxiv. 8, 9). The souls under the altar, where they had offered their bodies in sacrifice for the truth, cry out for vengeance, saying "How long?" When their number is completed by the Jewish and Gentile martyrs of the last half week, they will be raised to enjoy their heavenly inheritance.

The **sixth seal**, which is the answer to their cry, is characterised by a terrible revolution with general upheaval and overthrow of all authority, which causes men to say that the wrath of the Lamb is come. They are mistaken, this wrath is still to come.

*Parenthesis.*

**The 144,000 Sealed and the Great  
Multitude—Chapter vii.**

This chapter is a parenthesis relating to two classes of men who are preserved during the period of which these chapters treat. First, we have 144,000 (the number is symbolic) from the twelve tribes of Israel. Secondly, an immense multitude of Gentiles **on the earth**, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, and come out of *the* great tribulation; this refers to the time of the conversion of the nations at large, by the everlasting gospel (Rev. xiv. 6, 7; Matt. xxiv. 14). The words "after these things" twice repeated indicate that they belong to the third great division of the Apocalypse, introduced by this expression.

H. R.



**“A KINGDOM WHICH CANNOT BE MOVED.” 73**

**“A Kingdom which cannot be  
Moved.”**

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**T**HIS paper is intended, if God permit, to be the first of a series addressed, like the Bible Study papers of the past three years, especially to young Christians. Although questions will not be given, yet, as far as possible, suggestions for study will be made, and I hope that those who have followed the Bible Study will take up this one, now commencing, with much prayer and purpose of heart to learn what God may teach us.

For many young Christians the present time is one of great difficulty and perplexity. As they grow up in that part of the Church where God has appointed their lot, they find many sad things around them for which they are not personally responsible. They find increasing narrowness, party spirit, lack of power and freshness in the ministry of the Word, decay of energy in the gospel, and knowing well that these things are not of God, they cannot help being discouraged, and begin to question whether the system which has produced these results is of God. Hence comes restlessness—this one turns eagerly to that part of the Church where ministry appears to be fresher and more abundant, that one to where his energy may find fuller scope

and outlet for service. The desire to strike out a fresh path, to seek relief from these things that try and depress, grows stronger. But natural though such feelings and desires may be, they are only the working of what is most natural to us, to do our own will. The result is described in the Word of God :—

“In those days there was no king in Israel, **every man did what was right in his own eyes.**”

But there is something that is able to change entirely these feelings of restlessness, and replace them by a rest and quietness that cannot be shaken. It is to learn for oneself that **God rules** and always has been ruling. There is also Someone from whom the meaning of this rule, this government of God, may be learnt. It is the blessed Lord Jesus Himself who took this yoke of obedience to the Father's government, and so passed in perfect rest and peace through the utmost ruin and confusion. He says—

“Take **My yoke** upon you, and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find **rest** to your souls.”

Hence the object of this and any succeeding papers will be to trace out, by the help of God, what we can gather of the principles of **the kingdom of God** in Scripture, starting from the very beginning of the ways of God. The present paper is only introductory, and the few remarks which follow are only to point out that the “**kingdom of God,**” and the use of the title,

“A KINGDOM WHICH CANNOT BE MOVED.” 75

“**King**,” as applied to God are not merely dispensational terms, or poetic images. Will those who wish to follow this study read during the month **the first ten chapters of Genesis**, and seek to realise for themselves the bearing of the ways of God there recorded, not as types, but as very part of the lives of those elders who obtained a good report by faith.

In bringing these things before those who are older, I would ask their forbearance. Surely the effect of a practical acquaintance with the principles of the kingdom of God will not be to disparage any of the truths concerning Christ and the Church and all the hopes and affections belonging to that blessed relationship. It can only lead to a juster appreciation of these things in their true proportion in the thoughts of God, and in their relation to the rest of His ways, and to the practical path of the believer of to-day.

When in the Psalms we find the remarkable expressions—

“**My God, my King**” (lxviii. 24);

“**My King and my God**” (lxxxiv. 3);

“**Thou art my King, O God**” (xliv. 4);

“**God is my King of old**” (lxxiv. 12);

“**Thou satest in the throne judging right**” (ix. 4);

we cannot help seeing that these expressions are not the product of poetical fancy, but a very real fact of experience for the writers of these songs, some of them songs of praise, others cries

of need. It is not a form of expression which is often used to-day, nor does it express an habitual attitude of soul, so that it may often be passed over as though it were part of the poetic form of the Psalms.

But whether it be so or not, it is the expression of one of the deepest facts of life and reality. God is King, He is King of old, His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom. This fact underlies the whole of Scripture, the whole record of God's ways from the time when God put man in His image to rule over all created things, until the time when the Son will deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father, and be subject to Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.

When we come to the centre of God's ways, Christ on earth, and His pathway, we cannot help seeing again that the spirit which found expression in the utterances of these Psalms is now found perfectly expressed in the pathway of Christ in subjection to this reality, the rule of God. We find Him preaching the kingdom of God, bowing His neck under the yoke, owning the Father Lord of heaven and earth, and thanking Him for what had seemed good in His sight at the time when all His work appeared outwardly a failure, waiting two days until Lazarus was dead, in order that God might be glorified, refusing the aid of Peter's sword, of the legions of angels at His

**“A KINGDOM WHICH CANNOT BE MOVED.” 77**

disposal, or the exercise of His own divine power, because it was necessary that the Scriptures should be fulfilled, the will of God accomplished.

We find the same thing after His resurrection, the times and seasons are still in the Father's hands, He is still subject to the Father, and will not communicate to His disciples what He has not received from the Father. He speaks to them of the things pertaining to the **kingdom of God**. Even when He has gone back to wait in patience for the Father's time, and the Holy Ghost has come down bringing the witness of new hopes and a new relationship, and the apostle has been sent out whose special ministry is to make known the mystery of that marvellous relationship between Christ and the Church, still we find the familiar words, like a steadfast rock standing out from the ebb and flow of tides, **“the kingdom of God.”** At Corinth and at Ephesus the things pertaining to the kingdom of God form the subject of Paul's ministry, and he plainly tells the Ephesian elders that he had gone about among them **“preaching the kingdom of God.”**

And when the record closes, leaving the apostle in prison at Rome, still he is found preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ unhindered. Again in the Epistle to the Hebrews, to those who find their traditional foundations

breaking up, the message is that their portion is  
**a kingdom which cannot be moved,**

and whose central fact, as the whole epistle shows, is "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever," the interpreter of all the ways of God. Hence in a time of change, of shaking, and of the removal of things shaken, our hearts turn to this kingdom and its character, as it is found in Scripture.

The question, however, may possibly arise, indeed has arisen, Is not this the Church period of God's ways? Is not the Church an advance upon the kingdom, and is it not far more necessary to press the truths specially connected with the Church than to turn back to a period and character of God's ways that we have left behind us?

Such questions arise from a misapprehension. Scripture gives us no authority for looking upon the truths connected with the Church's relationship to Christ, and all the blessed consequences of His having taken the place described in Ephesians i. 20-23, "head over all things to the Church which is His body," as a line of truth independent of, superior to, and dispensationally in advance of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.\* The result of such an attitude has

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\* Doubtless the expression "kingdom of God" implies a moral relationship to be realised in every dispensation; it is equally clear that the Church is *dispensationally*

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been disastrous. It has gone a long way towards destroying a real sense of the authority of God, of the continuity of Scripture, and of the deepest meaning of the blessed Lord's path on earth. It has resulted in a strange loss of proportion in viewing the whole outline of God's ways. It has resulted in relegating many portions of the Word of God either to a past or future bearing on the history of the Jewish remnant, and hence practically making void their power and authority over the consciences of the children of God to-day. Other far-reaching and indirect results will suggest themselves to those who can look at the present state of things with hearts exercised before God, and desirous of discovering from Him the meaning of it all.

The seriousness of this needs no comment. The fact which seems to call for special emphasis, nay, rather, which God Himself is plainly driving home to the hearts and consciences of His children in every direction is, that “the things pertaining to the kingdom of God” are not a special **line of truth** which may be pressed unduly, and thus lead to heresy, but that they constitute the very bed-rock and eternal foundation of all the ways of God in every dispensation. The kingdom of God and its unchanging principles are not a dispensation, a period, out of which we have now

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“some better thing” than that which preceded in Old Testament times.—ED.

emerged, but an ever-present reality which must be practically known in the soul in order that every other truth, every relationship, may be understood in its true bearings, in its proper proportion to the whole of the revealed ways of God.

That the witness of Scripture to this truth is full, consistent, and extending throughout its entire range, can only be discovered by going direct to the Scripture itself with heart and conscience subject to it in the fear of God.

If the result of these articles should only be to stir up others far better equipped by experience of God and His ways, and maturer understanding of His Word, to write with abler pens what God may be pleased to give them on this subject for the blessing of the Church, they will not have been wholly in vain.

S. H. H.



## The Bible Class.

### The Book of Revelation.

#### 1. The Things which Thou hast seen.

**A**FTER the introduction of the first eight verses we come to the threefold division of the book contained in verse 19 of chapter i. They are these:—

1. The things which thou hast seen—chapter i. 9-20.



2. The things which are—chapters ii. and iii.
3. The things which shall be after these—chapter iii. to end.

“I, John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and patience in Jesus, was in the island called Patmos for the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus.”

The way in which John here introduces himself is worthy of all note. It is not as an apostle or one in a place of God-given authority in the Church; nor is it as a member of the body of Christ, and in the enjoyment of full Christian privileges. Undoubtedly he was both an apostle and a member of Christ's body, the Church, but these are not the thoughts here emphasised. Rather does he take a more general position of identification with the suffering saints of God, whether of the Church period or of that which will follow it. Most of what is described in the Apocalypse concerns the time that comes after the Church period, when there will be saints suffering violent persecution for the Word of God and for the testimony which they will render. What comfort it will be to them, when passing through the fire, to look back and know that all had been foreseen and foretold, and that God's chosen instrument for this had himself endured, along with others of a dispensation at that time past, like persecutions.

John links himself with his fellow-believers

in all their path of tribulation and suffering for Christ's sake; they were suffering, and so was he, for this was not the time of the kingdom in **power** (see Rev. xii. 10), but in **patience**. And yet not patience in a vague and general sense, but "the patience of Jesus Christ." How this links up the affections and the exercises of heart of all saints with the One for whom we wait. He waits and so do we for the time when suffering shall cease and glory burst forth upon this whole creation.

"The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patience of Christ" (2 Thess. iii. 5).

How far do we realise this blessed companionship we may truly ask our own hearts? And if there is a lack in this, is it not because we know so little of that suffering "for the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ" which led to the banishment to Patmos of the beloved disciple John?

John was in Patmos, no doubt on account of his faithful ministry of the Word, and yet God was behind all the movements of the world, and the tyrannical machinations of a cruel emperor. Little did he think that in sending John into exile it was carrying out God's plan to give to us and His people in a coming dispensation this marvellous "revelation of Jesus Christ"!

"My soul, wait thou only upon God!"

"I became in [the] Spirit on the Lord's Day, and heard behind me a great voice as of a trumpet, saying,

What thou seest, write in a book, and send to the seven assemblies; to Ephesus, and to Smyrna, and to Pergamos, and to Thyatira, and to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea" (vers. 10, 11). *Sardis*

Though the prophet was about to describe scenes and events of a dispensation posterior to the Church's sojourn here on earth, and though he is associated intimately by angelic testimony (chap. xxii. 9) with saints of Old Testament times, no less than with those of Apocalyptic days, yet it is in the full Christian position and relation that he stands. Not that the expression "in the Spirit" is exclusively descriptive of the Christian dispensation. What distinguishes the Christian from saints of all other periods is the **indwelling** of the Holy Ghost (John xiv. 16, 17); the Spirit dwells **in** the believer since Pentecost as the seal of faith in accomplished redemption, and as the earnest of coming glory. Besides this, which is **always** true of the Christian, there is the being "filled with the Spirit," which is only true as we walk in dependence upon God and obedience to His Word.

But when John "became in the Spirit" it was something totally different. He then speaks as a prophet inspired directly by the Holy Ghost, so that all that he gave utterance to was the Word of God. Evidently this cannot be said of the ordinary Christian, no matter how godly he may be. It is a mistaken use of the words,

therefore, that we sometimes hear in prayer that "we may be in the Spirit on the Lord's Day." John was in the Spirit as a prophet, communicating "the revelation of Jesus Christ," which he then received in vision. Similar language is used by Ezekiel (xi. 5, 24, 25):—

"The Spirit of the Lord fell upon me, and said unto me, Speak; Thus saith the Lord . . . Afterwards the Spirit took me up, and brought me in a vision by the Spirit of God into Chaldea . . . Then I spake unto them of the captivity all the things that the Lord had showed me."

It was the prophetic state, and the chosen instrument was taken out of himself for the moment, and came under the controlling power of the Holy Ghost, so as to give forth that which to the hearer was nothing less than **the Word of God**. He spake as he was moved by the Holy Ghost (2 Pet. i. 21).

But in John's case this took place on "the Lord's Day." This shows his Christian position, for the Lord's Day was as characteristic of Christianity as the **Sabbath** was of Judaism. It was the day of Christ's resurrection; the day that spoke of complete victory over all the power of death, of darkness, and of the devil; the day that spoke of God's entire satisfaction in that work of His own Son which had glorified Him with respect to sin; the day that brought back to John's heart, and through him to all Christians, the blessed memory of those words, "**Peace unto you.**"

A. H. B.

## Notes and Comments.

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*The Gospel in the Villages.* “Now that the spring season will soon be at hand, it occurs to me to suggest to those of your readers who have at heart the conversion of souls the great value of **open-air preaching** and **tract distribution** as a means of bringing the gospel before the unconverted. It is true that there are difficulties and hindrances in this work, as in all other kinds of evangelistic effort; but let us not look at the difficulties, but at God who is greater than them all. Much might be done in the villages and country places, in the spring and summer evenings, in a very simple way.

“May I venture to suggest to many young Christians that they might be able to devote one or two evenings a week to visiting and giving out gospel papers and tracts at the houses in some of our villages and towns, many of which are so dark spiritually. The facilities for travelling in these days are so great that it would be easy to reach suitable places, even for those living in cities. Christ is coming, souls are perishing, **let us awake and be in earnest.** If those who are interested in this blessed work of God in different places, were to come together, each in their own locality, and pray, **God would open the way** and give the needed guidance.

CXII.

“Many who are employed during the week get a half-holiday on Saturdays—would it not be well spent in going, two or three together if possible, by train or bicycle to some of our benighted villages, in order to bring to them the blessed news of a full and free salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ? A simple testimony to Christ, coming from the heart, is often more used of God than an elaborate address; and many young Christians can speak for five or ten minutes in the open air who would not like to undertake a gospel meeting in a meeting-room.

“It has been said, if you want to reach the people, you must go to them: this was what was done in the apostolic times, and it is God's way still. May God graciously stir up all His people, especially those young in the faith, to take a more practical and more prayerful interest in the deeply important matter of poor sinners perishing around us!—this is the **day** of His grace: soon the **night** will have come for this poor world, when no man can work.” F. G. B.

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*Christendom  
Astray.* There is little room for doubt on this point, and Scripture clearly foretells its complete apostasy. But none are more astray than those who have these two words as their watchword and battle-cry. A sect of modern times, they not only deny that there is a hell, but also a

heaven! There is no room in their theology for anything but the earth, and according to these men "salvation is dependent upon a hearty belief of the apostle's doctrines". (which means, of course, *their* doctrines!). *They only* will be saved! and *they only* will inherit the earth!

"Then you will have plenty of room," remarked a young man to one who had been propounding such views, and sometimes it is well to answer a fool according to his folly.

But those who possess the truth might well humble themselves for their want of zeal and earnestness in spreading it. Satan seems to inspire his servants with far more energy than most of us Christians possess. ED.

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## Correspondence.

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THE following letter has been sent to us from another hemisphere by the one to whom it was originally written, with the suggestion that it might be inserted in the *Christian's Library*. The writer has learnt what a lonely walk with God means. Let us suffer his word of exhortation. ED.

"I rejoice to learn that my name is mentioned at the little prayer meeting, and that blessing is asked on the tracts and periodicals distributed from time to time. It is a precious privilege to remember one another at the throne of grace; and not only so, but also God's servants

and their work, wherever there is a manifest work of His carried on by them, although the seal of approval could not be set to all the methods adopted ; and that He would have us large-hearted enough to have fellowship with Him in what He is doing. . . .

“Towards the close of last year my attention was directed to the blessed soul-saving work that had been going on for some time in China and India, wholly outside ourselves. Accordingly, at my request, Mr —— sent me the then current numbers of all the missionary periodicals. . . .

“Much as I deplore the ruinous state of all around, and the unscriptural ground occupied by the various Protestant bodies, which will go on to the close of this dispensation, I am fully convinced that in the China Inland Mission, &c., there are many devoted servants of God willing, if need be, to yield up life itself (as a matter of fact this happened during the Boxer uprising) rather than deny the Lord who bought them, and whose sole object is to carry His glad tidings to Satan's strongholds. The conversion and life-work of Dr Schereschewsky is to me truly wonderful, and I can recall no parallel in modern times when I take into consideration what blessing to immortal souls will be the outcome of God's Holy Word being brought within the reach of a people to-day numbering, it is estimated, at 400,000,000, who for centuries have been in gross darkness and superstition. Again, there is Mr Bergmann, who has given the Old and New Testaments to the Jews in the language all can understand. . . .

“Who can estimate the blessed results for eternity of the labours of these two saints of God? They are striking examples of His grace, demonstrating, too, and teaching us at the same time the solemn lesson, that not always does He choose His servants charged with special and extraordinary work from among those who are in the enjoyment of the highest spiritual privileges according



to the teaching of His Word. Though they do not walk in the same path of separation as myself, I honour them and their work for the Master's sake, and my heart goes out to them in tenderest love and prayerful sympathy that their labours in the Lord may be abundantly blessed. I earnestly desire that I may ever be as large-hearted as Paul (Eph. vi. 24).

“And now in conclusion, dear brother, I count on your prayers, that the Lord may increase my faith, give me to know more of Himself in the study of His Word, and make me an instrument for the blessing of others.

“G. W. B.”

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MY DEAR BROTHER,—Your paper on “good, bad, and dead works” interested me much, as it recalled to mind how once I had been zealous of good works as a baptized member of the establishment of England.

I had been confirmed in their way, and took their sacrament, and taught Sunday school, and was bent on doing more and more, but there were converted persons around me, and I could not but see the spring of their actions was different from mine, though we often did the same things.

In my distress I confided my difficulty to two ladies in whose house we had weekly Bible-readings, by asking, “Do confirmation and conversion mean the same thing?” They shook their heads; they then opened their Bibles, and one found the verse :

“How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God,

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purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Heb. ix. 14).

I read it two or three times, and at last concluded I had not a purged conscience, and therefore all works I could do, good or bad, were dead ones; but, How to have a purged conscience? was now the question.

Months passed, and at last one day when singing

**"Just as I am, without one plea,"**

it dawned on me that my difficulty was having too good an opinion of myself, and that the Church had confirmed me in that good opinion, so I had always been putting "the blood" in a secondary place.

Another hymn helped me:

"Let not conscience bid you linger,  
Nor of fitness fondly dream;  
All the fitness He requireth  
Is to feel your need of Him.  
This He gives you,  
'Tis the Spirit's rising beam."

About this time, at a weekly Bible-reading where a dozen officers attended, we cast lots who should ask M'Irraine, Bishop of Ohio, whether he knew his sins forgiven, and the lot fell on me. So when he came to our Bible-reading I asked, "Do you know your sins are forgiven?" His reply was, "Not only do I know my sins forgiven, but I have eternal life." Later, he departed this life in some city in Italy, and his last note of praise was expressed by, "Just as I am," &c.

## SHORT OUTLINE OF REVELATION. 91

Ever since I testify that he confirmed me in the **right** way.

Hebrews became precious to me. A verse in that epistle became a subject of inquiry :

“The worshippers once purged should have no more conscience of sins.”

I asked every one I met, but two years passed before the answer reached me in Montreal. The effect of this on me I might tell in a future letter if it has any interest for you.—Yours in the Lord,

H. T.

## Short Outline of the Book of Revelation.

### *b. Second Section.*

#### The Seventh Seal and the Four First Trumpets—Chapter viii. 1-12.

**A**FTER the parenthesis of chapter vii. the subject is resumed from chapter vi. by the opening of the **seventh seal**. There is a short interval without any special manifestation of God's ways (ver. 1), and then with the **seven trumpets** the judgments change in character. They are no longer providential events, so to speak, but judgments falling publicly and directly on mankind. Moreover, the Lord begins to manifest Himself not yet openly, but under angelic form, for in the Book of Revelation He has His angel (chap. i. 1), “the angel of Jehovah ”

of the Old Testament. We shall see His public manifestation in chapter xiv., but until then He is designated as "another angel," a term which has a different signification in chapter xiv. Already, in chapter vii. 3, He has made Himself known for the first time mysteriously and in association with the saints ("we") as "another angel" having the seal of the living God to set apart openly the 144,000. In the chapter we are considering He is as priest at the same time interceding in favour of the saints and giving efficacy to their prayers, and in answer to their request casting fire from the brazen altar on the earth. This twofold character, as seen here, is peculiar to the Apocalypse.

The trumpets, consequent upon the offering up of the prayers of the saints, proclaim the immediate intervention of God. Like the seals they are divided into four and three. The four first are direct judgments on the **circumstances** of men. Let us not forget that all the terms employed here are symbolic, and that their explanation must be sought for in the Word itself.

The **first trumpet** is sudden judgment from heaven which is destructive to the great, and to general prosperity. The **second trumpet** is the overthrow of a vast kingdom, cast into the midst of a state of anarchy and causing moral death and apostasy where it falls. In the **third trumpet** we find a mighty power, which had

been appointed to bring light from on high, quitting its position in relation to God and bringing death and perdition on mankind. In the **fourth trumpet**, sovereign authority, destined to enlighten men, is smitten with all that belongs to it, and men are left in utter ignorance of God's mind. The "third part" is characteristic throughout these verses, and signifies something which can be divided into three, but it refers most frequently to the western part of the Roman Empire, the seat of the throne of the beast.\*



## The Making of Saints.

IT does seem passing strange that sensible people can believe the childish nonsense of the ecclesiastical process of the making of saints.

Some of our readers will wonder whatever

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\* In chapter xii. 4 we see "the third part" in connection with the Roman Empire resuscitated under Satanic form, having the beast for its head, and exercising its influence in the **West**, that is to say in the sphere of the ten kings, over the third part of the subordinate powers who ought to have transmitted divine light to men. Chapter ix., as we shall see, brings under our notice **Palestine** (see Zech. xiii. 8 and Ezek. v. 12 for the third part in connection with Palestine) and the **Eastern** third part of this Empire (vers. 15, 18). H. R

this can be, and they may be forgiven if they declare that surely no such thing can ever be attempted by rational beings. And yet we are told by the daily press that during the month of April 1909, the Pope will undertake at Rome the beatification of Joan of Arc, preparatory to her being made a saint.

“It is expected that over sixty French bishops will be present, besides many hundreds of laymen who will travel to Rome especially for the ceremony. It is also quite possible that England will send a large representation consisting of Roman Catholic bishops, clergy, and laymen, with perhaps the Archbishop of Westminster at their head.”

Furthermore we are told that—

“The flowers, the electric lights, the cardinals in red, and the bishops in violet, will make an imposing scene in the magnificent cathedral (St Peter's in Rome), and it will probably be watched by large numbers of English people, both Catholic and Protestant (!), who rarely have an opportunity of witnessing such a ceremony.”

Indeed! And where does all this come from? Who originated such an idea as the “making” of saints? Certainly we see no such thing in the Bible. The “three bishops at Bologna” were quite right when they informed the Pope that if men read the Bible and compared the practices of the Church of Rome therewith they would at once perceive how diametrically they were opposed the one to the other.

The Bible tells us that unless we become “saints” in this world we cannot in the next.

God's saints become such **on earth**; Rome's are made after they die. Rome knows no such thing as a saint alive on the earth; not even His Holiness the Pope is a saint on earth, strange anomaly! For what does "saint" mean but a "holy" one, and yet "His Holiness" is not a holy one! Here is what we are informed:—

"The claims of Pope Pius IX. are now being considered, and within the next few years it is possible (!) that the 'process,' as it is called, will have been carried through, and he also will be canonised" (*Daily Mail*, 24th February 1909).

The Bible tells us that all true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are "saints," not that in themselves they were any better or different from all others, but they are

"Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling" (Heb. iii. 1).

All true believers in Christ are "called saints" (see Rom. i. 7; 1 Cor. i. 2). This does not mean that they are called saints by men, but that they become saints by the call of God. And how does God call them? He calls them by the gospel.

"We are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth. Whereunto He called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. ii. 13, 14).

What marvellous truths are wrapped up in

these two short verses! Let us just enumerate them, and leave all our readers to meditate upon them with thankful, adoring hearts:—

**Beloved** of the Lord—**chosen** from the beginning, *i.e.*, from before the foundation of the world—**saved**—**sanctified**, *i.e.*, set apart to God by the Spirit—**believers**—**called** by the gospel—soon to be **glorified** in the company of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is by the mighty operation of God's Holy Spirit producing in the heart of a poor, lost sinner a belief of the truth contained in the gospel that such a one is saved. Called by God through the gospel that tells of man's ruin through sin, of God's sovereign grace towards such, of the remedy found in the precious blood of Christ, and much more besides—yes, and believing that gospel, thus and thus only according to the Bible does any one become a saint.

But how does Rome "make" her saints? It appears that Joan of Arc, who died nearly five hundred years ago, is about to be canonised. She is not yet Saint Joan, according to the confession of the Church of Rome. Nor do we think that she is likely to become one by the elaborate process that is to be commenced in April of this year. Here is a description of the ceremony:—

"The process of making a saint is an interesting one, and there are always a few names under consideration.



## THE MAKING OF SAINTS.

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“The ‘process’ may be called a series of trials at which all known details of the life of the person are discussed. As a rule, it is the bishop of the town in which the person was born who makes the first move.

“He obtains the support of a number of other bishops, who sign a petition to the Pope asking permission for the ‘trial.’

“If the Pope gives his sanction, the moving bishop calls a meeting of influential dignitaries, priests, and laymen, who may have special knowledge.

“At this first meeting methods may be discussed for obtaining the necessary evidence. In the case of Joan of Arc, ten years were spent in gathering the facts; in all cases an immense amount of information must be collected.

“In the course of time a report is prepared, which is sent to Rome, and is considered by the body called the ‘Congregation of Rites.’ More delay will occur here. Possibly the report may be referred back to the makers for more information; but even if this is not necessary, the Congregation of Rites may keep it under consideration for four or five years.

“They may decide that the life of the person was a very worthy and a very holy one, but they require much more than that. It must be proved to their satisfaction that ‘miracles’ have been performed.

“Usually the report contains particulars of a number of ‘miracles,’ from which the Congregation of Rites may make a selection.

“The three chosen among those attributed to Joan of Arc relate to the curing of nuns belonging to different communities, who are said to have obtained relief from their diseases by her intercession.

“When the Congregation of Rites has been satisfied as to the authenticity of three miracles, they prepare their report, which is submitted to the Pope, who considers it.

“There is then a gathering at the Vatican, to which

the public are admitted. Cardinals and bishops are present, and a lawyer of the Papal Court reads out the decision.

“After this the ceremony of beatification generally takes place within a few months. It is held at St Peter's at about nine or ten o'clock in the morning, in the presence of the Congregation of Rites and numerous other dignitaries.

“The ceremony is performed before the altar of the Chair of St Peter's, and, as a rule, it attracts a large number of people.

“When the ceremony of beatifying Joan of Arc takes place, a big picture of ‘the Maid’ will be placed in front of the altar. This will be surrounded by flowers and electric lights, and will be covered with curtains until the decree has been read.

“It will then be unveiled, and the electric lamps will throw a glare of light upon it, while the Te Deum is sung and High Mass celebrated.

“In the afternoon of the same day the Pope will go to pray before the picture, and will assist at the benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, which will be given by one of the bishops.

“It must be understood that although the process described seems so elaborate, it is but the first step in the making of a saint.

“Perhaps ten or fifteen years hence Joan of Arc may be canonised, but before this can be done all the old routine must be passed again. More evidence of holiness will be required, three more miracles of the first order (making six in all) must be proved, and more elaborate reports must be prepared.

“At the final ceremony of canonisation the Pope will be present, and the entire service will probably last for four or five hours.

“Then, and not till then, will Joan of Arc be a Saint, and be publicly venerated as such by Roman Catholics.”

It is our firm conviction that Rome has burnt more saints than she has ever made. The day of God's righteous judgment is at hand when great Babylon shall come in remembrance before Him, "to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath" (Rev. xvi. 19).

**"In her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth"** (Rev. xviii. 24).

**"COME OUT OF HER, MY PEOPLE"**

(Rev. xviii. 4).

A. H. B.

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## The Devotedness of Old Testament Saints.

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**T**HE Old Testament dispensation, compared with that of the New, is to a great extent as darkness compared with the light. It is not under Judaism that the darkness is said to be passed, or passing away, but under Christianity; and it is not for Jews but for Christians that the "true light now shineth" (1 John ii. 8).

The great transition from Judaism to Christianity was introduced by Christ, and fully experienced by the apostles and saints after Pentecost. Old Testament saints did not receive the promises, but saw them by faith afar off, "and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (Heb. xi. 13).

But the promises, though seen only from afar, when brought home by the Holy Spirit, were a great reality to them in a way, probably, that we are unable to understand. For, in place of the full manifestation of Christ, and of the Word of God as we have it now, written and complete, God

“at sundry times, and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets” (Heb. i. 1).

But the Holy Ghost is given now in a way He was not given then, and speaks in these days to men, and especially to believers, by means of the holy writings both of the Old Testament and of the New.

He speaks now of promises **received**, of many prophecies **fulfilled**, and of Christians as being related to Christ, and to one another, in ways that the most privileged Old Testament saints could never have known.

The great distinctions in matters of privilege between saints before Christ and since, have not always been pointed out as they might have been had Christianity been better understood. On the one hand we know that Christian preachers have attributed to saints before Christ experiences and privileges which they could never have known; while on the other hand, which is much more serious, Christians have been carried back to times before Christ in such a way as to put them under law, and to lead them to believe that the various experiences of Old

Testament saints were all a necessary part of Christianity.

But it is not as easy as it seems to point out the limitations of saints and righteous men before Christ. Many of them enjoyed untold blessings ; the secret of the Lord was with them that feared Him, and Christians now cannot fully understand God's ways with His elect in ancient times, much of which is left unrecorded.

The Holy Spirit was not given before Jesus was glorified. Christ taught His disciples when with them to look for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit as a **future** blessing. His presence as a divine Person here on earth, and indwelling the believer, is peculiar to Christianity, and in consequence of accomplished redemption and faith in that work performed on the cross, God seals with His Spirit the one who believes the gospel of salvation. Nevertheless, the Holy Spirit wrought in the Old Testament saints and came upon the prophets. This was on some occasions manifest even to heathen kings and rulers. True spiritual life and devotedness have always been the product of the Spirit of God, and there was much of both in the earlier dispensation. Real revivals and reformation in the Old as well as in the New dispensation were ever the result of the Spirit's operation.

We shall misjudge very seriously the Old Testament saints unless we remember that the Holy Spirit influenced them. Then, as now,

men were born of the Spirit, comforted by Him, and fitted for heaven. It is not only that "holy men of old **spake** as they were moved" by Him, but men were enabled by Him to **live** righteous lives. And if others have erred in over-estimating their privileges, let us be careful lest we err on the other side through not freely owning the great reality of God's presence with them. He knew how to speak to men then as now. The prophecies given in pre-Christian times were many of them messages to men who lived in the days when they were first uttered, and not merely predictions of things to come. "There is nothing too hard for the Lord," and few things are too hard for us, when we sufficiently allow for the God of wonders, who maketh the earth to tremble at His presence. The Book of Job is at once an example and an illustration of the way God could, when He chose, quicken, discipline, humble, instruct, enlighten, and bless a man in the earliest days. Did God ever speak to mortal man more powerfully than He spoke to Job, though it might be "out of the whirlwind"?

God always had Christ before Him, and was ever prepared to bless men in view of the coming and death of Christ. It is a great mistake to suppose for a moment that they never thought of Christ. Job could speak out from the depths of his sorrow, of his Redeemer, with an energy of faith, of intelligence, and of consolation that many Christians might well

envy. Job's Redeemer was not, to him, merely a Person to be born into the world at some distant day. The patriarch cried out—"I know that my Redeemer **liveth!**" (Job xix. 25). Job's Redeemer was alive, and alive to Job, in Job's day. The Christian knows that the goings forth of Christ "have been from of old, from everlasting" (Micah v. 2), and ought not to be surprised at anything and everything. His saints in every age are able to speak of His glory. They in that age were not privileged in many ways as Christians are now, but the presence of God with them fully accounts for their devotedness.

Let us notice what a good example, for instance, they set Christians of giving for the Lord's work. Where would the tabernacle in the wilderness have been, apart from their willing offerings? They evidently accounted it a privilege to give. The gold and silver and brass, the blue and purple and scarlet, and all other needed precious things for the tent of meeting were fully forthcoming. The liberality of the people was so great that they had to be restrained from giving.

"The stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much" (Exod. xxxvi. 7).

At a later day, when the temple was about to be built, the generosity displayed was equally great. David prepared **with all his might** for the house of his God (1 Chron. xxix. 2). The princes of the tribes of Israel, and the captains

of thousands and of hundreds, followed in his steps. Is it not wholesome for us Christians, as we press our New Testament privileges, and congratulate ourselves on our superior advantages, to keep continually before us the whole-hearted giving in Old Testament times?

Some also in those days were ready to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Take, for illustration, Manoah and his wife. They asked of the Lord,

“How shall we order the child, and how shall we do unto him” (Judges xiii. 12).

Were they not ready to put the nurture of the child before their own meat and drink? God, in directing men, often leaves room for self-denial. It was so in this woman's case. Moreover, He intended, then as now, that details of instruction should be taken to heart.

“Of all that I said unto the woman, let her beware” (ver. 13).

What pregnant questions for Christians to-day: “How shall we **order** the child, and how shall we **do** unto him?” There is no evidence that the wife of Manoah stopped to argue, or to justify herself in partaking of what would have been sinful in her case to take. God was ready to instruct the willing mind then, and He is equally ready now. He only can show us how to live for the children in these difficult times, and what to avoid for their sakes. But if parents desire their children to be Nazarites,



in the antitypical sense of the word, they must begin by being Nazarites themselves.

It is good for us to notice, too, how men in Old Testament times poured out their hearts to God. Take Daniel as an example. We read—

“When Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house, and his window being open in his chamber towards Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day and prayed, and gave thanks before his God as he did aforetime” (Dan. vi. 10).

Praying definitely and giving thanks three times a day were plainly habits of Daniel's life. What is here said as to him was not something special because of the critical character of his time. But the critical place in which his faith placed him was not allowed to interfere with his perseverance in prayer—“as he did aforetime.” He must have been busier than most men, and withal a practical man, much occupied with secular affairs, yet he found time to give himself continually to prayer. He was not a visionary, though he saw and wrote visions. He was fully devoted to God, but this did not prevent his being alive to every duty in the secular affairs of the kingdom of Babylon. The man truly devoted to God is not unnatural. He was not so in those primitive times. It is said of Enoch that he “walked with God . . . and begat sons and daughters” (Gen. v. 22). He pleased God, and was not found, for God translated him.

Many Old Testament saints had very little light, but, along with it, very much reality. This is better than little reality, with a great deal of light, or the boast that we have it. The Pharisees were ready to say, "We see," and therefore, as Jesus said, they had no cloak for their sins.

May we, my brethren, all of us who know the fuller and deeper blessings of Christian days, know how to put into practice what we have received!

T. H.

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## The Bible Class.

### The Book of Revelation.

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#### I. The Things which Thou hast seen— *continued.*

THEN, too, the Lord's Day was the day in which Christians specially assembled (Acts xx. 7), and though deprived for the moment of the privilege of gathering together with them, John is found, at that time, as they were, in heart occupation with the Lord and His own. The Lord's Day is the first day of the week; we must carefully distinguish this from the prophetic day called in Scripture "the day of the Lord."

John then hears **behind** him a great voice; this is most significant. His mind was set, and rightly so, on things that were future, events

connected with the establishment of the kingdom in power, but he is recalled by the Spirit to that which **preceded** the kingdom. He has to receive a God-given vision of the ruin and breakdown of the dispensation to which he himself belonged. God never restores what has failed under man's responsibility. One dispensation follows another, and each fresh one is brought in upon the failure of that which preceded.

How strange must have sounded the "loud voice of a trumpet" to John, accustomed as he had been to the sweet accents of the Good Shepherd's voice calling His own sheep by name. The same Person was speaking, but how changed the circumstances. There was no change verily in His heart of love, for He loved His own which were in the world unto the end ; but here He is judging the state of that which professed the name of Christ.

When we think of love like His,  
 Joy and shame our hearts possess,  
 Joy that He should pity thus—  
 Shame for such returns from us.

The vision was not only for John, but must be written in a book and sent to these seven assemblies, **representative** assemblies as undoubtedly they must be. The number seven was not accidental but intentional. God was about to give **His Church history in a prophetic form.** That history was to be a full and complete fore-

cast of the Church from apostolic times down to the coming of the Lord, and thus the well-known symbolic number **seven** was chosen.

It was chosen, however, not only on this account, but because these different Churches possessed features in that day which, known beforehand to God, the Church as a whole was to possess during different stages of her history here below. This will become clearer as we proceed in our study of the book.

“And I turned back to see the voice that spake with me ; and being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks ; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks, one like unto a Son of man.”

The word “back,” omitted in the A.V., is of importance, as showing what was the attitude of John's mind at the time. He was looking forward in contemplation of glories about to be revealed, but is recalled authoritatively to view that which represented the Church in its responsibility as seen by the eye of Christ Himself.

“I saw seven golden candlesticks.” There were **seven** because of their *representative* character, presenting in its *completeness*, as God sees it, the character of the Church in its *responsibility* here on earth. They are **golden**, as typifying their true character as established of God. The Church was set up at the beginning by God Himself to be a witness of *His glory*, and as such was founded on *divine righteousness*. **Gold** in Scripture seems to convey these two great

thoughts, divine **righteousness**, and divine **glory**. They are **candlesticks**, for the bounden duty of the Church was to exhibit the **light** of the Holy Spirit in this world of darkness during the absence of the Lord Jesus Christ, and His session at the right hand of God.

Our thoughts naturally turn to the golden candlestick in the sanctuary of Old Testament times, only then there was but one, which represented Christ Himself, and not the Church. There the light shone in the sanctuary alone, whereas here these seven golden candlesticks are to give light in the world.

The truth here presented is not that of the unity of the Church as the body of Christ. Each assembly is seen in its own separate responsibility, and each assembly presents a complete moral picture of the external and visible Church in its progress through this world, at different periods, starting with its first decline in Ephesus, and ending with its total rejection in Laodicea. The body of Christ can never be spued out of Christ's mouth, but the assembly as an external and visible witness for Christ will be. No true believer in Christ can ever be lost, but multitudes of those who profess the Christian religion stand in awful danger of being so. True **confession** of Christ is one thing, mere **profession** is quite another.

We must not look here for rules and directions of Church government. These are found in the Epistles to the Corinthians and elsewhere. To

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reason from the fact that evil is found in these assemblies, and that no instruction is here given for its removal, that therefore evil may go unjudged in the assemblies of God to-day, is wresting the Scripture, and handling the Word of God deceitfully. To argue that because each of these is seen separate and distinct from the rest, that, therefore, independency of assemblies is a right and scriptural principle, is surely a misuse of the Scripture.

“And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto a Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.”

We must not mistake the expression “in the midst” as though it referred to the blessed truth of Matthew xviii. 20, for Christ is not seen here “in the midst” as the centre of gathering nor the object of worship. In Revelation He is in the midst as Judge, and we cannot fail to discern the resemblance of the description here given to that of the Ancient of Days in Daniel vii. It is the same Person described in Daniel and Revelation. He is not seen here in His character of priestly service of intercession, He is clothed with a garment “down to the foot.” In Luke xii. 37, and John xiii. 4, He girds Himself for service, but in Revelation it is more the dignity of the judge—the flowing robes and the golden girdle of divine righteousness (see Isa. xi. 5).

“His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow.”

What wonderful unfoldings of the glory of His person! That stately figure "like unto a Son of man" was robed in the garment of a priest, yet not girded for service, but rather in the attitude of priestly judgment and discrimination, such as we get in Leviticus xiii. As Son of man all judgment has been given into His hands (John v. 27). As Son of man He was rejected, despised, spat upon, and crucified, but as Son of man He will "execute judgment also."

And who is this Son of man? He is Jehovah, the Ancient of Days. The Ancient of Days is the eternal of God, and what is said of the Ancient of Days in Daniel vii. is here said of Christ, the Son of man. Christ is both God and man. The Word was God, and yet the Word became flesh (John i.), and in the vision John beholds humanity and deity combined in one Person. He who in grace became man is truly God.

"And His eyes were as a flame of fire; and His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and His voice as the sound of many waters."

Here we are given the character and attributes of His judgments. The eyes as a flame of fire denote the piercing and unsparing nature of His scrutiny. His holiness is as great as His love. Nothing escapes the searching glance of those eyes of fire; nothing, whether in the world, or in the Church, or in the individual professor of His name. Fire is the well-known Biblical symbol of all-consuming judgment.

But if the **eyes** denote the penetrating nature of this judgment, the **feet** as clearly teach the strength and firmness with which that judgment will be executed. The brass burning in the furnace teaches in symbol that all iniquity will be judged according to the requirements of divine righteousness. **Gold**, as seen at the mercy seat, is the symbol of divine righteousness, as found intrinsically in God Himself; and through that wonderful type we are taught the blessed truth that by virtue of the blood of Jesus the worshipper is brought right in to where God reveals Himself in all His own glory and intrinsic holiness.

**Brass**, as seen at the brazen altar, likewise symbolises divine righteousness, but not so much in connection with God's nature, as with the responsibility of man. It was at the brazen altar that sin was dealt with, but by means of a sacrifice that was consumed by the fire of judgment. Here in Revelation it is judgment pure and simple without a sacrifice. "Our God is a consuming fire."

But there is more! His **voice** was as "the sound of many waters." Here we learn in symbol the majesty, the authority, and the power with which God's holy and righteous judgment will be executed. If all that God has promised in grace will certainly be fulfilled, so will every warning of judgment come to pass, "for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it" (Isa. i. 20). A. H. B.



## Notes and Comments.

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**Conference of Sunday School Teachers.** A Conference was held at Acton on 20th March, when about 150 teachers assembled to consider the question of how to retain the elder scholars. Notes of the suggestions made will be printed, and copies may be obtained on application to S. G. P., 24 Lynton Road, Acton.

Another Conference will (D.V.) be held on 8th May, at 4 P.M., at the Public Library, Edwards Lane, Stoke Newington, to which provincial teachers are cordially invited.

It would be difficult to overestimate the importance of work for Christ amongst the young, and every help that one can give another should be gladly welcomed.

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**The Walls of Jericho.** Another discovery has been made completely confirming the Biblical narrative in the Book of Joshua. Excavations have recently taken place, under German auspices, around the site of the ancient city of Jericho. The veritable walls have been laid bare. "They lie at a depth of eight feet, and are marvellously built, while at one point there is a breach by which the place has been entered."

Numerous remains of Canaanite houses have

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been discovered; some of these were leaning against the old city wall. It is estimated that this portion of the city was inhabited as far back as 2,000 B.C., and on up to the last few centuries before Christ. It is remarkable how God is bringing to light these external evidences of the truth of Scripture to confound the wild dreams of rationalists. The absolute accuracy of the historical statements of the Bible, never doubted by the devout and intelligent Christian, is every day becoming more and more established for the confirmation of weaker minds. ED.

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***New Railway to Palestine.*** “It is announced that a project for the construction of a railway connecting Egypt and Syria has been submitted to the Turkish and Egyptian Governments with a view to the granting of a concession. The new line would probably cross the Suez Canal and the northern part of the Sinai Peninsula desert. It would shorten the journey to Jerusalem and other cities of the Holy Land by several days.”—*Daily Mail*, 15th March 1909.

This is interesting news to the student of prophecy, and is another stage in the rapid progress towards the closing scenes that are to usher in the reign of the Prince of Peace. This connecting link between the king of the North (Syria) and the king of the South (Egypt) is most striking. ED.

***Dreadnought  
Navies.***

The Christian has nothing to do with the politics of this world. He belongs to another country, even a heavenly one. But this does not hinder his watching with keenest interest the progress of events in this world, leading on most surely, and of late most rapidly, towards the accomplishment of God's plans for this earth. The scientific discovery of explosives of terrific force, the invention of engines of war of the most formidable description, the increase of the military fever amongst all nations, east and west—all these things remind us of the words of Joel iii. 9-14:—

“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.

“Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about.

“Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great.

“Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision.”

In reading such a prophecy of the near future we need to remember that “the heathen” here spoken of are all nations **outside the Jewish**

**people**, whether professed Christian, or pagan. Further, all prophecy shows that the locality where the great and final struggle will take place will be round about Jerusalem (Zech. xiv. 2). This passage in Joel precedes the one in Isaiah ii. 4. War must come before the reign of the Prince of Peace.

But now we hear of the feverish haste of the nations in the building of ships of the Dreadnought type. All others, formidable as they were, both in name and power, are now obsolete. Millions of pounds sterling are being voted, and the work of construction hurried on. Little do politicians know that they are being used to fulfil the words of the despised Book of books!

One of the earliest prophecies of the Scripture concerning the future of the nations speaks of **the ships of the West** afflicting the East (Num. xxiv. 24). Again, the last king of the North will descend upon Egypt like a whirlwind "with chariots, and with horsemen, and **with many ships.**"

The terrible times that are coming on rapidly may well be a call to Christians to cease their strife with one another, and impel them to "stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel" (Phil. i. 27).

Christians, **all Christians**, are "one in Christ." Nations may eye one another with suspicion and envy, but the Christians, the children of God, in all these nations should love one another as brethren.

ED.

**Great Wall  
of China.**

Dr Edgar Geil, the traveller and missionary, has just completed his journeying in the far north of China. He followed the Great Wall for 1,800 miles, and is convinced that there are at least ten great walls besides that which is known as the Great Wall of China. He adds:—

“What struck me most was the fact that all over the country, even in the remotest villages, I found small groups of young men drilling. In some cases there were only ten or fifteen men, but it appeared to be part of a concerted plan, the precise object of which the people themselves seem ignorant. I believe, however, that it is part of a general plan to prepare secretly an enormous army.”

“The end of all things is at hand; be ye therefore sober, and **watch unto prayer**. And above all things, have **fervent love** among yourselves” (1 Pet. iv. 7, 8).



## Correspondence.

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“**T**HE state of things you describe is indeed sad, but not being acquainted with the case I cannot say much.

“But apart from entering into details, we must ever remember that things in the Church to-day call for much patience and forbearance the one with the other.

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“Even the Apostle Paul, full of wisdom as he was, gave no further counsel in a somewhat similar case (only that they were sisters and not brothers) than this—

“‘I beseech Euodias and beseech Syntyche that they be of the same mind in the Lord (Phil. iv. 2).

**Each** was besought, for each no doubt was to blame. But apostle though he was, he does not command with authority, but beseeches with affection. This is most beautiful and instructive.

“Of this we may be sure, that if the same mind which was in Christ Jesus had been the guiding principle of these two sisters' lives, there would have been no need for such beseechings; but then a gracious Lord knows how to make even their petty differences turn to the good of **all** His own, right down the ages, who take heed to the aged apostle's loving admonition.

“How much better to be like ‘those women’ of verse 3, who laboured in the gospel—and of this I am certain, that if the hands and hearts and feet and tongues of all, both brothers and sisters, were engaged in such labour there would be far less of the strife of verse 2.

“May the Lord lead to healing and bring great blessing to all concerned.” ED.

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“Your article on “Casting out of the Church” in February number impressed me very much, for it describes the very circumstances and the sad effects

which we see all around us. Would that there were more who considered it their duty to speak openly and plainly about these things.

“Surely there are many Christians at the present time quietly groaning under such circumstances, but totally unable to alter them in any way, except bring them in earnest prayer before the Throne of Grace. It is also my sincere desire (as you expressed it) that God may grant a deeper exercise of conscience, and greater searching of heart as to this our common shame, among all His own. My aged father (now seventy-five) well remembers the revival times . . . and in speaking of them has often said that in comparing the present spirit of the Christians as to brotherly love and fellowship with that which existed in those times, made him feel like the Jews in the Book of Ezra, who ‘had seen the first house . . . wept with a loud voice.’”

Many have expressed themselves like our correspondent above, and we are thankful for signs of growing exercise of conscience as to these things. One thing that God is teaching His people everywhere to-day, is the importance of individual exercise of heart and conscience before Him, and a walk in the light of His own Word. Many find it a relief to abandon their own individual responsibility, and hand over the keeping of conscience and reason to the authority of the Church. This forms to certain minds the great attraction of Rome, but it is not the path of faith. It is surprising to find how such a principle crops up where it might be least expected. A relief at first, it becomes in the end a tyranny of the most cruel description,

as the history of the Middle Ages amply proves. From this God mercifully delivered large multitudes at the time of the Reformation by giving them an open Bible. Liberty of conscience was won at the price of faggot and flame. Men had then to choose between the authority of the Church and that of the Word of God. It is as true to-day. God's Word is our only guide and safeguard. Whether it be the individual or the assembly, it is to the Word all must bow. "I commend you to God, and to the Word of His grace" abides in all its force still. Nothing must be allowed to come in between the conscience and God and His Word.

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Another writes asking:—

"As regards your remarks in the *Christian's Library* about casting out of the Church, there is, I take it, such a thing as putting out of the assembly according to Matthew xviii. 15-18?"

Clearly it is the bounden duty of the Christian assembly to put away from amongst themselves wicked persons. But we should turn to 1 Corinthians v. 7-13, and not to Matthew xviii. for directions as to this sad and solemn exercise of discipline. No company of whatever name can claim the title of Christian which could tolerate such things as are described in 1 Corinthians v. But "casting out" (3 John) is very different from "putting away." The former is a carnal act and severely condemned,



the latter is a Christian duty and strictly enjoined.

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Yet another writes sympathetically but fearing that the young may be stumbled by alluding to such things. Our whole soul goes out in sympathy with those young in the faith, and we would not utter one word or write one line to stumble them. But 3 John is inspired and part of that Scripture which is given for reproof and correction as well as for doctrine and instruction. Furthermore, it is often the young who are the ones that are stumbled by the very actions that are there described as worthy of all censure. If we have stumbled a single one by our pressing the practical teaching of 3 John, we should be glad to hear from them, and would do all that in our power lies to undo the mischief.

Personally speaking, it is this very 3 John that has kept us these many years in our present path of Christian fellowship. At the time that John wrote his epistles, the Church was in utter ruin and confusion. All was intensely individual. Indeed the only allusion to the Church is in the third epistle, and there, even, not the Church as a whole, but simply a local assembly—and all was confusion there, yet John does not hint at such a thing as “leaving.” Far from this, he speaks of coming there (ver. 10), of speaking face to face with Gaius (ver. 14), and meanwhile sends his greetings to “the

friends," clearly signifying that there were those on the spot who had no fellowship with what was so distressing to the aged apostle, and yet had to endure it with sorrow and patience.

ED.

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### An Old Letter.

“**R**EAD the Holy Scriptures with attention and not as a task or burden laid upon you, but let your hearts delight in them.

“‘There,’ says Dr Watts, ‘are the only pleasant histories which are certain and true; there are abundance of precious promises made to sinners such as we all are by nature; there are sweet invitations and counsels of God and Christ to come in and lay hold of; then, there are the choice sayings and sermons of the Son of God, the prophets and apostles.’

“Above all books, read the Bible most; lay its truths in your hearts,—there you may know what is the will of God concerning you and what you must do to be holy here and happy hereafter.

“Lastly, I exhort you not to live without prayer and religion. You will profit but little if you do not pray; however busy you may be in your work or business, do not let the day pass without having bowed your knees before the Lord to supplicate His mercy and give Him thanks for every blessing.

“ I have written these few lines with a trembling hand and in bodily pain. Should any good result come from them, to God's Holy Name give all praise.”



## God in our Daily Life.



**I**T is worth while, in our reading of Scripture, to observe the presence and working of God in the ordinary affairs of everyday life. For instance, in Genesis xxxvii., Joseph, in obedience to his father's command, is seen on his way to visit his brethren, but unable to find them. It is said—

“ A certain man found him and behold he was **wandering** in the field.”

It so happened that the “ certain man ” had heard Joseph's brethren say they were going to Dothan, and thus he was able to direct Joseph on his way. Now, what believer would dare to say that the finding and directing of Joseph as here recorded happened by chance, and that God had nothing to do with the “ certain man ” finding him in that field ?

Great events often spring from seemingly small and unexpected causes, and from what seem to us trivial and commonplace things. When we “ know as we are known,” and understand fully the working of God in the lives of those who trust Him, we shall be filled with

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wonder to know how constantly He was present, though often unknown to ourselves, and how much and how continually we were indebted to Him. There is great truth in the words of the poet—

“He everywhere hath sway  
And all things serve His might.”

When David was pursuing the Amalekites who had smitten Ziklag (see 1 Sam. xxx. 11) an Egyptian was found in a field, but apparently dead. This man, after being restored, was able to give David the information he needed to enable him to overtake the Amalekites and recover all that they had taken away. God used this weak and apparently impossible instrument to promote the victory of David, by directing him as recorded in this Scripture. We do well to ponder these simple narratives, and observe the ways of God's working in everyday life. For it is blind unbelief to limit the presence of God to that which is called miraculous and supernatural, and not to look out for Him, and trust Him in the things which we call commonplace and ordinary.

It is a matter of divine revelation that God commanded the ravens to bring Elijah bread and flesh in the morning and bread and flesh in the evening. Yet God was not more truly present in providing for His servant then, and there, in that time of famine, than He is in commanding the needful provision here and now,

it may be in a time of plenty, and by means of very ordinary circumstances.

We cannot read of the needs of God's people in Scripture, if our eyes have been opened to see, without reading of the way in which God supplied them, though sometimes those needs were very apparent, and even were allowed occasionally to become urgent, before they were fully met. But God in giving a record of the trials of His saints does not leave us without an account of their deliverances. And thus the generations of His children who follow are able to say as they study the record—

“Our fathers trusted in Thee, and Thou didst deliver them” (Ps. xxii. 4).

The word “salvation” in Scripture does not always mean the salvation of the soul from hell, nor yet the being clothed with a resurrection body, though, thank God, these sure mercies are presented to us in Scripture also. But the Word of God is rich in its faithful record of various kinds of temporal deliverances, and not a few of these are celebrated in thankful songs of praise.

Further, these deliverances are by no means written for the sake of those for whom the deliverances were wrought, but for all those who in time to come should read, or be instructed by these divinely inspired records, and be thereby encouraged to put their trust in God. For God is not retired to the heavens, having left the

world to itself, and especially His people to themselves in the days in which we live. It must strike an unbeliever as somewhat singular to hear a Christian singing heartily about the salvation of his soul, and yet soon afterwards to discern in his anxious, careworn appearance, and perhaps in his speech too, a lack of confidence in God about the living present. It is not according to Scripture that such matters as God's care for the soul, and God's present care for the body, should be divorced in that way.

“He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things.”

“He **giveth**” (not gave) “us richly all things to enjoy.”

God is present with His children for many purposes. He is specially with the righteous, with His own, and with those who consciously, heartily, and intelligently serve Him; but not only so, for the apostle was able to tell heathen men—applying the words both to heathen and Christian—

“He is not far from any one of us, for in Him we live and move and have our being.”

Take an illustration of the way in which God is near His people to protect them (1 Sam. xxiii. 27):—

“There came a messenger unto Saul, saying, Haste thee, and come, for the Philistines have invaded the land. **Wherefore Saul returned from pursuing after David**, and went against the Philistines: therefore they called that

place Sela-hammahlekoth" (that is, the rock of divisions or escape).

Saul was pressing David very close. It seemed as if Saul had captured his long pursued quarry on this occasion :—

"Saul and his men compassed David and his men round about to take them,"

but suddenly a messenger appeared saying to Saul, "Haste thee, and come." Saul was called away, and thus one of the spots of David's greatest danger became henceforth a monumental place of divine deliverance, for in all this the believer sees God's intervention in David's escape. Are there not places in our own experience over which we, too, might write, as truly as these Hebrews did, the long and difficult word—

### "Sela-hammahlekoth" ?

God was no more David's deliverer than He is the deliverer, in these days, of those who put their trust in Him. Let us not forget the words of our Lord Jesus Christ where He says, "The very hairs of your head are all numbered."

Again, God is present with His people to provide for them. We read of the disciples of Jesus on one occasion that—

"They reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have taken no bread. And Jesus perceiving it said, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves because ye have brought no bread? Do ye not understand, neither remember," &c. (Matt. xvi. 7-9).

Jesus had wrought two miracles in both of which He had shown how fully competent He was to satisfy the hungry with bread in places where there was none. Did He not expect these disciples to learn from these miracles that He was all-sufficient for every emergency? He is the Creator. He asks us to trust Him when we have no bread, and not to be overcome by difficulties like the one we read of here, which His disciples were unable to master. It is His will that we should "understand" and "remember" (and may divine grace accomplish this in us!) that while man thinks he can prepare a table in a land of plenty, God can prepare

**"A Table in the Wilderness."**

If we have what seem like needs unmet, or difficulties unremoved, it is certainly not because God is unable to deal with these if He choose. Jesus on this occasion said to His disciples, "O ye of little faith," and He says to us all to-day—

"Be content with such things as ye have, for Himself hath said, I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee" (Heb. xiii. 5, 6).

But God is working for His people oftentimes, not only to provide for them, to protect them, to save them out of danger, but also to prevent them from entering into danger, or temptation, and from falling into sin. It is not written in vain that "He keepeth the feet of



His saints." He may sometimes allow us to proceed a considerable distance in a wrong course, but every step of the straying feet is carefully measured. For instance, the time came when David seemed under a cloud. After many manifest deliverances he said in his heart—

"I shall one day perish by the hand of Saul, there is nothing better for me than that I should escape into the land of the Philistines."

As a consequence of this step, David is seen in 1 Samuel xxviii. in actual danger of fighting against Israel, the people he loved, his own nation whom he defended when he slew Goliath. Had such a thing been allowed to happen, what remorse would have been his portion afterwards! But his ever-faithful God kept him from such a calamity. And only God **could** extricate him in this extremity. It happened that **the lords of the Philistines objected to David's presence on the battlefield against Israel.** Could David have wished for anything better? Deliverance came at the last moment, but what a deliverance it was! How it shows that God is never behind His time. How He loved, protected, and delivered David, not because David was worthy, but because of God's sovereign grace.

But as we should expect, we see the Divine presence nowhere so fully displayed as in the human life of the Lord Jesus. Only to take one instance. The kings of the earth and of Israel were careful to provide, often at very great

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expense to their subjects, tombs or sepulchres for themselves while they lived. It is true that in some instances their bodies never reached these self-provided resting-places. The Lord Jesus knew He was to die, but He never made provision for His body in this way. Yet we may read how perfectly His Father made provision for this, so that Christ was found "with the rich in His death." \* Let Scripture speak for itself—

"There came a rich man of Arimathea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple: he went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered. And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out of the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre and departed" (Matt. xxvii. 57-60).

In the Master's life women ministered unto Him of their substance, and in His death perfect provision was made for His burial. **He** did not live for Himself. He never wrought miracles to meet His own needs, but His Father was with Him, angels ministered unto Him, and He teaches us, by word and by example, to trust in God, and to seek **first** the kingdom of God and His righteousness, assuring us that all needful things shall be added.

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\* In keeping with this it is beautiful to observe the correct translation of Isaiah liii. 9—"They gave Him a grave with the wicked, but He was with the rich in His death."—ED.

SHORT OUTLINE OF REVELATION. 131

May we be without anxiety, with our yieldingness known unto all men, for "the Lord is at hand."  
T. H.



## Short Outline of the Book of Revelation.

### *c. Third Section.*

#### The Fifth and Sixth Trumpets— Chapters viii. 13, ix.

THE three last trumpets are trumpets of **woe**, and here the judgments are still more terrible and overtake **people**, not circumstances.

The first **woe** (chap. ix. 1-11) falls on a part of the Eastern Roman Empire, that is to say on Palestine.\* In verse 4 the conquering army of locusts, which bears some resemblance to the one mentioned in Joel i. 6, ii. 4, overtakes those in the invaded region who have not the seal of God in their foreheads (*cf.* chap. vii. 3), that is to say, apostate Jews. It is a judgment from God, but left in the hands of Satan and possessing an impress of moral misery as from beneath.

The second **woe** (vers. 13-19) falls on another third part of the kingdom of the beast (vers. 15-18), that is to say, on the Eastern Roman

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\* Hence perhaps the expression so often repeated in this passage, "the earth" or the land (comp. chap. xi. 4, 6).

Empire, with the exception, perhaps, of Palestine, of which we have just spoken. It consists of a warlike invasion to uphold diabolical doctrines by force of arms.

The whole Roman Empire is thus smitten by the six first trumpets.

Until now (vers. 20, 21) men are struck **with a view to leading them, if possible, to repent.** In these two verses we see how they respond to the call.

*Parenthesis.*

**The Little Book**—Chapters x.-xi. 13.

Here we have a fresh parenthesis introduced between the second and third trumpets of woe. It occupies a specific place between these two periods. The length of time of the events which belong to it, the only one mentioned in the Apocalypse, corresponds with the last half week of Daniel (Dan. ix. 27) three years and a half, or 1,260 days, or a time and times and half a time (xii. 14). All that precedes the trumpets of woe is of undefined length and does not enter into apocalyptic chronology.

This parenthesis begins with "another angel," Christ, not yet openly manifested, but clothed in angelic and heavenly form, particularly in connection with the circumstances of His people, the cloud and the pillar of fire, having supreme authority, proclaiming that He maintains His covenant with creation, and claims His rights over the whole world. After the third trumpet of woe He will enter into possession of all His rights. He has in His hand and He gives to the prophet a little book of prophecy in connection with Israel, open, not sealed, for it was well known in the Old Testament. In this passage it refers more especially to the remnant of Judah undergoing martyrdom at Jerusalem, and its connection

## SHORT OUTLINE OF REVELATION. 133

with the apostasy, whose agents are the beast and the false prophet. The testimony of the remnant goes on while Jerusalem is trodden under foot of the Gentiles, and it asserts the rights of Christ on the earth in connection with His royalty and priesthood (comp. Zech. iv.). It resembles the testimony of Elias and Moses, confirmed by an adequate number of witnesses (in symbolic language two witnesses) whose history is given in a few words. The imperial Roman beast puts them to death in the person of their leaders; "those that dwell upon the earth" rejoice over them. This characteristic expression, which recurs twelve times in Revelation, indicates utter forgetfulness of God on the part of man. Earth is the scene where their hearts, their will, and their hopes are centred. The history of the witnesses closes with their resurrection and ascension up to heaven in a cloud, under the very eyes of their enemies.

*Third Section (Continuation).*

**The Seventh Trumpet**—Chapter xi. 14-18.

The third **woe** is the final one and closes the third section. The mystery of God is finished (chap. x. 7). His government is now fully manifested. The first woe came from Satan upon apostate Jews; the second woe came from men influenced by Satan upon the Eastern Roman Empire. The third woe falls directly from God upon all the nations. It is a concise account of the final struggle, the solution of the great question which had been raised, whether Satan would have the upper hand, or whether the Lord and His saints would gain the victory, and the reign of Christ be established on earth. Thus

in a few words we are brought on to the establishment of this reign in its full duration since it terminates with the judgment of the dead after the millennium.

Chapter xi. 18 closes the **general** history of prophetic events in the book of Revelation.

H. R.



## The Effects of the Revival of 1859.

A FEW years ago as I sat with an aged couple one evening, I asked them of the effects of the Revival on the population of Belfast.

They told me that they had both been Christians before that year, and were therefore able to understand and rejoice in the work of God then accomplished in the salvation of souls, and a liberty of the Spirit which had been quite unknown up to that year.

The meetings were held in various buildings, and though godly ministers took a part in them, yet they never took the only part to the exclusion of others. In case a clergyman resisted the work of revival, or the liberty of the Spirit, in a building over which he had control, the converts simply left that building and resorted to one where there was more godly liberty. In this way for from two to three years, there was more fresh-

## THE EFFECTS OF THE REVIVAL OF 1859. 135

ness in the meetings than had been enjoyed in any of the systems up to that, and though not always according to knowledge, it was preferable to the state of ordered deadness in which things in Ulster had been for many years.

On the other hand, Satan took advantage of this Christian liberty to bring in through the unwatchfulness of the children of God, and lack of real grounding on the Word of God, an element of his own which soon marred that which had been begun by the Spirit. The deep sense of sin, which was almost invariable in those in whom God was working, was imitated by those in whom there was no such work, so that the world, not realising the forces at work, while owning that there was something that was good in the conversion of notorious sinners, saw also much that was bad, and by that freed themselves from the testimony which the work of God in their midst had upon them.

A doctor in this place at present, for instance, takes every opportunity of disparaging the work of the Revival on the ground that more insanity occurred at that time. We have no doubt, as Christians, that it was the work of Satan to bring in flesh by excitement, which in some cases ended, it may be, in insanity, to bring discredit on what God was doing.

On telling what the doctor said as I walked with an aged Christian, who had been brought to God at that time, he stood still on the path

and said, "Well, even from a worldly point of view the Revival was a blessing; in the year '58 I could count half a dozen public-houses within half a mile of where we now stand. These had all to shut in '59 as their customers were all gone."

At night, the streets of Belfast, instead of resounding with party tunes, as is often the case, were filled with heavenly songs as the converts returned from the various meetings, and a spirit of love, unselfishness, and unworldliness was manifest which could only have been from above.

The aged couple from whom I gleaned the above, are now gone to be with the Lord.

C. A. II.

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## The Bible Class.

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### 1. The Things which Thou hast seen— *continued.*

"And He had in His right hand seven stars: and out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength."

**F**URTHER glories of our adorable Lord are here unfolded. All power was His, and supreme authority. Stars, truly, were to give light amidst darkness, but they were subordinate to the one great source of light. Christ indeed was the true light (John i.). In its fulness and perfection, yea, in its supreme force and bright-



ness, it shone in Him—"the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. iv. 6). In His blessed face the sun shineth in its strength. It is so now for faith in blessing, it will be then for unbelief in judgment.

There are three things here presented in connection with Christ relatively to others, let us glance briefly at them, and study them more in detail in our own closets.

I. "**His right hand.**"—This is His place of supreme **power**; He holds the stars in His right hand. The last verse of our chapter shows us clearly what these stars represent; they stand for the "angels" of the seven assemblies. Doubtless the question as ever arises, Who are the angels? We may, of course, dismiss at once the thought of their being angelic heavenly beings. Nor are the angels symbols of anything else—the "stars" are the symbols, and these are symbols of the "angels." According to the derivation of the word, they are "messengers"; and according to the constant Scriptural usage, except where literal angels are meant, they are **representative** in character (see Luke vii. 24; James ii. 25). There can be no reasonable doubt that in these addresses to the seven churches the angels are persons. Who these persons are we shall discuss later on. But is it not plain that the "stars" are here seen in connection with the assembly, as set in a place of

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subordinate responsibility to be lights amidst the darkness? If the moon and stars of the material creation were set by God in the heavens to give light upon the earth, these symbolic stars are held responsible to shed spiritual light during the night of Christ's absence. How great the privilege! how solemn the obligation!

2. "**Out of His mouth.**"—The sharp two-edged sword is a weapon of judgments; it is the quick and powerful Word of God, which is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. With this sword the Faithful and the True One will presently, in righteousness, judge and make war; the rebellious nations will be smitten before Him, and the followers of the beast and false prophet will be slain (Rev. xix.). How solemn it is to consider that that same sword of judgment is used in His dealings with that which calls itself by His name. Theologians to-day and **so-called** Christian ministers are sitting in judgment upon that Word, and calmly discussing whether it be in very deed and truth the inspired Word of God. How soon all this will be changed when He comes forth from heaven to give unto every one according as his work has been!

3. "**His countenance.**"—Supreme authority, the sun shining forth in all its strength, the day of the Lord introduced in all its brightness with no possibility of evil hiding away in some dark

corner either of the world as such, or of Christendom—all this is suggested, but who may abide that day? And who shall stand when He appeareth?

“For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

“But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.

“And ye shall tread down the wicked; and they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of Hosts” (Mal. iv. 1-4).

And is not the Book of Revelation the introduction of that day? And does not this first chapter show us in vivid language the Judge Himself, both God and man in one person, clothed in His judicial garments, just about to come forth to execute the judgments which shall subdue all things unto Him? We have seen Him in His **personal** glory in verses 13 and 14, we see Him in His **official** glory in verse 16.

But how overwhelming the sight was to John, accustomed as he had been to lean his head upon His bosom.

“And when I saw Him I fell at His feet as dead; and He laid His right hand upon me, saying, Fear not; I am the first and the last, and the living one: and I became dead, and behold I am living to the ages of ages, and have the keys of death and of hades” (vers. 17, 18).

It was no mere man at whose feet John fell, but a divine Person, and that not in any ambiguous sense. Christ the Son was and is as truly God as the Father is God. His becoming man in no wise altered the truth of His Godhead. It was the only becoming attitude for the creature to take in presence of His Creator, "**I fell at His feet.**" Later on in the book, John fell at the feet of the angel and was at once rebuked; "**See thou do it not**" (Rev. xix. 10, xxii. 9), was the immediate check to any worship of the creature, and what was an angel but a creature, however excellent in power? But He before whom John falls in chapter i. was his Lord, hence no rebuke follows, but His right hand of power is outstretched, not in judgment, but to uphold the fear-struck saint, and words of cheer and comfort follow, "**Fear not.**" For after all the Christ of Revelation is the Christ of the gospels. If His sword be girded to His side to strike through kings in the day of His wrath (see Ps. xlv., cx.), yet is grace poured into His lips for those that are His own.

Then follow words which prove beyond all question the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, "**I am the first and the last.**" Who but God could be "**the first**"? And who but He could be "**the last**"? No beginning had He, neither can He have an end. Christ is "the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last" (ch. xxii. 13). A. H. B.

## The Irish Revival of 1859.

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THIS being the jubilee year of the great Ulster awakening, and this the very month (June) when that remarkable outpouring of divine blessing began, it seems a fitting occasion for sending forth the following account of its early commencement at Coleraine.

The writer went to be with Christ a short while after having set down on paper his own personal recollections of that remarkable work. It was one of his last requests to me that I should pass on to others this record of the Lord's dealings at that time.

I have often been asked by Christians who are anxious to see a similar movement in these days whether I think that such will take place again. My answer has always been that the circumstances of to-day are totally different to those of 1859. Speaking generally, the state of spiritual deadness is as great to-day as it was then; but the deadness of that time was the result of utter indifference, the deadness of to-day comes from positive unbelief and infidelity.

“Higher criticism” and such like things have poured from the pulpits until those in the pews have become saturated with unbelief. Men no longer believe the Bible to be the inspired Word of God. Yet God is sovereign, and if He sees

fit He can cause a mighty wave of spiritual awakening to roll over the land. Multitudes are praying for it, and God is a prayer-hearing and prayer-answering God. Let us pray on.

The need is awful, the deadness appalling. Will anything arouse slumbering Christendom but the coming of the Bridegroom and the closing of the door? But then it will be too late.

There can be no question that we are living in times of thrilling interest. No student of Scripture can doubt that the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. The feverish restlessness of the nations, their uneasiness and distrust of one another, their unprecedented preparations for war; then the awakening of the national idea amongst the Jews, the talk of the "independency of Palestine," and the growth of Zionism; all this, coupled with the rapid downgrade movement amongst the so-called Churches, and the development of the predicted apostasy of Christendom. These things taken all together are most significant.

Yes, indeed, the coming of Christ is near at hand. Christians have been aroused with regard to this "blessed hope" as never before. The midnight cry is sounding abroad. As we look up and, in unison with the Spirit and the Bride, cry, "Come, Lord Jesus," may we also remember those who are perishing in their sins. He who has taught the Christian to cry, "Come, Lord

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Jesus," has also said to the sinner, "**Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.**" ED.

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## The Awakening in Coleraine.

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THE year 1859 was a memorable one in the province of Ulster. Vital or spiritual religion had practically no existence, preaching was drily dogmatic, or bitterly controversial between the various Protestant churches. Drunkenness was common amongst the clergy of the Establishment and Presbyterian bodies. Conversion was a mere theological term, except among the Wesleyans. Swearing was so common that it was considered a merely venial offence, and public morals were at the lowest possible ebb.

Suddenly into this dead and barren land the fire of God fell, and everything was transformed. The dead became alive, the lost were saved, salvation became a reality, unity and love were restored to the evangelised churches.

The Revival began in a hamlet near Ballymena, in a prayer-meeting started by some person either from America or in correspondence with friends there who had realised conversion in the great movement of 1857. Quickly the effects were felt in neighbouring villages, and

finally in the town of Ballymena. The fame of it extended far and wide, and anxious inquirers came long distances to see and catch the wonderful fire from heaven.

About the 1st of June 1859, the first appearance of the revival was seen in Coleraine, but in a few weeks the vital centre of the movement was settled there. I should be glad to tell the story without introducing the personal element, but it has so wound itself round my own experiences and that of my entire family and social circle, that it seems impossible to speak of it as detached, therefore I crave pardon if the personal pronoun intrudes into the narrative.

I was a gay, merry youth of eighteen, delighting in field sports and boating, fond of dancing, theatricals, and worldly enjoyments, though at the very early age of five I had had definite spiritual influences working in mind and heart owing to the loving teaching of a saintly mother, a pious old nurse, and the constant association with godly Wesleyan ministers of the old stamp, some of them really John Wesley's own converts. These men were frequent visitors at my home (my mother being highly esteemed in the Society as a confidante of all who had sorrow either of soul or body), and as they always dealt personally with the members of the families they stayed with, I early learned to desire to know God; but as I grew up and saw more of the world, these early impressions were effaced, and



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in June 1859 I had become practically a heathen, scoffing at all goody-goodisms.

I was starting in company with a friend on a week's fishing excursion about fifteen miles from home, and was just getting on to the car when a band of maniacs, as I thought them, came into the street, singing, shouting, and throwing up their hands, and seizing on the people who were following them to talk about salvation. To my astonishment the party was led by a well-known and highly esteemed parish rector, a man of good family and fine character, the party were mostly his parishioners, country lads and lasses, mixed with old men and women. They were very joyful, but their eyes and voices were full of tears as they exhorted the people to get saved. I was moved to laugh and ridicule, but my friend was seriously affected, and pleaded with me not to give offence, so we hurried off and did not return from our excursion for several days, having had no communication with home in the meantime. We came back by train, and on arriving at the station, found it deserted but for a single porter who seemed not quite like his usual self. Leaving the station we entered a main street, and came upon a crowd at a corner round a man preaching, an unusual sight at that time, it was about four o'clock in the afternoon.

We stopped at the hotel and spoke to the proprietor, asking what it meant, and learning

that we had been away, he told us that during the last week the whole town had gone mad on religion, and that hundreds of men and women had been saying they had got saved. We had some joking over the matter and went on up town, observing at other places similar crowds singing, or playing, or preaching. Coming to the shop of a well-known grocer and publican, a man of unclean life and lips, we were invited in for a nip of whisky, and heard his version of what had occurred. He was mad as a demon, raved at the whole thing as a delusion and humbug, and cursed everybody who was prominent in the work.

Farther on we met a young friend, one of my set, but rather inclined to be good. He said, "Oh, I *wish* you had been at home this week; will you come to the great town meeting this evening? I will come for you." I scoffed at him for a fool, and chaffed him for being so soft, but his eyes filled with tears, and he said, "Ah well, we are praying for you"—which made me really angry.

At home I found everything upset, my father's workmen were all off work, the servants out, my mother only within, and she at once took me earnestly in hand and pleaded that I should give my heart to God, now that so many of my chums had done so. The more she pleaded the harder my heart seemed to grow; I got angry and mocked at the whole thing. Later

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in the evening other young friends dropped in urging me to come with them to the meeting, but I would not, and when the time came I went and took out my skiff and soon put some miles between myself and the town.

This great town meeting had begun without any arrangement after the first Sunday services, when the power of God was manifested. The Fair Hill by the river-side was crowded night after night with immense congregations drawn from miles of the country round. It is said that as many as twelve and fifteen thousand were gathered there by six o' clock and did not break up till after eleven. The singing of the great Scotch Psalms was something never to be forgotten. In my boat five miles off I could distinguish the words of the 23rd, and 40th, and Old Hundredth Psalms. The people were by the water-side, and the current or the high banks carried the sound an amazing distance. Later I returned, and finding no one at my home I strolled through the streets. Almost every house was open, prayer, praise, and exhortation going on to the dispersed groups of people who gathered round the stricken members of any household, and gladly joined in the services, or stayed in the hope of "catching the revival," for that was the current form of speech with regard to the strange affection which was attacking every class and age; they were taken with it at the meetings, on the streets, in their own and other

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homes, and fell into a state of trance, in which many lay for days without meat or drink.

I stayed out amidst such scenes till midnight, and at last went home tired and vexed with everybody and everything. I found no one to feel with me. Everybody was ready to talk religion with me and advise me to give in, but the more I had of this the harder grew my heart and I blasphemed. At two in the morning I found my home still lonely: my mother was in great demand to deal with stricken souls, my sister and a dear young friend who had long been on the Lord's side were out missioning.

Next morning I made desperate efforts to get some business done, but men would not work. My father had run away for fear, and did not return for many days. Two of the men had been converted early in the movement, and others were anxious. The remainder thought the end of the world had come and either were indifferent or fearful, and could not settle to do any work. Hour after hour young friends called to try and get me to be right with God, and one, the most intimate of all, was in such a state of misery that he could neither eat nor sleep, his face was a picture of the deepest agony; he had not entered into life, and the pains of hell were on him. He could hardly speak, but he intimated that we would go together to the evening meeting that I might see the wonderful things that were happening.

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At six o'clock we went to the Fair Hill and found such crowds as I had never seen before gathered for religious services. On half a dozen extemporised platforms were all the ministers of every denomination in the town, preaching, exhorting, praying, and praising as I had never heard them before. They were full of fire and earnestness, urging, pleading, crying many of them. They had all learned in that short week that God was a reality, and some of them had found Him for the first time as their personal Saviour. It was an overpowering sight, and after a little time shriek after shriek rose on the air, and then a scream of heart-broken agony, as some soul felt the arrow of conviction and fell into a death-like trance, while some of the lately revived ones hastened to form a prayer circle round the prostrate body. I hurried from group to group looking at what seemed to be the death struggles of people I knew well, many notorious livers, others well-to-do gay worldlings, and I thought the end of all things was at hand. I felt affected and rushed off to my favourite boat resort, determined to hide myself till this wave of madness had passed, but I could not get out of the range of the singing, and late again I returned to a repetition of scenes the same as described above. At midnight I got home, and again my mother pleaded for me with God. Her hope was that I would get converted and become a minister (Wesleyan), that had

been her great desire for me from the time I was born. I was subdued but not willing, and I knew she was praying without ceasing for me and for father.

Next day was like the one before, but I was being prepared. I was amazed and subdued by the strange sights and events of the week, and influenced by the continuous pressure of my mother and friends.

I went alone that evening to the meeting, which was like every other, only that night after night the numbers of the stricken people increased and the town day and night was like a plague-stricken place. Few houses were shut, some obtained special notoriety as having almost pentecostal powers of conversion. Business was suspended except for absolutely necessary things, churches were open all day, open-air services were everywhere. Every new convert became a centre. They began at once, as in Jerusalem, to testify of salvation, and many became eloquent exhorters without education or knowledge of the Scriptures. This was a wonderful and inexplicable thing, that men and women who had never spoken in public and were absolutely untaught, many unable to read, began fluently and with power to speak for God and press His claims on crowds. Women especially were distinguished in this way; two humble general servants became remarkable for their gifts as speakers (unfortunately the popularity they attained led to

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swollen heads and they fell away into sin after a time and lapsed into loose lives).

After wandering about and seeing the wounded in scores surrounded by praying circles, I walked about the streets and went into house after house, only to leave quickly as acquaintances and friends urged me to give my heart to God; and at last passing a house which was notoriously of ill fame inhabited by, I think, five sisters all on the streets, I saw it was full of people singing, and getting nearer I recognised a number of ladies and two young friends conducting a meeting. They beckoned me to come in as I was a good singer, and entering I saw three of the girls lying in the usual comatose condition, with tears running from their eyes, their breasts heaving as if they must burst, and great sobs coming from them.

I had not been long there when I felt as if the blackness of darkness had seized me. I saw myself as condemned before God, and it seemed to me that I was left alone unsaved and that now or never I must decide for eternity. My eyes filled with tears, my heart became so heavy I could hardly endure the pain. A lady friend saw my condition, and putting her arm round my neck pleaded with me to yield; a lad who was as a brother also spoke to me, but pride prevented me admitting that I had "taken the revival." I rushed from the house, and made for the river-side, my favourite resort, through the grounds of a private residence, dimly con-

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scious that I was about to faint or die. My friends were close in pursuit, and as I entered the shrubberies I fell and became absolutely unconscious, and when I became again alive to outward things I was in bed at home, my mother holding my hand, and a dear Presbyterian minister friend who had been helpful to me as a schoolboy and had taken a great interest in my successes there, was praying for me. I knew that I had been "taken," and felt very bitter in my mind at the humiliation. There had been no special conviction of sin beyond the few moments in the little house, and now there was nothing but deep disgust with myself at being humbled before many people. I was at length conscious of what was occurring about me, but remained for many hours more, incapable of talking or eating. Friends came and went, prayer was offered, and every one expressed pleasure at the thought that I was being saved ; it seemed certain that it must end in that.

In the afternoon about six o'clock my mother found that I was conscious, and put all the friends out, and came and sat with my hand in hers while she talked of the salvation that she believed had come to me, but I sadly told her that I did not feel as I thought a saved one ought. However, I was willing to pray with her, and being helped up I had a little refreshment, and then we knelt together by a chair near a large window. All seemed dark as



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pitch though it was still broad daylight. Here she prayed and talked to me until at last a perfect storm of passion came upon me. I cried bitterly for God to reveal Himself and take my heart for His own, then I prayed for myself, and soon the Holy Spirit revealed the Lord my Saviour, and I heard His voice saying, "**Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.**" Then the burden rolled away, I rejoiced in God my Saviour and began to praise Him. The whole room was filled with a blaze of light. What a change! I looked out on a new world. Truly all things had become new. I had passed from darkness to light. The news soon spread, and the house was filled with delighted friends, embracing, kissing me and one another, shouting and singing. I was taken to an evening meeting in the chapel, for, strange to say, the weakness had also gone, and I was quite restored to my usual strength and more. I was called on to give my experience, and some who had not yet realised pardon and peace found it. Day after day and night after night God used my feeble testimony to draw others to a knowledge of His love, and the circuit ministers decided that I should be put on the local preachers' list, and sent into the towns and villages round.

This involved travelling often eighteen miles and taking three services, always to crowded congregations, and nearly always we had convictions and conversions. The most remarkable

experience I remember was at a country church (Presbyterian) where several young friends had been invited to take a service. The meeting began at six o'clock, the church was packed to suffocation, and crowds could not get in, but the windows were opened and they crowded round to hear and possibly to catch the infection. We spoke in turns, prayed, or sung and read as the Spirit within led us; there was no prepared talk, our hearts were overflowing with first love, and we had no difficulty in speaking; there were no unsympathetic hearers. Half an hour after the meeting started a young lady screamed and fell in the usual fit, and in a few minutes the scene was overpowering. Scores of men, women, and even children were seized, others were crying and sobbing in sympathy and with conviction of sin. We broke up into small groups and pleaded with God in the church, on the grass, on the tombstones, for round the building was a large graveyard, and there many were brought into the light. The girl first affected was taken home unconscious but came out of her darkness next day. We continued the meeting in the churchyard till long past midnight, and then the people followed our car for miles, holding our hands and clinging to the vehicle as if we could of ourselves give them the blessing they longed for. In this country place the fire burned brightly for weeks and many were born again.

Similar scenes were witnessed in other neigh-

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bouring circuits ; no matter what denomination or church held the meeting, the results were much the same. The regular ministers were not always in unison, but they stood aside and allowed the converts to take their places ; many of them realised conversion and became powerful instruments of God's grace. An area of quite fifteen miles round Coleraine was covered by reviving influences. Visitors came from England and Scotland by thousands, nearly every eminent minister in both countries preached in our pulpits, and visited the houses where the most remarkable scenes had occurred, and listened to the testimonies of the awakened. I had the privilege of attending many of these servants of God in these visits ; some of them stayed at our house. I cannot enumerate them all, but Messrs Brownlow North, Baptist Noel, Robinson of Blackheath or Greenwich, the Hays and Bonars were amongst those I remember best, but the stream flowed continuously and the congregations were numbered by thousands, for the season was remarkably fine and outdoor meetings were most numerous.

Returning to my personal affairs, my conversion laid hold on my father, who was in his way very fond and proud of me, but was a very gay liver, and in fact a wicked man. I do not wish to remember or magnify his faults, they were public and great, but a week or two after my change he was at the evening service in the

Wesleyan Chapel ; he occupied one of the four large pews, and in another that night was a former friend of his, who had emigrated to Canada and become one of the foremost leading men. He was still Mr Wm. G——, but soon after he became Sir William. A very young but gifted preacher was taking the service. His text was, "**Flee from the wrath to come,**" and with great power and earnestness he urged all to come now that the fountain was opened ; none need perish. As he exhorted, conviction seized on both these men and they fell on their faces, confessing their sins, and the meeting continuing till late they both professed to enter into peace and testified of conscious forgiveness. This was one of the greatest wonders of the time, and many thought it was impossible.

The vicar, a fine old gentleman and good man as far as his light went, told me that he did not believe that God could pardon and change such a man as my father in a moment, and he would wait and see how it would end. He expressed the same views about another very remarkable case that occurred at the same time. A woman of ill-fame, rather well-to-do, living sumptuously on her prostitution, was changed, but people hardly believed it until one or two ladies took her by the hand, and recognising that she had found mercy, helped her, for she broke off at once from her ill life, sold her fine clothes, and began in a very humble way

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to glorify God. She was not much heard, but was noted ever after as a consistent and humble Christian, and eventually acted as district church visitor. Mr G—— returned to Canada, and I heard from his sister years after that the change was radical and permanent. As for my father the report of his conversion attracted widespread attention, his life was published in a tract, entitled "A Brand Plucked from the Burning," and he was invited far and near to give his testimony. He took missions in England and Scotland, but the excessive popularity and adulation soon affected his impulsive and unsteady nature, and he developed spiritual pride which soon injured his life, and within a year he had fallen away into his former sinfulness, but not till he had been used by God to waken many. This was probably one of the most remarkable "cases" in the revival, both of spiritual awakening and rapid declension.

During this halcyon year in our home, my beloved mother developed a fatal disease (cancer), and endured months of agonising pain. I nursed and comforted, and had delightful Christian fellowship with her. She recognised from the first that she was marked for death, and her testimony was blessed to many visitors. Her death was peaceful and victorious, but the home bond was gone, and we soon broke up as a family. My life afterwards was lived mostly in England, but for the few years I remained in Ireland I was

engaged in Christian work of all kinds, Sunday schools, local preaching, Y.M.C.A., &c., and I had the privilege of being the means of building a new Sunday schoolroom out of the ruins of one of John Wesley's old preaching houses.

With other young friends we walked many miles in the evenings to take cottage meetings, and much good was done in this way. The great excitement and demonstrations subsided within a year, but the results were great and permanent. Church membership increased by scores and hundreds, every town and village and hamlet felt the power, and the change is manifest to-day in the spiritual and evangelical nature of public worship and teaching all over the district to which I have referred in my narrative. Many young men were led to offer for the ministry in all the churches, and their lives were quite different to what the preceding generation had known. Conversions became recognised as necessary to church membership, and salvation was no longer a theological fiction, but a blessed personal experience.

Amongst the most notable local features of the great revival, I must mention the opening of a new Town Hall which was being completed that summer, and all the young people were looking forward with great expectation to a ball which was being arranged for as the opening ceremony. The ball never came off, as the whole town was in the throes of conviction of sin.

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The building stood in the centre of the town, surrounded by a large market square, and it was in this square that the first great public meeting was held on the Sunday evening after the invasion I mentioned at the beginning of my narrative. The power of God was marvellously present, and hundreds were stricken. The hall was opened and they were carried in there, the place presenting all the appearance of a hospital ward. I have heard from many (who were present and affected as I have before described) that the meetings were prolonged till a late hour, the ministers of all churches working together. The zeal of Christians was boundless. Every one who had any personal acquaintance with God testified and exhorted, and I can well believe that the scenes equalled the first great awakening in Jerusalem. A prayer meeting (united, of course) was instituted and perpetuated for many years in the hall every morning at nine o'clock, each minister taking one service a week in turn. A noble Bible was bought for use, and in it was recorded a memoir of the wonderful occurrences of the time. It still exists, and is a public property still used at the annual commemoration which is continued to this day. The keynote of these remarkable services was the unity of Christians, and one dear Presbyterian minister, whom I mentioned before, nearly always either read or gave out Psalm cxxxiii. for congregational singing, or "All people that on earth do

dwelling." The old theological bitternesses were killed and buried, never to be revived again. Harmony and co-operation have prevailed in the North country ever since.

Another notable event was the visit of Mr Grattan Guinness, Sen., then itinerating as an apostle of evangelical religion. His eloquence and great spiritual gifts attracted enormous crowds, and led to many conversions, though the distinguishing feature of the entire movement was the secondary place taken by the regular ministers, in the early part of the time, until they had become humbled and changed by the occurrences taking place without their leadership.

Mr Guinness became a popular idol—the great cattle market square, capable of holding many thousands, was even too small for his meetings. The largest churches were crowded to suffocation at the morning six o'clock meetings, as well as the prolonged evening services. Numbers were convicted of sin under his powerful appeal, and his memory is blessed by many.

Another happy result was the institution of a monthly open-air mountain meeting at a central situation amongst a group of towns—Portrush, Bushmills, Ballymoney, Dervock, and the hamlets adjacent. Here on the glorious summer afternoons people flocked by thousands to sing and pray and hear their favourite leaders,



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and conversions were common at these mountain open-air.

Probably the most wonderful event of all took place during my term of prostration, but as I often heard the occurrences from the lips of the chief actor, a dear old godly Wesleyan leader, with whom I had the privilege of working for years as superintendent in our Sunday school, I seem as if I had taken part in the event. My friend, whose name deserves to be held in blessed memory, John Canning, was master of a large public school, maintained by the Honourable the Irish Society of London, for the benefit of the working classes of the town, an entirely undenominational institution; by the personal influence of the teacher, with his wife, the mistress of the girls' side, the school had attained a high moral tone, and the Bible was the great factor in its programme. A few days after the revival began he noticed an unusual desire on the part of the children to ask permission to go out into the school yards, and the school rooms at last were so thin that he went out to see what had become of his little ones, and found that they were in the covered sheds and open grounds in groups, singing and praying, sobbing and praising, exhibiting all the symptoms and affections of the grown-ups at the other services.

He was at first surprised, and hesitated what he should do, but finally invited the children

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into the schools, and helped them with their services. The news spread into the town, and the place was soon crowded, some to speak for God, others to seek Him where He was so manifestly to be found, and for several days the schools became the centre of the interest. Hundreds dated their conversion from those days, and children's conversion, which at that time had few advocates, was never after a questionable thing.

Amongst the crowd was a young friend (my brother, if closeness of living and practical freedom of each other's homes can make one so related) whom I have mentioned before as suffering badly in the early days of the revival; he was so dreadfully convicted that it was feared he would lose his reason, and his appearance was such as to make us all fear for his life. Young as he was, he had committed a foul sin, unknown to any one but himself and the other party to it, and his despair and terror were simply awful to witness. Prayer was made unceasingly for him, the best personal dealers pleaded in vain, he could not be made to humble or confess to God. His misery was extreme and continued for weeks. Finally he unbosomed to his own father, who was a professing Christian, but in reality had no vital religion, and could not consequently help the lad to spiritual peace. He never entered into life, and continued for many years a hater of

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all religion, and eventually an avowed infidel. When I came to live in England our ways parted, and as our modes of life were so different, we gradually ceased to hold any intercourse.

Another member of the same family, younger, about sixteen, seemed well saved, and engaged for a long time in the village work and other services with much acceptance and success, but having, after great progress in the local High School, taken honours at College and again at the University, he met with so much scepticism and unbelief among his fellow-students, that he was drawn aside and finally fell away. He obtained high honours in the Civil Service, and became an important factor in the affairs of Japan when it was opened. He afterwards married the daughter of one of the principal English officials there, and disavowed everything in the way of revelation or experimental religion. Nothing else in my life has been so sad as the loss of this acquaintance and fellowship.

I ought not to close my narrative without reference to an important factor in the events of the time. That was the residence of the sainted C. H. Macintosh in Coleraine at that date. He had found congenial friends in the neighbourhood, and gathered round him a little company of choice spirits, who were instant in season and out of season pleading in open-air services for God before the revival broke out. No other body then held such meet-

ings, and as they preached the need for repentance and change of heart as necessary for pardon and salvation, they were looked upon as extreme fanatics, but their testimony and lives were powerful, and many were led to seek God through their services. Unfortunately differences crept into their assembly, which divided into groups not always agreeing to differ. Afterwards dear Mr Macintosh left the town, but his gracious life and powerful preaching of the truth as it is in Jesus was blessed to many a soul now with the Lord. His acquaintance was one of the most influential factors in my early religious life, but a visit paid us by Dr and Mrs Palmer from America was also a powerful influence for higher Christian life.

Years after, through the fellowship of a poor and not gifted Salvation Army officer, I was led further into the light, and found heaven below in the love of Christ coming in all its fulness into my soul. It is now forty-seven years since God revealed Himself to me as the Forgiver of my sins, the Father of my spirit, and the source of all my hopes. My way has been often dark and trying, but hitherto by His grace and mercy I have been led and kept.

Blessed be His name and mercy! My journey is now near its end, I know that the axe is at the root, and soon my spirit in His hands shall stand where my Forerunner stands.

I shall never cease to praise Him who has

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through life been my Saviour and Comforter in every time of need, and I shall wait in longing and expectation to see His face on the other shore, which is so near just now.

May this narrative be blest to some who will read of the great things done by God during that wonderful epoch known as the Irish Revival of 1859. J. H—.

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A LETTER of the late Dr Carson of Coleraine has come into my hands recently, bearing upon the physical manifestations that accompanied the '59 Revival. It is too long to print in full, but a few extracts are here given. To try and imitate these things would be a fatal folly and soon prove itself to be of Satan, but few can question that in 1859 they were as much sent of God as was the striking to the ground of Saul of Tarsus.—ED.

COLERAINE, 20th September 1859.

“DEAR SIR,—I am now thoroughly convinced that the idea I threw out in my letter of the 1st July 1859, regarding the nature of the present revival, is the correct one. Without doubt there is a physical agent, as well as a spiritual one, abroad. The one is, as it were, the handmaid to the other. They are both specially from God, and are most admirably calculated to work out His great design. . . .

“I see a good deal of time and labour have been spent in *asserting*, over and over again, that the physical manifestations are neither more nor less than hysteria. Were it not that the public might be misled by the plausible and ostentatious statements which have been put forward on the subject, I would not think of occupying time with its consideration.

“There is no reason why the country should be free

from hysterical cases now, more than at any other time. On the contrary, we should rather expect the number to be increased, in consequence of the excitement which is abroad. Hence, as might be anticipated, some cases of hysteria are to be met with in every district where the revival has appeared. But the man who will confine his observations to these cases, or confound them with the revival manifestations, has but a poor capacity for the observation of facts ; he must be ignorant, or devoid of discriminating powers. The fact is, the revival and hysteria have scarcely any symptoms in common. . . .

“ I now freely and fearlessly state that, in my opinion, there is a physical as well as a spiritual agent concerned in the revival. There does not appear to me to be any other rational way of accounting for the facts. Whatever I may have been disposed to think at first, I am now fully satisfied the symptoms of a revival case do not correspond to the effects which are manifested as the result of mere mental impressions. The unearthly tone, the intense melancholy, and subdued entreaties for the soul, and the partial prostration of muscular power in the individual, are very different indeed from the wild and indefinite screams and convulsive paroxysms which arise from sudden mental anguish in connection with great temporal distress ; and we cannot consistently refer them to a sudden view of spiritual danger, because the same sudden view of spiritual matters has been revealed to thousands of individuals, of different constitutions, at different periods of the history of the world, without producing the like results. . . .

“ On the other hand, in the revival the person is generally cognisant of what is going on around him ; hears what is said, and sees what is to be seen before his eyes. But above all, it is quite impossible to turn his attention completely off the one point regarding the condition of his soul, and the circumstances relating thereto. This is a fixed point from which none of the parties affected can

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be finally moved, although they may be distracted for a time. They all pass, in a longer or shorter period, through a similar course. . . . Be the physical agent what it may, it is evidently sent by God for a special purpose. What is this special purpose? Why, simply to excite such a degree of attention to spiritual matters as, humanly speaking, would not be done by any other means. No person but the man who has witnessed them could have any idea of the awful effects produced on the public mind by a number of revival cases. A scene like the one which took place on the night in which the new hall in Coleraine was first filled with these cases, has perhaps never been equalled in the world. It was so like the day of judgment, when sinners would be calling on the mountains and the rocks to hide them from the storm of God's wrath, that it struck terror to the heart of the most hardened and obdurate sinner. The whole town was in a state of alarm, business was forgotten, and the revival was the only subject of conversation. A French invasion could not have produced so great a panic. I have been present at executions ; I have seen much of the accumulated misery of bodily disease and mental distress ; but I never in my life saw anything to be compared, for one moment, to the harassing scenes in the Coleraine Town Hall. It would be quite impossible to imagine any agency more powerful for drawing the attention of men to the state of their souls. I heard many people mocking and scoffing, before that night, about the revival ; but when I saw the same parties examining the cases in the Town Hall, their mocking was at an end, and they looked like criminals whose hour was at hand. No other sort of a revival could have had the same effects. If one-half of the inhabitants of Coleraine had been converted in a minute, in the ordinary way, the other half would not have believed it—they would have laughed at it as at a vision. It would have had no effect upon them. In truth, the people of England do not yet believe that the people of Ireland are being converted, because they have

not witnessed the scenes which have occurred. But if they had one hour of the revival, they would soon change their tune: their scepticism would speedily vanish. When I heard of the revival being at Ballymena, I did not believe it. I even went the length of saying it would soon be stopped in its progress by the coldness, formality, and narrow-minded bigotry and sectarianism of Coleraine. My scepticism on the subject, which was very great, all vanished in a night. Wherever the physical manifestations broke out, in town or country, they put terror into the hearts of all who saw them, and at once convinced the onlooker that there was a great reality in them, let them be explained as they might. Deception was considered to be out of the question. No person who witnessed it could doubt the reality. One case in each end of a parish would set the whole parish in a state of excitement. The people all ran to see them. They could not avoid it. Consequently, I conclude that the physical manifestations were a most important part of the work, and that they entered specially into God's design, and were, in no sense of the word, mere accidents of the revival. They were essentials, or God would not have sent them. The revival has taken more root in Coleraine than anywhere else, and I believe this has been greatly owing to the fact that the clergy, of different denominations, have allowed the physical manifestations to progress without interruption. They did not use any means to obviate their production. They seemed determined to make the best use they could out of what God had sent; and they have had their reward. The manifestations awakened the attention of the people in the highest degree, and the Spirit of God, which was then working mightily, effected the conversion of multitudes. It might safely be said that more people have been converted in this district during the last four months than during the previous fifty years. Indeed, I am certain this statement is far within the mark.—Believe me, dear sir, &c.,

JAMES C. L. CARSON, M.D."



## Notes and Comments.

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The great Zionistic Conference *Progress of Zionism* held in Sheffield last March proves how the Jewish question, and the return to Palestine, still occupies the attention of both Christians and Jews. "Our people are now the dust under the feet of every nation. Whoever chooses, tramples upon us with absolute impunity," exclaimed Dr Gaster in his stirring appeal on behalf of Zionism. May the day soon come when Israel shall from the heart respond to Jehovah's invitation:—

"Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to me" ("to me," not "to **Zion**") "with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning :

"And rend your hearts, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth Him of the evil" (Joel ii. 12, 13).

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The following letter, taken from *Ritualism St Bartholomew's Parish Magazine in Brighton*. of November last, is a fair sample of what is going on very widely in a constantly increasing number of parishes in this so-called Protestant country:—

"MY DEAR PEOPLE,—The first day of this month bids us call to our minds that countless host of men, women, and children who, in their white-robed throng,

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reign with Christ in heaven, having by their holiness and correspondence with the grace of God attained to their eternal bliss. They still think of us, and remember us in all their unselfish prayers before the throne of God. We should, therefore, set before us these three things—first, to observe with devotion the Feast of All Saints, and to make a point of hearing Mass on that day ; second, to ask their prayers ; and third, to follow their example.

“All Souls’ Day tells us of our duty to those who in the Church expectant await their admission into heaven, learning more of God, and finishing their temporal punishment and the penalty due to sin. It is a work of charity as well as a duty to pray for the dead, so I hope that not only on All Souls’ Day, but upon the other days on which Mass will be said for them, you will make a real effort to be present. I commend you to the grace of God and to the prayers of the ever-blessed Mother of God and all saints.”

There are here several doctrines taught alike by Romanists and ritualists :—

**1. That salvation and heaven are obtained by the sinner's own personal holiness.**

We wonder whether the writer of the above letter has derived his belief from a careful study of Ephesians ii. 8, 9 :—

“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.”

**2. The intercession of Mary.**

We wonder whether the writer of the above letter bases his advice to his parishioners to “seek the prayers of the ever-blessed Mother of God” upon the fact that the only occasion in

the Bible on which "the mother of Jesus" made a request, that request was not granted (John ii.).

### 3. Prayers for the dead and purgatory.

Does the writer of this letter think that these things, being nowhere found in Scripture, it is a pity not to find them somewhere, and to have them taught somehow?

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It seems strange how any one *Will Babylon be Rebuilt?* reading Isaiah xiii. 19-22 can think that the literal city of Babylon will be rebuilt. "It shall never be inhabited" seems clear enough. Some assert that this is not the case, and that the Arabians do pitch their tents there, that there is even a considerable town erected on the spot where "Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency," once stood. In this connection it is interesting to read the account recently given by one travelling in the track of the Bagdad railway:—

"The Germans are taking Babylon out of the dust, and proving Isaiah more trustworthy than Herodotus, the father of history. . . .

"Our guide called us back through the centuries to the palace where Daniel **interpreted the dream of Nebuchadnezzar**, and Darius commanded him to be cast into the den of lions; and where Belshazzar—who never reigned—made a feast to a thousand of his lords and drank wine, and saw the fatal writing on the wall. . . . We saw the bones of Parthian and Greek, of Mongol and Turk and Persian—the men who came out of the north, and broke

the images of her gods, and laid the virgin daughter of Babylon low in the dust.

“And at dusk, as we walked in the shadow of this desolation, there came out of the ruins a fox. For a second he stood and looked at us, and then stole silently away and was lost, and we knew that the words of the prophet were true : ‘The wild beasts of the desert shall lie there ; and thine houses shall be full of doleful creatures, and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there.’

“The Arabian, as Isaiah foretold, does not pitch his tent in Babylon, but he has built for himself a village of Babylonian bricks on the bank of the Euphrates.”

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We have just received the following *Blessing in Egypt* interesting news :—“Mac—— heard from Mr N. (who has received a letter from Mr B.) that a wonderful work is going on in Egypt. The Copts have communicated with the brethren to the effect that they wish them to come and explain the Scriptures to them. Some did so and occupied their pulpits, but after a fortnight the priests opposed the procedure, but the Copts overruled the objection. Many are being saved and added to the Church. The Lord is owned as the Head of the Body, and several fresh tables have been spread.\* The work is not of a local character by any means, for merchants from the Soudan have been blessed, and on their return

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\* We would rather say, “the one table has been spread in several fresh places.”—ED.

have sent the message to Upper Egypt, 'Come over and help us.' The message has been responded to. The Word has been preached with much blessing, and the Lord's table is now spread at Omdurman and Khartoum.

"I know this will rejoice your heart, in case you have not already heard of the blessing.

W. H. F."

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## The Mercy of Christ to His Servants.

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**E**VERY Christian in a healthy state of soul is surely conscious of his need of divine mercy. This is not said in reference to the great truth of forgiveness of sins, but rather to that dependence upon God's forbearance which cannot but be felt in view of Christian responsibility.

We need the application of the truth of God to our hearts and consciences from every point of view which Scripture gives, and thus believers, however firmly established they may be by the truth of present salvation, as it is presented in the Epistles to the Romans and the Ephesians, are seen in Jude 21 to be "looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." For it is not safe for any to think and speak and act as though they had "already attained," or "were already perfect" (Phil. iii. 12),

But if Christians in general are thus conscious of the continual need of the mercy of God, how much more must this be so in the case of the servants of God who are called to labour in the Word and in teaching. What consolation can a servant of Christ know if he has not thoroughly learned that his Master is gracious! He of all others needs the fullest experience of abounding grace; and this, not only that he may preach a full salvation to others, but also for the peace, security, and stability of his own soul. He needs to see the work of Christ as taught by the type of a bullock, rather than the feebler aspect of it as presented by the female goat or the turtle-dove. He needs to see that the Great High Priest made atonement, not only for the sins of ordinary life, but also for "the iniquity of the holy things," to see, as Paul saw, that "the grace of our Lord was (and is) exceeding abundant."

It was Paul who wrote the Epistles to Timothy and Titus. These men were individual servants of the Lord, and the epistles to them are to be read in the light of this fact, and of their having been written also to servants of God now. The word "mercy," as it occurs in the salutations of these epistles, is among the most precious of Scripture to the servant of God. This word does not occur in the salutations of the Pauline Epistles, written to saints in general. As a rule, in those letters the salutation is "Grace be unto

you, and peace.” But in writing to individual servants of God, to men conscious, or men who ought to be conscious, of the grave responsibility of the service of God, the apostle greets them by the words—

“Grace, **mercy**, and peace from God our Father, and Jesus Christ **our Lord**.”

And to Titus—

“Grace, **mercy**, and peace from God the Father, and Christ Jesus **our Saviour**.”

It must be hard to know Christ as Lord if one does not already know Him as Saviour. To such an one He would be “a hard Master” indeed. Of course the Holy Spirit knows in a divinely perfect way our ever-abiding need of the mercy of God, but the apostle had a deep sense of that need too. He had felt it, faithful as he was, was feeling it when he wrote, and knew how Timothy, Titus, yea, all who seek to serve the Lord are unequal, apart from God’s mercy, to the obligations of Christian service.

The Christian ministry is not a service to be rashly entered upon. It is not a calling that a Christian having leisure may adopt as a recreation. All Christians are not called to preach or teach, though all are called to serve the Lord in some way or other. Paul speaks of himself as being “put into the ministry.” And those put into the ministry by the Holy Ghost need mercy, most of all. For instance, as called to instruct others in the truth of God, they are in danger

as others are not of being "exalted above measure." They must sound the depths of the truths they minister to others. The Apostle Paul, through the abundance of the revelations he received, required "a thorn in the flesh" to keep him from being exalted overmuch. And where the knowledge of the truth of God is abundantly given, it carries with it new responsibilities, and therefore new dangers. But in the apostle's case God's grace was sufficient, though not without a particular and trying discipline of soul in connection with his experience of divine revelation. No wonder then in writing to Timothy, Titus, and, by means of their epistles, to others also, he is found inserting this additional word, mercy. There is no need whatever to be in a hurry to teach, or to attempt to put others right when we may think they are wrong. While we are to be swift to hear, it is better to be "slow to speak, and slow to wrath." It is incumbent on us to be teachers, and to help others in this way when God calls us to this work. Grace is then given and mercy according to our day. But we must be led of God, for His Word is precise—

"Be not many teachers, my brethren, knowing that we shall receive heavier (or greater) judgment."

The responsibility of a professing Christian is one thing, but, plainly and solemnly, the responsibility of a Christian teacher is another. And no one will escape the judgment here



spoken of, who causes another to stumble at the truth of God. Some, by their misuse of the truth, have brought delivered souls again into bondage, while others in their unguarded language about free grace may have emboldened men into Antinomian ways of living. None of us could stand, apart from the thought of the mercy of the Lord, as we ponder on these things. But will not any servant of the Lord suffer in his conscience, and in his spirit too, at the discovery of having misdirected any one in a matter of Christian doctrine?

Plainly, Christian ministry is no trifle. It is having to do with **souls** for eternity; with the righteous who are saved with difficulty (1 Pet. iv. 18). It is caring for sheep who are, as it were, in the wilderness, exposed to ravenous beasts of prey. It is watching for souls, "as they that must give account." There is no responsibility like it. But it is in the deep consciousness that we are part of the flock ourselves, and that the Good, the Great, and the Chief Shepherd is our Shepherd too, that we can best endure to serve as we should.

"He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are dust."

All His servants have learned His mercy, or will do before they finish, for we are "vessels of mercy," as well as chosen vessels to carry the name of the Lord to others. Now, which of the Lord's servants has not failed? "Moses was

faithful as a servant in all his house," nevertheless Moses failed very seriously where he seemed to be strong. Yet have we seen Moses on the Mount of Transfiguration in glory with Christ.

Elijah was a true prophet of the Lord. In answer to his prayer he could close and open the windows of heaven, so that there was rain and no rain, according to his word. Yet the journey became too great for him. He was afraid of a woman, and ran away from his work when it very much needed him. We find him depressed and pessimistic, saying, "I, even I, only am left." He is found to be taking a much more gloomy view of God's people than the truth allowed, as some of us are in danger of doing now. Of course he was justified in condemning the sin of God's people. Wickedness everywhere always calls for our fullest exposure and rejection. Let us not spare it. Let us not compromise with known evil.

But we must not close our eyes to the good. We must not represent things worse than they are. This is, only to say the least, to discourage ourselves and others. Surely it takes all a critic's grace to make a critic in these matters. Elijah is found "pleading **against** Israel"!

"But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal" (Rom. xi. 2-4).

Yet where are more tenderness and mercy shown than in God's restoration of Elijah? When the

prophet was all right, and obedient to the Lord, he was fed by ravens, and when he was wrong, and away from the post of duty, he was fed by the angel of the Lord. We read:—

“And as he lay and slept under the juniper tree, **behold, then** an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat.”

Which he did, and slept again. But this was not all.

“The angel of the Lord came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee” (1 Kings xix. 5-7).

At Horeb the Lord spoke to him, but it was with “a still small voice.” (Margin R.V., “A sound of gentle stillness.”—1 Kings xix. 12.) This “still small voice” made him hide his face in his mantle, but I do not think it made him afraid. The question was, “What dost thou here, Elijah?” But surely the voice that asked the question was infinitely gentle. Does it not remind us of the Lord Jesus? This is the voice that we often used to hear, the voice which Simon Peter heard, and he was restored by it, when he had thrice denied his Lord. The same Lord perfected that which concerned Elijah, and carried him by a chariot into heaven.

Take as another illustration of the Lord's mercy to His servants, the case of John Mark. He is well known to have been the cause of Paul and Barnabas being parted the one from the other, through his turning back when he

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ought to have followed on with these two labourers. Yet the patient Master of all did not dismiss him for ever from His service. But in 2 Timothy iv. 11—one of the epistles, as we have seen, which speaks to the servant of mercy—we read:—

“Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me **for the ministry.**”

And further, as others have pointed out, this same Mark became in due time the writer of the second Gospel, which presents the Lord Jesus Himself as the unfailing, ever-perfect Servant of Jehovah. But what shall we say more. Was Paul perfect? Was he fully justified, or was he perfectly like Christ when he called the high priest a “whited wall,” in Acts xxiii. 3? Had Paul fully followed the guidance of the Holy Spirit would he have been in Jerusalem at all, or anywhere near there on that occasion (see Acts xxi. 4)? No doubt the providence of God saved him in Jerusalem at that time from more serious complications than his outspoken remarks to the high priest. Be it so, however, that Paul was in Jerusalem contrary to the mind of the Holy Spirit. Was he then left to himself? By no means. It is written—

“The night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul, for as thou hast testified of Me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome” (Acts xxiii. 11).

Our Master's tenderness and mercy are more

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than equal to all the burdens of responsibility that any one of us is called to bear. He asks us to trust Him, and to "be of good courage." Shall not this fresh consideration of His love lead us to more whole-hearted service for Him? If we are conscious of failure in service, shall we not come to Him afresh to hear the voice of "gentle stillness," even more perfectly than Elijah heard it, until like him we are made to hide our faces in our mantles, so to speak? Yea,

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. iv. 16).

T. H.

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## Short Outline of the Book of Revelation.

### II. SECOND DIVISION.

#### Religious Aspect of the Last Days— Chapters xi. 19—xxii.

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**T**HESSE chapters are divided into groups, and do not, like chapters i.-xi. 18, follow in order. These groups consist of pictures placed side by side, but not without connection, as we shall see, and **historically** belonging to **the period of the second half week**, that is to say, to the parenthesis intercalated between the two last trumpets of woe.

1. *First Group.***Chief Actors in the Final Scene—**

Chapters xi. 19—xiv. 5.

Here we have the principal actors in the final scene, which is enacted in the land of Judea, and corresponds with the parenthesis of the last half week contained in chapter x.-xi. 13.

*a.* **The Woman, Her Seed, and the Dragon—**

Chapters xi. 19—xii. 17.

Relations with Israel, looked at according to the eternal counsels of God, are here resumed (chap. xi. 19). Then (chap. xii. 1-17) appears the woman, the Jewish people seen, according to the mind of God, in heaven, giving birth to the Messiah, who is caught up to God despite the devil's effort to devour Him, an effort which commenced at His birth, continued at the cross, and since then during the whole existence of the Church on earth. The Church is included in the translation, for Satan is immediately seen cast out into the earth as soon as "the Man child" (specific term indicative of Christ, the first-fruits, and those who are Christ's at His coming) is translated to heaven.

But the Jewish woman is left on the earth, and the dragon, after being cast down to the earth in the war with Michael and his angels, persecutes her under the political guise of the resuscitated Roman Empire. The woman represented

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by the faithful Jewish remnant is sheltered amongst the nations from Satan's persecution during the last half week. Part of this remnant remains in Jerusalem, as we saw in the parenthesis, to bear testimony and suffer martyrdom, and it is on these that Satan, furious at the non-success of his attempt against the woman, now expends his rage (chap. xii. 17; *cf.* chap. xi. 4-13).

*b.* **The Two Beasts**—Chapter xiii.

After the woman, her seed, and the dragon, we come to the two great Satanic factors in the scene of the last half week. They form with Satan a sort of trinity of evil.

First, the beast rising up out of the sea, the Roman Empire, the fourth universal Gentile monarchy, resuscitated after being wounded to death in its imperial head. This empire reappears with a head and in a personage who commands a confederation of ten kings, and who possesses mighty Satanic power, and a mouth full of blasphemies against God, the Church, and the saints. His blasphemous religious aspect is specially in view here. Next we have the second beast coming up out of the earth, antichrist, Jewish king, and false prophet, possessed of infernal miraculous power, forcing his people to worship the image of the first beast (the "abomination" of Daniel established in the temple at Jerusalem), and, like a parody

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of the 144,000 in the following chapter, marking all mankind with his mark.

*c.* **The Lamb and the 144,000—**

Chapter xiv. 1-5.

There remain still some actors to be noted in the final scene.

In contrast with chapter xiii. we have first the Lamb upon Mount Zion. It is the first **public** manifestation of Christ, and closes the mysterious angelic manifestations which preceded. With Him are seen 144,000 from Judah, not the 144,000 of chapter vii. sealed in Israel. In chapter xiii. there were those who had the mark of the beast; these have the name of the Lamb and His Father's name written in their foreheads. They have passed through the terrible times of tribulation and the dragon has not been able to hurt them; they are the seed of the woman, without fault, like the remnant of the two first books of Psalms. They sing **on earth** a new song (the elders sing it **in heaven**); they learn this song from an assembled company in heaven, which is not the four beasts or the elders. These two companies are the heavenly and earthly part of the faithful Jewish remnant, since the rapture of the Church, the one (chap. xi. 11, 12) put to death for the testimony and raised, the other having traversed the tribulation, destined to accompany the King on earth.



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2. *Second Group.*

**The Ways of God during the Final Crisis—**  
Chapter xiv. 6-20.

The second part of this chapter shows us **the divers ways of God while the final crisis lasts**—ways which result in the public manifestation of the Lamb, as presented in the first verses of our chapter.

1. The everlasting gospel proclaimed in Genesis iii. 15, which is eternal in its results. In point of fact, it is the gospel of the kingdom preached amongst all nations, and which will convert the immense multitude of chap. vii. 6, 7.\*

2. The fall of Babylon the Great, introduced here in its historical order and taken up later on in detail (ver. 8).

3. The final judgment of those who worship the beast and receive his mark (vers. 9-12).

4. The blessed and eternal rest of those who die in the Lord; henceforth there will be no more martyrs (ver. 13).

5. Finally and consequent upon all this (vers. 14-16), the harvest of the Son of man when the tares are separated from the wheat and (vers. 17-20) the vintage and judgment by blood on unbelieving Israel throughout the whole extent of Palestine (1,600 furlongs).

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\* *N.B.*—In verse 6 where “another angel” is mentioned, the word “another” the meaning of which is doubtful, should, we think, be omitted.

## The Value of Obedience.

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**B**ESIDES a number of interesting illustrations of how the Old Testament was used by the writers of the New, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, such as in Acts vii. and Hebrews xi., there are also two remarkable passages which point out the **general principle** of the use of the Old Testament writings. The first is Romans xv. 3-6 :—

“For the Christ also did not please Himself; but according as it is written, the reproaches of them that reproach thee have fallen upon me. For as many things as have been written before, have been written for our instruction, that through endurance and through encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. Now the God of endurance and encouragement give to you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus; that ye may with one accord, with one mouth, glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus” (New Tr.).

Here we find first a practical illustration of the Scriptures in the path of Christ, then these Scriptures which formed the path of Christ in obedience are said to be written for our teaching, that we might have, not knowledge, but **hope**, through endurance, and through encouragement afforded by the Scriptures. But at once it appears that this is the result of a practical acquaintance with the ways of God, for God is found to be the God of the very endurance and

the very encouragement which produce this hope. It is a reflection of Psalm lxxviii. 1-7.

The second passage is in 1 Corinthians x, 6, 11-13:—

“But these things happened as types of us. . . . Now all these things happened to them as types, and have been written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come. So let him that thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has taken us but such as is according to man's nature; and God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above what ye are able (to bear), but will with the temptation make the issue also, so that ye should be able to bear it” (New Tr.).

These things, we are told, happened as patterns—patterns of us, in the first place, for we have the same hearts and natures as these Israelites; and then the patterns of God's dealings, the principles of His government, with them and us. They are written for our admonition that we, standing at the end but in the line of all God's past ways, might know first, that no position of privilege of itself will keep us from falling if the Scriptures lose their power over us, and second, that God is still faithful, and His way through the temptation is still the way of Deuteronomy viii. 2, 3.

So we find from Scripture itself that the primary object of the Old Testament writings is to instruct us in the ways of God, and these ways are found in the history of individuals and of the nation of Israel. God is certainly turning

the attention of His children at the present time to that purpose of the Scriptures which in His wisdom He sees to be necessary for them. Hence it is with the object of learning, I trust from God, something of the reality and the continuity of the government of God, that we now begin to trace out the lives of some of the people in the Old Testament, aiming more at an understanding of the broad principles of God's ways than an examination of details.

One of the sayings of our wise world is, "Happy is the nation that has no history." But through the sad history of man we have learnt a better wisdom and a deeper truth than that—"Blessed is the nation whose God is Jehovah." If man had never disobeyed God he would have lived happily on in the garden of Eden, and the history which we have in the Bible would never have been written, with all its sorrow and sin. But God would not be known as we know Him to-day through His infinite mercy, revealed in Christ, after He had worked out, through centuries of man's sin and rebellion, His own perfect ways of wisdom and grace. In the millennium men and angels will see the government of God in all its order and majesty, the Son of man, in all the varied glories which are His by inheritance and conquest, administering the kingdom on earth, while the righteous shine as the sun in their Father's kingdom. But it will no longer be possible to learn God as faith may learn Him

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now, by tracing out His patient workings through a scene of ruin and man's will, all leading up to Christ, who came to do the Father's will perfectly, and reveal the Father, giving a full light where only the faint gleam of a candle had shone before. So the history of these ways really begins outside the garden of Eden. But the bearing of two things must be noted first.

In the history of creation given in the first of Genesis we find as a broad principle that out of chaos, God alone, by His simple sovereign word, produces an ordered scene in an ordered way. Not in one bound does order spring out of chaos, but in a way that reflects the patience of God in His workings. Evening by evening, and morning by morning, God's work moves on in His own time to His appointed end. I would suggest as a study full of profit, that the Scriptures be searched to see how this first great fact in the Word of God has acted on the hearts of the people of God in later times. In the Psalms it is particularly instructive to note the effect upon the soul.

The value of the **fact of creation for faith** is summed up in Hebrews xi. 3. There we learn that faith enables us to understand that there was something more to be learnt than the fact of the creating and ordering of a material world. We learn that "the ages," the whole course of the world's history starting from Genesis i., were "framed," arranged in a plan

and sequence which God had planned Himself, by His spoken word, as in Psalm xxxiii. 9. "He spoke and it was done." But this was done with a purpose, they were so framed to the end that what is seen should not be the result of the things that appear. That is, God had so arranged the course of the world's history that something that did not appear, and could not be comprehended by reason alone, was necessary to account for what was actually seen in the history. What was to account for Abel's sacrifice, for Enoch's disappearance, for Noah's ark, for Abraham's apparently motiveless abandonment of home and country? There was something behind that could only be learnt by faith. This is the comment, the setting that Scripture gives when we consider the beginning of the history. Creation is the scene where God's ways are to be displayed.\*

Then, in the second place, after God has put

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\* We quite agree that God's ways are displayed in creation, but it seems a somewhat strained interpretation of Hebrews xi. 3. True, the word "ages" is here used, but so it is in Hebrews i. 2, where unquestionably it refers to the material creation, not of one planet only but of the "worlds," *i.e.*, the universe. In view of the dreams of ancient philosophers and the guesses of modern scientists, how important and sublime is this statement of Hebrews xi. 3, with reference to creation :—

"By faith we apprehend that the worlds have been framed by God's word, so that what is seen hath not been made out of things that appear" (Kelly).—ED.

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man into this scene, and blessed him, showing at the outset that He is a God of blessing, we get in the garden of Eden a picture of the order of government which is never forgotten, even after man's disobedience had spoilt the order as God set it up. This order is described in brief in Psalm viii., in a retrospect where the author looks back to the beginning of God's ways, and contemplating the immense contrast between God as revealed in creation first, and then in ways of lowly grace in the long struggle with evil, and man in all his frailty raises the great question—"What is man?" We know where that question is answered for us, although the full answer is "not yet" given in display. But the order is simple, God supreme over all, His majesty above the heavens, man representing God and bearing rule over all creation below Him, the works of God's hands. So that the blessing and happiness of the created scene as governed by God depended on the one to whom God had committed the administration of government.

This was God's ordering. Obedience was the key to all. The order and blessing of the whole scene depended on the obedience of the man who was put in the place of rule. Moreover, the obedience required was of the simplest kind, far simpler than the obedience of Sinai so lightly undertaken. But God's order of government broke down when man

disobeyed, and the problem commenced which we are to trace out in our dim imperfect way by God's help, how God could carry on His government in a world where man, whom He had made to obey was living in a state of rebellion against Him. In order to get any real knowledge of the character of a government of any sort, we must see it at work where there is **obedience**; this is a very simple principle which greatly helps us to a knowledge of God's government in Scripture. A knowledge of government which is only learnt from seeing it in exercise where there is opposition and disobedience, is a defective and one-sided knowledge. This is why so many Christians think that the government of God is "the stick" and only that. And this, too, is the reason why it is only in the path of Christ, where perfect obedience was found, that we can learn the true and blessed nature of that government under which we are, and must be, whether we realise it or not.

Hence it is that the real history of the government of God as a **progressive** thing begins with the man who first did what the little child in the eighteenth of Matthew did, obeyed when he was called. "By faith Abraham **when he was called . . . obeyed.**" But there are certain facts which Scripture dwells on, facts which bring out principles of God's ways, coming before the call of Abraham, and which we must look at briefly.

S. H. H.



## The Bible Class.

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### The Things which Thou hast seen (Rev. i. 17, 18).

**T**HESSE words, "**the first and the last,**" occur three times in the prophet Isaiah, and in that part of the prophecy which establishes Jehovah's undivided claim to be the One and only true God (Isa. xli. 4, xliv. 6, xlviii. 12).

The nations had their idols, they were but pretence, Jehovah alone was very God. Jehovah controlled the affairs of the world, giving power to whom He would, and causing nations and kings to be blown about as dust and driven stubble (Isa. xli.)—" **I am thy God** " (ver. 10).

Jehovah was King and Redeemer of His people Israel (Isa. xliv.)—" **beside me there is no God** " (ver. 6). The idols of the heathen were "profitable for nothing," they were fashioned with hammers, and wrought with tongs, and planes, and compass—with what graphic irony does the prophet here describe them! But listen to Jehovah's triumphant boast—"Is there a God beside me? Yea, there is no God; I know not any" (ver. 8).

Again, Jehovah, the first and the last, was the Creator of all things; His hand laid the foundation of the earth, His right hand spanned the heavens (xlviii. 12, 13).

No language could more conclusively prove essential deity. Jehovah, the first and the last, was **Creator** of all things in heaven and earth (Isa. xlviii. 12, 13); He was **Redeemer** of His people (Isa. xlv. 6), and **Disposer** of all the earth (Isa. xli. 1-5). All this we learn from the prophet Isaiah. But Revelation i. 17, 18, declares that Christ is the first and the last; He, then, is not only man but God. Eternal praise to His name!

Furthermore, Christ is the "**Living One**"—"I am He that liveth"—as the Father hath life in Himself, even so the Son (John v. 26), and, blessed be His name! He is the **Source** of life to all who believe in Him. And yet, amazing truth! this living One has died. He who was God from all eternity, became Man that He might die (Heb. ii. 14), and by His death Satan's power has been annulled, and his captives delivered from bondage and fear, ere long to be brought as sons to glory under the leadership of their victorious Captain. But what suffering was His to bring all this about!—suffering inflicted by man's wicked hands, suffering, too, at the hands of a Holy God, but suffering voluntarily endured in eternal and infinite love. The "was dead" of our A.V. does not contain the full expression of His love—"I am He that . . . **became dead.**" This expression could only be used of One, and that our adorable Saviour. There was no necessity for Him to

die, except it were the necessity of His love, obedience, and devotedness—and yet He died. This side of the truth is here maintained by the use of the word “became,” thus guarding the glory and dignity of His person. Not only this, His **willingness** to die is presented ; it was not enough to merely state the fact of His death, but He in the love of His heart “became dead.” How admirably perfect is the language of God’s inspired Word !

But death has no more dominion over Him ; He is alive “to the ages of the ages,” and this not merely as God, but as man. God He ever was in the eternity of the past, God He was when here on earth as man, and God He ever will be in the ages of eternity to come. But He became man at His incarnation.

“The Word became flesh and dwelt amongst us” (John i. 14).

In becoming man He did not cease to be God, but having once become man, He will never cease to be a man ; He is alive as man “to the ages of the ages,” this being the well-known expression throughout Revelation for **eternity**.

Not only so, but He has “the keys of death and of hades,” for such is the true order of the words. He who in His infinite love died for us, and rose again, has complete authority and power over death. Satan had the power of

death (Heb. ii. 14), and used that power to bring man still more under bondage through the fear of death. And what more terrible than death to one who has no Saviour? What more awful than a step into the dark unknown?—for death was the judgment of God because of sin, and besides and beyond this there is the **judgment after death** (Heb. ix. 27). How well Satan knows how to wield this fear over man's conscience, but for the believer in Christ this fear is gone for ever. Satan's power has been annulled, the stronger than he has overcome him, has taken from him all his armour wherein he trusted and divided his spoils (Luke xi. 22). Sinners saved by grace are the spoils of that glorious victory of Calvary, and Christ has become our Deliverer from the fear of death, and not the subjector to it. He has the keys, all power of deliverance is His, all authority too, none can dispute His rights, He is Lord both of the dead and the living (Rom. xiv. 9). With what calm, unruffled peace the believer can face death under all its circumstances—its sting is gone, its victory crushed, its strength for ever broken.

“Thanks be unto God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. xv. 57).

A. H. B.

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“I will joy in the God of my salvation” (Hab. iii. 18).

## Christ Magnified.

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NOTES AND RECOLLECTIONS OF AN ADDRESS  
ON 2 CORINTHIANS i. AND xii.

**T**HERE is one great truth connected with Christianity which we do not think enough about — the peculiar place the bodies of the Lord's people occupy in His dealings with them. We must not forget that the body is the Lord's, "The body . . . for the Lord ; and the Lord for the body" (1 Cor. vi. 13). Sometimes people make this a plea for indulgence, and sometimes for neglecting the body, but it ought to keep me from erring on either side.

It is an amazing fact that this body, once the vessel in which Satan's malignity was displayed against Christ, is now the vessel in which God is displaying the glory of His Son. I would call your attention to a passage in Philippians i. 20, where the apostle speaks of his earnest expectation, and his "hope that in nothing he might be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also **Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death.**" In this vessel of clay, our body, that is the very sphere in which God proposes to display the superiority of His Son. If we reckoned thus, how differently should we think of bodily trial ; He wants everything to be tributary to His

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great end—the magnifying in us, the displaying of the excellence of His own dear Son.

When we get into a difficulty what is our first thought? Is not our first question generally, how can I escape from it? Rather let it be, how shall I best glorify God? how shall Christ be magnified? How wonderful a thing it is! Think of the blessed Son, the anointed of God, magnified in my poor body. The Christ at God's right hand magnified in **me!** I cannot, of course, make Christ greater than He is, that were impossible, that's not the thought; but all that Christ is to God, and for God, should come out in this worthless weak vessel; nothing less is His thought.

There is a danger of our making the things of Christ as so many doctrines to which we give our assent. Remember that Christianity is not a well-framed statement of theology (though, of course, it is a most full and perfect revelation of God), but Christianity, true Christianity, is a living power which ought to be displayed in me, seen in me, every moment. God never intended that the truths of Christianity should be separated from the Person of Christ. It is the display of His Person that gives force and power, and God would make **all** circumstances contribute to our showing out Christ—the apostle says,

**“For to me to live is Christ.”**

The first chapter of Second Corinthians shows us the apostle in human circumstances, into

• which he was brought by his testimony—all hope, humanly speaking, was gone. **That** was God's object. God places us in human circumstances. I suppose there are few but know more or less of what it is to prove something of this. When God closes every door what are we apt to do? The tendency in us is to try and escape of ourselves. The force and energy of our natural character comes out amazingly when we are pressed. Here the apostle gets the sentence of death in himself. God brings him face to face with circumstances that shut out **every** hope, in order that he might turn his eye to the living God. Do we see that this is God's way—to cut us off from natural resources. Here the apostle gets the sentence of death in himself, and looks up to the Quickener of the dead.

“We had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should **not** trust in ourselves, but in God, which raiseth the dead.”

It is God who does this to meet the natural tendency of our hearts to turn to “an arm of flesh.” The apostle gets the sentence of death in himself that he might not trust in himself. It is wonderful how self-confidence sticks to us; we do not deny this truth as a matter of doctrine, but we do very much in practice. It is one of the last things we learn, to have “no confidence in the flesh.”

What a living resource for the heart is God, the living God, who quickens the dead. I look

to Him, and not only this, but all that **He is** in Himself is my portion, apart from the question of all that He does. I have this wonderful resource—God Himself, apart from deliverances, apart from how He will intervene for me. It is an unspeakable comfort this, we have the Deliverer before we get the deliverance. That's what the Lord wanted to teach the disciples in the storm. He said to them, as it were, Have you so far forgotten the fact that you've got the Maker of the bread in the boat with you? He would make my heart know the superiority of this knowledge, that I've got the Deliverer Himself, who is above and beyond **all** circumstances.

We sometimes sing that hymn,

“Jesus, Thou art enough!”

Are we not wonderfully taken aback sometimes? Dear brethren, we must look for **reality**. God looks for it. Unreality is abroad. Two things characterise profession now, **unreality** and **unrest**. Now Christ gives both reality and rest. The apostle could say—

“We had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead, who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver; in whom we trust that He will **yet** deliver.”

He hath delivered, He doth, He will—past, present, and future. The apostle knew God, knew Him as a delivering God, and thus He could speak as confidently of the future as he could of the past.



Look at the 27th Psalm. I refer to it now freely for this reason that it is the same life in expression, the outgoing of the divine life in the soul. It begins—

“The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?”

In verse 4 it adds—

“One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in His temple.”

Now mark, there is the simple, plain, normal characteristic of the life of God in the soul. It is the blessed outgoing of my heart to God for what He is in Himself, and not merely going to Him in my trouble to get shelter from the storm. I want to **dwell** there. It is not only a shelter, it is a home. What do people do when they only seek a shelter? They come out of it as soon as the storm has passed. We then forget the presence; but not so when we have known it as our home, tasted its joys, the Father's joys, the delight of the Father's house. How much do we know of this, dear brethren? how much do we know of dwelling there? It is the **one** desire of the soul in this psalm, to dwell in the house of the Lord; mark, not for a season only, his stay is not to be transient, he desires it for “all the days of his life.”

Now mark the object, it is in order that he

“may behold the beauty of the Lord, and enquire in His temple”; or, as I might perhaps render it, to “meditate with joy in His temple.” It is no question of distress, of trouble, that comes after in the psalm. He has the most perfect rest, and then there is the most entire confidence.

“In the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion ; in the secret of His tabernacle shall He hide me. He shall set me upon a rock ; and now shall my head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me.”

There you get the deliverance, and then what follows? **Praise.** He will offer in His tabernacle sacrifices of praise—joy. “I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the Lord.” That is also what the apostle looks for, the answer **to** the prayers of many begets thanks **from** the many on the apostle's behalf. I refer to this because the simple exercise of this life of God is abiding (dwelling) in His presence. When trouble does come, then He will hide me. Do I pity the soul that is hidden of God? He hides them in trouble in the activity of His love, and when the deliverance has been accomplished they enter into His temple to praise. How wonderful! His patience, His care, His endeavours to bring us to the sense that there is no place where our hearts can rest but in **Himself.** We **must** have the sentence of death in **ourselves.**

*(To be continued.)*

**Query.—What is the difference between Propitiation and Substitution?**

**Answer.**—These are two great aspects of Christ's atoning work, illustrated by the two goats in Leviticus xvi.

1. **Propitiation** Godward—seen in the goat that was slain, whose blood was carried within the veil, and sprinkled on the mercy-seat. This is a type of the value of the blood of Christ in God's sight, as meeting all His just and holy claims, so that He can righteously receive and pardon any and every sinner who comes to Him pleading the value of Christ's precious blood.

2. **Substitution** manward—seen in the live goat, upon whose head the sins of the people were confessed, illustrating faith laying its hand on Christ, and thus appropriating to itself the value of His sacrifice. The slain goat meets **God's claims**; the live goat meets **man's need**.



**Short Outline of the Book of Revelation.**

II. SECOND DIVISION.

3. *Third Group.*

**The Seven Vials**—Chapters xv.-xvi.

**T**HIS group forms an appendix relating to the events which belong to the second half of chapter xiv.; *the seven vials are the filling up of the wrath of God.*

But to begin with (chap. xv. 2-4) we have

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the heavenly company of Gentile martyrs of the Beast put to death during the last half week ; this heavenly company corresponds with the immense multitude of Gentiles saved on the earth in chapter vii. 9. They stand on the sea of glass mingled with fire (in contrast with the sea of brass of the temple), symbolic of definitive purity and of the tribulation passed through to reach it. They sing the song of Moses, praise for the destruction of the oppressor of God's people, but it is the victory of the Lamb once rejected and now declared King of *nations*. This scene is like the counterpart of chapter xiv. 1-5, where the two Jewish companies are seen, one in heaven (the Jewish martyrs of the Apocalypse) the other on earth, on Mount Zion with the Lamb.

Notice, by the way, the succession of heavenly scenes up to this : chapters iv., v., all the glorified saints, including the Church, represented by the elders, kings and priests, the distinction not being yet established between the saints of the old dispensation and the new ; chapter vi. 9-11, the souls under the altar ; chapter xii., the man-child, Christ and the Church caught up to God and to His throne ; chapter xiv. 2-4, the Jewish martyrs of the Beast, teaching from heaven the new song to the Jewish remnant on earth ; chapter xv. 2, the Gentile martyrs of the Beast. All these classes belong to the first resurrection, as we shall see later.

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Chapter xv. 5—xvi. The temple of the tabernacle is opened in heaven to allow the seven angels having the seven plagues to come forth, God thus showing that in the seven vials He will act with a view to His relationship with His people Israel; the seven vials of the wrath of God are the last, for in them that wrath is filled up. Without wishing to be too dogmatic, I think that the period of the vials corresponds with the seventh trumpet, where it is said (chap. xi. 8), "thy wrath is come," or else with chapter xiv. 9-12, where we read of "the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation."

In the character of their judgments, the seven vials (chap. xvi. 2-21) resemble those of the seven trumpets, only here they are more general and reach further than the "third," that is, than either part of the Roman Empire.

The first vial, corresponding with chapter xiv. 9, falls on the earth and the apostates. The second is poured out upon the masses who have abandoned God. Under the third all man's sources of refreshment become deadly: the persecutors of the saints are here specially in view. Under the fourth vial supreme power becomes scorching and horribly oppressive. In the fifth vial the Roman Empire is full of darkness and sore pain, but this in nowise abates the violence of the Beast against Christ.

Notice in the fourth, fifth, and seventh vials, that men, far from repenting, when opportunity for so doing had been given, blaspheme the "name of God," then "the God of heaven," and then "God," increasing more and more in their hatred against the One who smites. In the sixth vial the barriers which formed the security of the Roman Empire are removed, so that the way of the kings of the east (or of the rising sun) may be prepared. These last may form part of the Assyrian's great confederation.

In verses 13-16 we learn who are the promoters of the principles which will gather the kings of the earth and of the whole world to the great conflict between the Roman Empire and the East (*i.e.*, the Assyrian with his allies) about Palestine and Jerusalem, but in reality in rebellion against Christ.

In verse 15 a short parenthesis contains a solemn warning to the world, similar to that in chapter iii. 3 addressed to the Church.

During the seventh vial the wrath is accomplished: it is the "It is done" of the consummation of the wrath of God, to be followed later by the "It is done" of the establishment of the new creation (chap. xxi. 6), for God's **ultimate purpose** is never judgment but blessing. During this vial the great city, the civil organisation of the Roman Empire,

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is annihilated, and the apostate religious system by which this empire is characterised comes in remembrance before God to be destroyed.

4. *Fourth Group.***Babylon and the Beast—**

## Chapters xvii.—xviii.

This group resumes in detail the contents of the last vial as given in chapter xvi. 19, also the subject mentioned in chapter xiv. 8, with regard to God's ways in the last days. Chapter xiii. describes the civil and religious power in the Beast and the False Prophet, while here we have the description of Babylon, the false Church, under its religious and civil aspect, and in relation to the Roman Beast.

In chapter xvii. she is the whore seated on the Beast, or the resuscitated Roman Empire, and we are called to be present at her sentence.

The prophet is filled with astonishment at this mystery, the so-called Church becomes the whore drunken with the blood of the saints! In verse 9 the city of Rome with its seven mountains is said to be the seat of the woman, they are the seven heads of the Beast, but they have **also** a symbolic meaning, and signify the seven successive forms of government of the Roman power; the Beast itself is **also** an eighth king, imperial govern-

ment revived in a leader. The confederation of ten kings dependent on the Beast hates the great whore, the false Church, seizes all her substance and riches, and ends by destroying her. This is done gradually—abandonment, confiscation, destruction.

Chapter xviii. gives us the civil aspect of Babylon, condemned for her idolatry, corruption, worldliness, and persecutions; the judgment of God takes vengeance on her. The effects on those who inhabit the earth, of the disappearance in its entirety of the much-vaunted yet Satanic system of civilisation, are here seen.



## A Glimpse at God's Government.



**G**OVERNMENT, whether in Israel, the world, or the Church, was instituted by God, and was, therefore, to be recognised as being of Him. And in the exercise of it, judgment in respect to good and evil, with authority to pronounce upon evil and evil-doers, was necessarily called for in order to preserve a moral integrity according to Him.

In Israel this judgment was **for** God, as it was also **of** Him. "The judgment is God's," Moses declared in Deuteronomy i. 17, as being of Him. And in 2 Chronicles xix. 6 we read—



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“Take heed what ye do, for ye judge not for man, but for the Lord who is with you in the judgment,” or “in the matter of judgment” [Marg.].

And it was just because judgment was of and for Jehovah, that no unrighteousness was to be allowed in its execution by those who were responsible in undertaking it.

“Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment . . . but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour” (Lev. xix. 15).

And it is evident that God not only insisted that His people should execute judgment, but He also demanded that their judgment should be righteous.

And Christ sounded the same warning in the ears of the Pharisee when He said—

“Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment” (John vii. 24).

But the history of Israel proved that they not only failed to execute judgment, but that they also wrested judgment. And therefore, a wrong or wrested judgment went forth (Exod. xxiii. 2 ; Deut. xvi. 19 ; Jer. v. 1).

“Why dost thou show me iniquity? . . . for . . . there are that raise up strife and contention. Therefore the law is slacked, and judgment doth never go forth ; for the wicked doth compass about the righteous, therefore wrong judgment proceedeth” (Hab. i. 3, 4).

There could be no question as to whether an act of judgment which was wrested or unrighteous were either of or for Jehovah. Evidently such could not be, for we read that—

“The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether” (Ps. xix. 9).

And therefore when Israel failed to execute the true and righteous judgments of the Lord, they themselves fell under these very judgments, by which they were both “diminished” and “scattered” (see Hab. i. 5-11; Ezek. v. 5-11).

And so when they were thus given up by God, He committed His government in the world to the Gentile king, Nebuchadnezzar, whose reign constituted the first world-kingdom to which God gave His power in government (Dan. ii. 37, 38). And accordingly it was this power that God could use in carrying out His judgment upon Israel.

Government, then, in the world could be said to be of God, even as the Apostle Paul recognised it at a time of the greatest political corruption and tyranny. To the beloved saints at Rome he wrote—

“For there is no power but of God, the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God, and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. . . For he is the minister of God to thee for good” (Rom. xiii. 1-4).

The power, then, was of God, and was therefore not to be resisted but feared. But the acts of men as having this power must be in the cause of good, or as it says, “The minister of God to thee *for good.*” For the Scripture could

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own such actions no further than what would be for good, as morally suited to God. But if this power, whether religious or secular, were at all to interfere with one's obedience and service to God, then God must be obeyed rather than man.

“Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye” (Acts iv. 19).

The three Hebrew children would not serve the gods of Nebuchadnezzar, according to his commandment; neither would Daniel cease to pray unto his God, though contrary to the law of the Medes and Persians which changeth not. (Dan. iii. 6). And because Daniel and his companions refused to obey man rather than God, they were called upon to suffer for His sake—

“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Tim. iii. 12).

And thus a Christian may, for conscience toward God, be called upon to endure grief, suffering wrongfully. And so should he arm himself with the mind of Christ to suffer for well-doing, for righteousness' sake, and also for Christ's sake (1 Pet. ii. 19, iii. 14-17, iv. 13-16).

Suffering, then, in the world, according to the will of God, is possible for the Christian because of man's will and the devil's power. And while power is of God, the wrong or perverted use of it belongs to man and the devil. We are told to “resist not evil,” but are admonished to resist the devil, “steadfast in the faith” (Matt. v. 39;

1 Pet. v. 9). And so Jesus pleased not Himself, but endured the contradiction of sinners against Himself, and He also endured the cross, suffering indeed wrongfully, but (blessed truth!) according to the will of God and for our sakes. Still, from the time of His temptation in the wilderness onward, He was seen to resist the devil, even unto blood (Rom. xv. 3; Heb. xii. 2-4).

But to the Pharisees Jesus spoke the truth when He said to them—

“Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father will ye do” (John viii. 44).

And yet at another time He declared to His disciples—

“The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do, but do not ye after their works, for they say and do not” (Matt. xxiii. 2, 3).

And this declaration was quite in keeping with what He again said to them—

“Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? . . . unto whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken . . .” (John x. 34, 35).

It is clear, therefore, that the Lord did not resist the persecution of the Jews, even unto death, and it is also clear that He would not resist but observe to do whatever the Pharisees commanded, according to the word and will of God, as in the capacity of “gods,” and as sitting in “Moses' seat,” which as a seat of authority

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He did not deny them. But, if their teaching were according to the "commandments of men," thus "making the word of God of none effect," He could no longer sanction such an observance, even though they sat in the seat of authority.

"All, therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe," had its limitation in this way, for the commandment of God could alone carry with it the authority of God, to which all were to be subject.

We see how God identified Himself with the remnant that returned of the captivity to Jerusalem in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah—

"Then spake the Lord's messenger in the Lord's message unto the people, saying, I am with you, saith the Lord. . . . According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so My Spirit remaineth among you" (Hag. i. 13, ii. 5).

And about the same time another prophet spoke—

"Thus saith the Lord, I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem. . . . These are the things that ye shall do, speak ye every man truth with his neighbour, execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates, and let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour" (Zech. viii. 3, 16, 17).

And yet the last of the minor prophets was obliged to testify to the sin and failure of the nation thus—

"But ye are departed out of the way, ye have caused many to stumble at the law . . . according as ye have not kept My ways, but have been partial in the law."

While to a remnant that feared His name, among the general apostasy of the first remnant that returned to the land, it was said—

“Remember ye the law of Moses, My servant . . . with the statutes and judgments” (Mal. ii. 8, 9, iv. 4).

And so the Lord Jesus and His disciples had the fullest respect for the word of God by Malachi, for He remembered the law of Moses with the statutes and judgments, when He exhorted His disciples to observe all that the Pharisees bid them do.

But on the other hand, what a lamentable perversion of Jehovah's judgments do we behold in their judgment of Jesus, when they condemned and crucified Him. And let us ask, was their judgment of Him “the judgment of truth and peace,” was Jehovah with them in the judgment, or could it be said to be either of or for Him? Nicodemus, as the advocate of Jesus, could righteously inquire—

“Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know **what he doeth**” (John vii. 51).

And to this the Pharisees appeared to make reply later on, when they said to Pilate—

“We have a law, and by our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God” (John xix. 7).

But Jesus, after His apprehension, was ever open to the judgment of the law, yet He would on a single occasion bear witness to the unrighteous judgment of one who smote Him—

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“If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil, but if well, why smitest thou Me?” (John xviii. 23).

And yet when Pilate was determined to let Him go, he also, like Nicodemus, righteously inquired of them the third time—

“Why, what evil hath He done?” (Luke xxiii. 22).

Does not all this go to show then, that Israel, in killing the prophets, in crucifying Jesus, and in persecuting His followers, were moved with a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge (Rom. x. 2). The law had said—

“So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee” (Deut. xiii. 5).

And so in their zeal, when they thrust out of their synagogues, or killed the followers of Jesus, they thought they were doing God service (John xvi. 2). But Jesus has given them to know the secret of their error when He said—

“Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God” (Matt. xxii. 29).

And in His perfect grace He breathed these blessed words to the Father when on the cross—

“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” (Luke xxiii. 34).

And Peter, in the same spirit of grace and forgiveness, preached to the nation after the day of Pentecost.

“And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers” (Acts iii. 17).

And the testimony of Paul later on was the same—

“For they that dwell at Jerusalem and their rulers, because they knew Him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets, which are read every Sabbath day,” &c. (Acts xiii. 27).

We know that the Jews had every advantage, for Moses had given them the law, and to them the oracles of God had been committed (John vii. 19; Rom. iii. 1, 2). They rested in the law and made their boast of it and God (Rom. ii. 17-23). They searched the Scriptures, and could teach out of the law (John v. 39, vii. 52).

And they were also positionally in a place of authority, so far as the true judgment of the law was concerned. They were jealous in their service for God, and they judged the Lord Jesus according to this zeal, and also professedly according to the law.

But the cause of their awful error and blunder in judgment upon the Son of God was *ignorance*. Ignorance of the Scriptures, ignorance of Him, and, therefore, ignorance of the power of God. And while God could pity them in their ignorance, He could by no means pass over their sins and errors, due to this ignorance. But that the ground of their judgment of Christ was also unrighteous, the civil law of their times could testify, by raising the question, “Why, *what evil hath He done?*”



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But the ignorance of the Jews was not of the letter of the Scriptures; they were in *spiritual* darkness. And because they were not spiritual, they could neither discern the Lord of Glory, nor the signs of the times, and therefore they were deceived, and left to believe a lie (Matt. xvi. 3; John viii. 44; I Cor. ii. 6-16). And because of their sins, the judgment of God and a veil of darkness abide upon them, until they repent (Acts ii. 38, iii. 19; 2 Cor. iii. 15, 16).

We may now consider briefly the Church, or house of God, as another sphere where the government of God has been intrusted to men.

The apostles and the Church, or local assembly, derived their authority from Christ, who, as the Son of God and as the risen Son of man, was given all power both in heaven and in earth (Matt. xxviii. 18, John v. 27). And this power the Church could exercise, and in judgment it could bind and loose on earth, in the authority of Christ, since He was in the midst (Matt. xviii. 20).

The acting in judgment, then, on the part of the assembly was of the Lord and for Him, as it had been also in Israel. But in Matthew xviii. Christ spoke not to His disciples about the doing of unrighteousness by the assembly, as Jehovah had before to Israel. Not but that it were possible for the assembly to act unrighteously, but the Lord appeared to be dealing

with what was positive and normal in the use of His authority by the assembly.

“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” (Matt. xviii. 18-20).

The assembly's proper moral condition had been anticipated in the Lord's teaching at the beginning of the chapter, where we have not only the necessity of conversion, but also the need of meekness and humility. And, therefore, in the “agreement” of the two spoken of as a condition, we have a moral possibility and certainty.

Strife and division in the assembly would affect, more or less, the proper or righteous use of Christ's authority. While the presence of evil, where man's will and not God's were in control, might subvert such authority altogether.

And while God's ways and moral principles in His government in Israel, and also in the world, may teach us the relation between the right use of His power and the right moral condition of those who exercise it ; still, the more positive teaching of Matthew xviii. would appear to be, that Christ has an assembly on earth, or as viewed locally, assemblies (Rom. xvi. 16).

That this assembly is composed of two or three gathered in, or to His name, and that He is in their midst. That whatever this assembly binds or looses on earth is also bound or loosed in heaven. And that whatever they agree upon to ask in prayer, it is done for them by the Father in heaven. And the sum of it would seem to be, *God's power practically among Christ's own on earth.*

But we observe that it is the same power that binds and looses in heaven as also acts in response to prayer. The assembly can bind and loose on earth, and it can also ask on earth of the Father in heaven, whatever it agrees upon. But for any reality the Father's power must respond to the assembly's acts and prayers. And righteousness and the will of God must ever be considered, in the granting of His power to His glory.

G. B. E.

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## The Bible Class.

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“Write therefore what thou hast seen, and the things that are, and the things that are about to be after these” (verse 19, N.T.).

**I**N this well-known verse we find the key to the whole book. A threefold division of all that the book contains is here given. This has already been noticed, but for any intelligent

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interpretation it cannot be too much insisted upon.

The first division, namely, the things which "thou hast seen," has already passed before us. It is the vision of Christ's glory, as described in the first chapter. We are now about to enter upon the second division, namely, "the things that are." This is a remarkable expression—*the present state of things*. These things are brought before us in the second and third chapters; they describe the Church period. Originally given *prophetically*, they may now be read *historically*, for we are nearing the end, as Christians in ever-increasing numbers are fully convinced.

That we are right in saying that "the things that are" are those described in chapters ii. and iii., is evident from chapter iv. 1, where, after the addresses to the seven churches, John is shown "the things which must take place after these things." It is important to observe that the word "hereafter" (chap. i. 9, and iv. 1) of our A.V. is altogether too vague; the thought conveyed by the Greek (*μετὰ ταῦτα*) does not imply *indefinite futurity*, but *immediate sequence*.

How then are we to understand the expression, "the things that are"? Clearly they are the *present* state of things. But were they present merely in John's day? or have they been prolonged and continued in such a way that they are present still? We must remember that the *whole* book is a *prophecy* (see chap. i. 3). We

cannot, therefore, exclude the prophetic interpretation of chapters ii. and iii. It may be objected that the seven assemblies were assemblies that then were all actually existing, and that now they have all ceased to be. Why were actually existing assemblies addressed ?

In the first place, it is noteworthy that the Lord would never have His people postpone the hope of His return. He would ever have it as their immediate expectation. Hence, that which to us may seem, as we look back, a long and dreary pilgrimage presented no such sorrowful anticipation to our brethren of earlier days. It was their duty, as it is ours, to be *always* waiting for Christ—"Ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord" (Luke xii. 36)—and hence the language of inspiration was always such as to bring that "blessed hope" *near*, it never implied long delay. This most interesting fact has often been pointed out—the virgins (Matt. xxv.) that first went forth were those that went in to the feast ; the servants to whom the pounds were given when the nobleman went into the far country, were the same that were called before him on his return (Luke xix.); Paul included himself amongst the number that might be alive (I Thess. iv.) when Christ should return—"we which are alive" (not "they which shall be").

Known unto God were all His ways from the very beginning, and had He been pleased to do

so He might have communicated to us the fact that long centuries would intervene between Christ's ascension to glory and His return to fetch us home. But we are distinctly told to watch, and for what reason?

“Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh” (Mark xiii. 35).

“The things which thou hast seen,” then, are described in chapter i.; “the things which are,” in chapters ii. and iii.; whereas “the things which shall be after these” commence at chapter iv. and continue to the end of the book. In the mind of the Spirit the whole period of the Church's history here on earth is described as “the things which are.” The distinctly prophetic and future portion of the book does not commence to be fulfilled until the Church's history on earth is closed. “The things which shall be after these” (chapters iv.-xxii.) unfold God's future dealings with the world, introducing by a succession of judgments Christ's millennial kingdom, and finally the eternal state.

“The mystery of the seven stars which thou hast seen in My right hand, and the seven golden lamps.”

Surely none can fail to see that the seven assemblies spoken of in the two following chapters require an application far more extended than these littoral churches in Asia. The very use of the word “mystery” implies such an interpretation, for there was no mystery

about those seven particular churches. The mystery consisted in this, that they were to be taken as representing various stages and phases of the Church on earth, which the lapse of time has now proved to have covered a long and extended period, but which at every stage could be spoken of as "the things which are."

"The seven stars are angels of the seven assemblies, and the seven lamps are seven assemblies."

And what are stars? They are lights, *subordinate* lights, in contrast to the sun, which is *supreme*. Moreover, they are lights that shine in the night. Furthermore, we are told that the stars are the angels of the assemblies. And what, and who are the angels? We have already seen that an angel is one that *represents* another. Elsewhere we read of the "angel of Jehovah," the angel of Peter, and the angels of little children; here, for the first time, we read of angels of the assemblies. Clearly they are not any of the gifts or office-bearers with which we are familiar in the epistles. No doubt the very vagueness of the expression is intended to act on the conscience of each individual member of the assembly. Doubtless leaders and those occupying a more prominent position in the assembly are specially responsible, yet we must remember the constant reiteration of the words—

"He that hath an ear to hear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."

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The angel is specially addressed, nevertheless the whole assembly and each individual member thereof is responsible to hear. And everything here speaks of responsibility, for the assembly itself is described as a lamp, and of what use is a light which is hidden out of men's sight? It is a solemn thing to remember in these days that not only as separate individuals are we responsible to shine as lights, even as stars amidst the darkness of night, but also as *assemblies* of saints a light should ever be shining for God's glory. How little this is so is, alas! often too manifest, local assemblies being often the arena for the display of fleshly strife. How often do we forget the important place of 1 Corinthians xiii. firmly wedged in between chapter xii., which describes the *principles* of the Church, and chapter xiv., which enlarges on the *practice* of the Church. In chapter xiii. is unfolded the *power*. Do we not oftentimes forget our Lord's *command*?—

**“These things I command you, that ye love one another”** (John xv. 17).

And again—

**“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another: as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another”** (John xiii. 34, 35).

As surely as love, that divine characteristic, is absent from an assembly of saints, so surely will its candlestick be removed.

A. H. B.



## Notes and Comments.

A recent writer in the *Times* communicates his apprehensions with regard to India:—

***Briton's Future in India.***

“Recent reforms have left almost entirely unaffected those essential conditions which chiefly concern us. So far as there is any menace, direct or indirect, to the continuance of British rule in India, the reforms have not abated that menace in any material degree. On the contrary, it would not be difficult to demonstrate that their ultimate and inevitable effect must be to accentuate it. We are face to face with the antagonism, open or veiled, of a very large proportion of the Indian peoples. Our rule is disliked, not because it is bad, but because it is alien. . . . The real cause of the unrest is not Indian at all, but Asiatic. The unrest is the most visible symptom of that resentment of prolonged European domination which is affecting the whole continent of Asia. For three hundred years the tide of European dominion has flowed eastwards, but the ebb has now set in. . . . It is part of a great world movement, the end of which no man can foresee.”

In connection with this it is of interest to read the following extract from a lecture given by the late William Kelly as far back as 1874:—

“Let me say here that according to Scripture there cannot be the slightest doubt that Russia is reserved to play a most important part in the great future crisis, for the policy of that vast modern empire affects the same objects as the Assyrian of the last day. Russia from its position in the north-east is known to seek the lead as suzerain over the Eastern Powers, acquiring influence politically, so as to be able to mould and guide those vast hordes of Central Asia down to the south. It is my

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conviction that Western influence will ere long be completely annihilated in the East, and that the dominion of our own country in India is destined to be short-lived."

Recent events in connection with India are causing fear and anxiety even to men of the world.

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We are receiving encouraging news from China. Mr H—  
*The Work in China.* writes :—

"Our preaching room was full last night, and yesterday afternoon a good number listened to the gospel. God is working mightily in China, and I believe He is speaking in Hsinhua. There are a few cases here in which we are much interested. But they need much teaching ; they have not the help of books that brethren in England have, and one would like to see them grasp the truth more rapidly. Yet overfeeding is not good, and too rapid growth leads to decline. . . . The Chinese Government is enforcing the Anti-Opium-smoking Edict. It looks as if they are determined to stop the smoking by force. I hear, too, to-night that a strong edict is now out against foot-binding. Last night our brother Ching was preaching against the god of war. To-day one of the servant idols in the temple beside this deity has fallen on the ground just a heap of earth. As I have heard of this this afternoon from two sources, I judge it has impressed some who heard our brother last night."

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"The extent of the judgment of Christendom will be a much wider area than the simple overthrow of the congregated nations who oppose the Lord near Jerusalem. For  
*Russia, Asia, and Persia.*

instance, the judgment of Babylon will involve in it the humiliation and punishment of all the different parts of professing Christendom, then, of course, apostate under the seventh vial just before Christ appears.

“The downfall of Babylon is just before He comes for the judgment of the world. There will remain the lawless beast and false prophet, with all that follow them, to be destroyed when He appears in glory. The last providential judgment will be soon followed by the shining forth of Christ's coming. Thus not merely corrupt Christendom will be smitten in the form of Babylon, with Rome its active centre, as it will continue to be to the end ; but the final rebellion that the Lord will judge when he comes will arrange itself under the beast and the false prophet, which is not the state of Babylonish corruption, but a condition of open wilful rejection of God and His Christ. This last will comprise the head of the revived Roman empire of that day, who will sustain the antichrist against the king of the north ; and the scene of the destruction will be Jerusalem or its neighbourhood.

“Thus the judgment of Christendom will be in a certain sense providential judgment before the brightness or appearing of the Lord's coming, when He destroys them (*i.e.*, the beast and the false prophet) by the breath of His mouth. Who can suppose, for example, that

America, or Australia, or India will be unscathed in the judgment of the latter day? The truth is that no place or nation bearing the name of Christ, or having had the gospel preached there, will escape.

“It is true that some of these lands, as America, are not expressly named in prophecy. But this in no way hinders the application of general principles. The judgment of the habitable world will take all in. Nor is God mocked by an ocean. His hand will surely deal with those who despise Him, east or west. It is not always understood that, when Babylon is judged, she sits not only on the seven hills but upon many waters. These waters, I suppose, mean all the streams of professedly Christian doctrine that spring from Babylonish principles. They constitute the main corruption of Christianity. The apostasy follows, but is a much more open avowed hostility than any such corruption of Christianity, though apparently its reactionary result. It would seem to be more centralised than Babylon's influence, and to have a more circumscribed place.

“Now, after the beast's judgment as well as Babylon's, the confederacy of nations will cover again a larger sphere, because this is not necessarily professing Christendom at all. They may be heathen nations or not. I presume that the nations of Central Asia will all succumb to Russia, and will perish most signally upon the

mountains of Israel. It is well known that, even to the Chinese and others, the Eastern nations are sinking under the control of Russia, not without resistance and checks, but sure in the end to fall under its steady, never-abandoned policy. It is not more certain for the Porte than for Persia or for Central India; not all to be absorbed into the empire, but all to accept its leadership. Astonishing is the blindness of men to what is coming. Such will be the part played by the Assyrian, who appears to be the great north-eastern instrument of Russia's designs; but they will all come under the judgment of God.

“The fact is that in due time all the nations must be judged as such: only there will be different measures of judgment according to differences of privilege. The greater our favour from God, the more strict the account to be rendered. Every one can feel the righteousness of this, and in judgment it is a question of righteousness. But the portion of the Christian is of grace which reigns through righteousness: and hence, therefore, his place will be with Christ. They will be all taken away from the earth and its varied circumstances of sorrow here to meet the Lord Jesus and dwell with Him in the Father's house. This is not, of course, revealed in the Old Testament, but only in the New where the proper revelation of Christianity is given.”—KELLY.

## Some of God's Preparations.

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THE longer the child of God is left in this world, while finding it to be to him a wilderness, the greater is the opportunity of proving and learning the God who has taken him up for Himself. As one has sung:—

“In the desert God shall teach thee  
 What the God that thou hast found ;  
 Patient, gracious, powerful, holy,  
 All His grace shall there abound.”

Sweet it is to see how gracious is our God's tender care and thought for His people, better learnt it may be in sorrow, when taken from His hand, than in happiness. In Jonah iv. 6, we find that **God prepared** a gourd to shelter His servant Jonah, and “Jonah was exceeding glad of the gourd.” The heart is so ready to rejoice in the gifts of God's love, rather than in the Giver. So the same love that prepared the gourd, prepared the worm to wither it, and the vehement east wind. We are ready to recognise God's love in the tokens of it which give us gladness, but do we recognise the equal love in those dealings which cause us grief?

God Himself prepared the gourd, the worm, and the east wind. If for a little season our hearts can rejoice in a gourd of His preparing, and He then would lead those hearts—it may be by means of a worm or a vehement east

## SOME OF GOD'S PREPARATIONS. 231

wind—into a deeper and fuller joy in God, shall we not say with one of old :—

“The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away ; blessed be the name of the Lord” (Job i. 21)?

**Psalm xxiii.**—“**Thou preparest** a table before me in the presence of mine enemies.” The Lord loves to prepare food and comfort for our souls : and one great expression of this is in the feast at His table. His own hand broke the bread for His disciples, and gave them the cup. Thus in the presence of our enemies, against whom we had no power nor might, enemies such as Satan, death, and the grave, we have a table prepared for us by Himself, where, as a result of His death, of which the broken bread and poured out wine remind us, we can feed in peace—yea, triumph, and sing—

“ His be the Victor's name,  
Who fought the fight alone,  
Triumphant saints no honour claim,  
His conquest was their own.”

**John xiv. and I Corinthians ii. 9.**—“**I go to prepare** a place for you.” The Lord in His loving care prepares our future for us: A home in His Father's house, where **God has prepared** things which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, &c. The loftiest imagination of man cannot reach to the heights of what our Father and God has thought out for us ; but the Spirit reveals them to us in connection with Christ, through whom alone they could be made ours.

“Where I am.” “The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them.” Even these very bodies of humiliation will be changed and fashioned like unto His “body of glory.”

From these scriptures we learn that our circumstances, pleasing or painful, dark or bright, are prepared for us by God's loving hand. Our spiritual needs, too, find our risen Lord and Saviour ever ready to meet them: while our future is awaiting us, where there are pleasures for evermore. God's heart of infinite love prepares all these for us, and His hand of almighty power secures them to us, and preserves us for all that He has yet in store for us, for none can pluck out of His hand.

W. H. S. F.

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### “God is.”

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IN the last paper I spoke of the difference between the history of God's ways with Abraham, and the record of those ways with Abel, Enoch, and Noah. With Abraham the history of God's plan begins. It was not said to Abel, Enoch, or Noah, “in *thee* shall all families of the earth be blessed,” but to Abraham. But some very interesting and instructive things come out in the brief account of God's dealings with these three early saints of His.

It is not so simple as it seems to believe



that **God is**. In these days of advanced truth, it may seem very unnecessary to go back to such an elementary fact as this. Yet the inspired author of this long letter to the Hebrew Christians saw that they needed to be taken back to it, and after speaking of God's ways with Abel and with Enoch, he breaks off and dwells upon this fact as the great lesson of the first part of this review of God's ways. From the moment that Adam and Eve took their mournful way from Eden, and the flame of the flashing sword closed the way behind them to the tree of life, the world became a place where man was to dwell without God, and, for a time at least, was to be left alone that he might learn whether his own will was better for him than God's, or not. Adam did not have to **seek** God in Eden. But now, through sorrow and weariness and all the sad fruit of sin, God was going to produce this lovely fruit of faith that sought for Him, desired His company, obeyed Him, and feared Him. No doubt Abel had often seen the light of that flaming sword, and had heard the story of why it was there, and of the lost happiness of Eden and the companionship of God.

Abel believed in the reality of God. He had proofs before him of the reality of God's government, but God had so wrought in him that he **sought** God, and in such a way that he owned this reality of God's government, owned the

fruit of sin to be death, owned the curse upon the ground, and by his gifts owned a God that was going to forgive through the sacrifice of Jesus. All this wonderful understanding of what suited God was the result of believing that "God is." Abel knew nothing more than what his parents could tell him of God, but **acting** on that, he did exactly what suited God. This is no small gain to learn. Much that we do with a great deal of intelligence fails to please God for want of this believing really in our souls that "God is," and acting on the fact. Cain's action shows the difference. He acted as though God had not cursed the ground. To use the words of the Psalm, he thought that God was altogether such a one as himself, as his subsequent intercourse with God proves. He did not really believe that "God is, and that He is the rewarder of them that **diligently** seek Him."

But Abel in doing so received the witness that he was **righteous**. Who bore witness? GOD—and that not to Abel but to his gifts. This is a wonderful thing. Abel becomes like God, God acknowledges him as the first righteous man. To think that so much should flow from what seems so slight, so elementary a thing. He believed that "God is," and because of this he was taught how to meet God in a way that owned everything according to God, his own place as a sinner, God's place in majesty, holiness, righteousness, His love in Christ, the state, too,

of the world in which he had lived so brief a life. By such a faith the long-dead Abel speaks to us to-day and tells us that "God is."

But the world chose Cain's way. It was Cain's race that made such a world as we know to-day. A world where God is not, and where everything combines to enable man to forget God and to do without Him. In such a world, where the fruits of man's will were rapidly showing themselves in murder, death, corruption, and violence, and men sought to oppose to the tide of lawlessness the feeble barriers of legal retribution, did Enoch choose to walk with God. It was no light thing to walk with an unseen God in such a world, yet Enoch did it for 365 years. He did not retire into some retreat from all the divinely appointed ties of nature, but lived according to God's ordering, begat sons and daughters, and in the course of everyday life walked with God. What a testimony to the goodness of God that it should be possible, and to the blessedness of a faith that could believe that "God is." What a witness to the men of his day! While still on earth he had the witness that he pleased God. Adam himself, who had known what it was to have the companionship of God in Eden, lived during 308 years of Enoch's walk with God. God willed that Abel being dead should still speak, but that Enoch should live 365 years as a witness of the possibility of knowing God, walking with

Him, and pleasing Him on earth in the midst of the rapid progress of corruption.

But the thing that the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews puts in the forefront of this short history is—

“By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him.”

We should not have thought of putting it in this way. “**By faith** he was translated.” Looking at it, as we commonly do, as a type of the rapture of the Church, there is a possibility of missing the lesson that this opening sentence drives home. “By faith” this man who walked with God, and pleased Him, did not taste the consequences of God's government in death.

In Abel's case faith enabled him to understand what was suited to God, to recognise and bow before God's government, but he was allowed to suffer in the world the consequences of sin. He was slain because his works were righteous. But in Enoch's case the faith which enabled him to know God and walk with Him, took him out of the world when God's time was come by a way which was not the appointed end of man as the consequence of sin. God translated him, transferred him to the place described in Hebrews xii. 22-24, in the hope of which he had walked for 365 years. Let us remember that **by faith** he was translated, and ponder it.

In the case of Noah we have the crisis. After

bearing long with the course of man's will in revolt, God vindicates His rule. In after-days we have more than once a reflection of the effect of this event upon the hearts of the people of God. In Psalm xxix. 10, we find

"Jehovah sat enthroned at the flood, and Jehovah has taken His seat as King for ever."

It was the solemn and terrible vindication of the fact that God rules. Faith rejoices in it, but woe to those who act as though it were not true. But the situation gives occasion for God to display the third of these great and yet simple principles of His ways in a world where He is set aside.

In Abraham's history, as was said before, we get the developed course of God's more intimate government with one who lived by faith, who obeyed God's word. In these three cases we get rather the great outstanding principles of God's ways in the world where He is not known, and where externally the course of His government cannot fully display His character because everything is in rebellion against Him. Hence the need for the further unfolding which comes in Abraham's history. But however bad the world may get, "God is," and faith can know Him and walk with Him, in spite of all. So we find Abel dies, Enoch is translated, and Noah passes through the judgment unharmed to a new earth, cleansed by judgment from the violence and corruption of man.

But all three lived by faith and left the issue of their path to God. The issue was different in each case. Abel died at the beginning, the only reward that seemed to be his was to be slain because his works were righteous, he got nothing here except God's witness. Enoch walked with God and was translated. The world has never seen him again, and he got nothing here for his faith but God's witness. So in each case the government of God seemed to require explanation. What is behind this? is the question that naturally arises. What is this righteousness to which God bears witness so emphatically? What is it to become an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith, as Noah did? So far we are told little. We only know that Abel sought God by faith in the right way, that Enoch walked with God, and that Noah in holy fear recognised the judgment of God as a reality before it was seen.

To each of these God was a reality, and the Holy Ghost brings them before the Hebrews as object-lessons of the right attitude of subjection of soul before God, the true reverence and godly fear which God meets in a way that cannot be explained by anything short of His ways with Christ. This, we shall find, is the climax of the eleventh of Hebrews. But first the development of the history of God's ways is traced on to Abraham, and there the hints about righteousness, and many things which seem inexplicable if we take

God's ways with Abel, Enoch, and Noah by themselves, apart from what they lead on to, begin to come out into the light. But the great lesson is here, "**God is, and He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.**"

Let us seek Him, and we shall find. There may be more need of it now than we think.

S. H. H.

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## Christ Magnified.

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NOTES AND RECOLLECTIONS OF AN ADDRESS  
ON 2 CORINTHIANS i. AND xii.

**I**N 2 Corinthians xii. it is not human circumstances, neither in the remarkable vision nor when the apostle returns to consciousness in his body. It is blessedly instructive the way God deals with His servant.

The apostle says, I knew a man in Christ, caught up into the third heaven. He was taken up in a way that any other was not, that is to say, it was doubtless exceptional. He heard unspeakable words which it was not lawful for a man to utter, or more correctly rendered, it was not "possible" for a man to utter. There was no way by which he could convey to others the divine things God had communicated in that vision.

When in Paradise everything was as it ought to be, but when, so to speak, he came down,

there he was with a human nature, not altered, not ameliorated one bit; all this wonderful revelation did not touch the exceeding badness of that nature. "There was given me a thorn in the flesh." How blessedly he speaks of this dealing of God—there was given me! We know God is the restorer of our souls, active in bringing back the wanderers. We need the activity of His grace continually, but here it is not so much restorative as it is preventive discipline. "Lest he should be exalted above measure," unduly elevated by the abundance of the revelations, there was **given** him this thorn in the flesh.

Have you ever thought when you have had pressure on you—a difficulty, a weak body, a weight of care, or some depressing circumstance—have you ever thought what you would be without it? Have you looked at it as a divinely given messenger? Does this thought occupy our hearts enough? I've seen people going on crippled, wonderful grace sustaining them, but when delivered from the pressure they were in a fair way to get into trouble. They were safer with the weight than without it.

In the first chapter the apostle was in human circumstances, here they are divine—a thorn divinely given—given of God. What a thing to say of this or that, it's a heaven-sent messenger. Weariness, pressure, trouble, to say—that's my Father's care, my Father's watchfulness,



His own wise foreseeing, preventive grace. The apostle says three times over "take it away." That is just what we do. I believe the apostle actually applied to the Lord to take away that which had been divinely **given**. The answer of God was beautiful. "I'll give you My power" on the subjective side, that is to say, the effect in the believer—that is Christ's power in me.

On the objective side, I am a man in Christ. The apostle speaking of himself in this chapter says, "I knew a man **in Christ**"; that is common to every believer; he is seen by God as **in Christ**, but the side that men see is the subjective side. Christ's power and grace displayed in my body down here as the consequence of my being in Christ up there.

As a general rule, our circumstances are not altered: things take their course, and if He acts on circumstances, it may be, as with the disciples in the boat, the sea is made boisterous. He does not act on the circumstances so much as He acts **in me**. He gives me power. My grace, He says, is sufficient. His power goes along with me. People say, "I'm so weak," then answer them according to the words here, "When I **am** weak, then am I strong." God cripples the energy of man that the energy of Christ may be displayed in a crippled man. The blessed God can use Satan against Satan as in the case of Job, and Paul too. Jacob's sinew was made to shrink, but when he was

lamed it was then he prevailed, and got the new name. The blessed Lord says, as it were, to us, "Do you want to be in circumstances where you won't want My grace, where you can do without My shoulder under you?" This vessel which had been Satan's, God turns all out of it and fills him with Christ. Christ was glorified in his weakness. So he says—

"I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake, for when I am weak, then am I strong."

Can you bless God for that thing which shuts you out entirely, to turn to Him and find your satisfaction in Him alone, your light when every other light in this world is extinguished? Can you say, never were things so bright! never the joys of His presence so known! A poor, fragile thing that is gone to pieces, but sustained by divine power. The vessel is nothing; it is not the properties of the vessel, broken, feeble, and earthen, but it is the surpassingness of the power of Christ revealed in it.

Paul was not only subject to Christ, but so in communion with God that he cheerfully, joyfully accepts that which no doubt made him contemptible in the eyes of men. He could thank God for **every** trial. Can you and I?

It is a comfort for me to think what a resource that Blessed One is. He has had His way with His servant, and had the opportunity to display His own greatness and the surpassingness of the

power. We ought to be here for the **one** purpose of magnifying Him. You may say, perhaps, What can I do for Christ? How can such a vessel as I am, weak, crippled, and broken, be of service to Him? Why just be a poor, weak thing in which He can display His power? I see some poor soul perhaps lying on a bed of pain, a burden to themselves and helpless, how natural for such to say, "Wouldn't it be better for me to be taken to heaven?" But suppose I see such a one restful, undisturbed, a blessed savour of Christ going up from the bed of pain. I see then a person kept by the hands of Omnipotency. Wonderful power! It is not a question of what I can do, but what **He** can do. I have to be quiet and let Him have His own way. This will separate me from this world and its spirit.

May your heart and mine be able to enter into the apostle's thought and say with him, "According to my earnest expectation and my hope, Christ shall be magnified in **my body** whether by life or by death." I believe there is only one other instance of this word "earnest expectation," and that is in Romans viii. 19—"the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." **The stretching out of the neck in expectancy** is the force of it. Eternity will not give back the opportunity of the present moment, may we have grace to use the present for eternal gain.

[BLACKHEATH, 1876.]

## Short Outline of the Book of Revelation.

### II. SECOND DIVISION—*Continued.*

#### 5. *Fifth Group.*

**Historic Order of Events from the Fall of Babylon to the Establishment of the New Jerusalem in Eternity—Chaps. xix.-xxi. 8.**

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**T**HE historic order is here resumed, and we are told what follows upon the fall of the spurious Church, the great whore, closing with the new heavens and the new earth.

1. (**xix. 1-5**).—The Alleluia over the judgment of the whore. Here we recognise the classes already mentioned in the course of the book—the company of martyred saints in heaven, the servants small and great on the earth, while the elders and the four living creatures occupy a distinct place.

2. (**verses 6-10**).—The marriage of the **Lamb**; His wife hath made herself ready. Here the elders have disappeared or rather have resolved themselves into two companies, the glorified saints of preceding dispensations, and the Church or Bride of the Lamb. Those who are invited to the marriage of the Lamb are all the heavenly saints except of course the Bride, the Church.

3. (**verses 11-21**).—The wrath of the Lamb

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and the judgment of the living ; Christ followed by His holy myriads comes out of heaven in a new aspect and enters triumphantly upon His reign. It is then that the defeat of the nations assembled at Armageddon takes place (chap. xvi. 16). The beast and the false prophet are cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.

4. (**xx. 1-3**).—**Satan is bound** a thousand years.

5. (**verses 4-6**).—The government is entrusted to the heavenly saints during the millennium ; **all** are seated on thrones ;\* it is the first Resurrection. Two special classes are named amongst them : the martyrs during the time which preceded the last half week, these are the souls under the altar (the word *soul* simply indicates that these are the ones referred to in Revelation vi. 9 ; here they are already raised), and the martyrs of the beast whether Jews or Gentiles. Along with these all the saints of the Old Testament and the Church belong to the first resurrection, of which Christ is the firstfruits.

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\* We incline to think that there are three classes spoken of in this verse (xx. 4) : (1) " And I saw thrones, and they were sat upon." This seems to apply to the twenty-four elders who in chapter iv. are seen sitting on thrones. They include the whole company of the glorified saints from Eden right up to the rapture ; (2) the souls under the altar or the martyrs of the first half week ; and (3) the martyrs under the beast.—Ed.

6. (**verses 7-10**).—This concise account of the millennium is followed by the announcement that Satan is loosed from his prison after the thousand years. He deceives the nations Gog and Magog which compass Jerusalem and the camp of the saints: these nations are devoured by fire from heaven; Satan is cast into the lake of fire and brimstone.

7. (**verses 11-14**).—After these things comes the great white throne and the judgment of the dead, who are raised in view of this event.

8. (**xxi. 1-8**).—Finally we have the New Jerusalem and the eternal state. Henceforth the Tabernacle of God, the Church, is with men, but more than this, God will dwell with them and yet more, God will dwell with them and be their God. The definitive "It is done" of the new creation is based on the "It is finished" of the cross.

### 6. *Sixth Group.*

#### **The New Jerusalem during the Millennium—**

Chapters xxi. 9-xxii. 5.

Here we return to a preceding subject in order to show the glorious beauty of the bride, the Lamb's wife, the New Jerusalem during the whole period of the millennial reign and the administration by her of this reign. She *has* the glory of God. The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it, and the Lamb

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is the light thereof. The description of the New Jerusalem may be divided into three parts:—

*Firstly.*—The external aspect (verses 9-17).

*Secondly.*—What the city is in itself (verses 18-23).

*Thirdly.*—Its relation to others, and what may be enjoyed in it (verse 24-xxi. 5).

### **Appendix**—Chapter xxii. 6-15.

Last exhortations belonging to the prophetic revelation, which insist on the immediate coming of the Lord in the sense belonging to this book. He comes **quickly** for those who are mentioned therein and who have the spirit of prophecy (verses 6, 7). Then “the time is at hand,” and He “comes quickly” “to give unto every man according as his work shall be” (verses 10-12).

### **Epilogue**—Chapter xxii. 16-21.

This epilogue does not form part of the prophetic subject of the book any more than do the words “Unto Him that loveth us” of chapter i. Here it is the coming of Christ in the character of the morning star as a **present** hope. It is not the seven churches but the Church, the true bride watching and waiting by the Spirit for the Lord from heaven and crying, “Come.” In verse 17 the Spirit and the bride say, “Come.” This is collective. “Let him that heareth say, Come,” is individual, and then there

is a general invitation to him who is athirst and whosoever will to "come and take the water of life freely," which is possessed already by the Church.

May we realise all that this verse contains.  
**Amen, even so, come, Lord Jesus.**

H. R.



## The Bible Class.

### The Things which are.

**P**ERHAPS with no part of the Book of Revelation are we more familiar than with chapters ii. and iii. Much has been written by more than one of the Lord's servants upon the Seven Churches with which the Bible student might most profitably make himself acquainted. We shall therefore endeavour to be brief, and summarise rather than develop.

One great principle stands out clearly. The assembly is seen in its responsibility, and is itself the subject of judgment. This is a fact that we do well to bear in mind at a time when we so often hear of the "authority of the assembly" and of "assembly judgments."

"To the angel of the assembly in Ephesus write: These things says He that holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lamps" (Rev. ii. 1).



The history that follows is one of declension, ending in utter rejection in Laodicea ; but how solemn the fact that the first step in declension is seen in Ephesus. No assembly in apostolic times was more highly favoured, but how different the Ephesus of John from the Ephesus of Paul ! The humbling fact stands forth that the assembly is no more able to maintain God's testimony in the world than Israel was of old. No privileges, however great, can keep us when faith and love begin to wane. The assembly as a vessel of outward testimony has failed, and will be set aside as truly as Israel has been. God had long patience towards Israel amidst centuries of idolatry. He warned and besought, but all in vain. Even so is it with the professing Church. The true Church, composed of all true believers, will be manifested in glory, but profession will be spued out of Christ's mouth.

We cannot too seriously weigh the fact, as brought before us in this Book of Revelation, that it is the assembly which is judged and not the assembly that judges. We do not make light of what other scriptures teach with reference to the judgment of evil and the exercise of discipline. These have their place, and are the sorrowful consequence of the flesh in action in individual members of the assembly. But when the assembly assumes the place of authority and sits in the seat of judgment she departs from her proper attitude of subjection to Christ (Eph. v.

24) and submission to His Word. What the Spirit here speaks He speaks to the assemblies, and each individual saint is responsible to listen. In these days of the pretensions of Rome, it is of ever-increasing necessity to resist the putting of any authority between the soul and Christ. The believer needs no priest to stand between him and God, for the precious blood of Christ has opened the way for him into the Holiest of all; and he needs no ecclesiastical authority to usurp the place of God's Word, which speaks directly to both heart and conscience in the power of the Holy Ghost.

We cannot leave this subject without pressing upon the members of our Bible Class the great need of individually having to do with God and hearkening to His Word. Multitudes of the Lord's people are distracted and disappointed. They had seen in measure "the ruin of the Church," but fancied they had found security and shelter in some ecclesiastical position. There may have been in some an effort to reconstruct the Church according to Paul's teaching, and a satisfaction at the thought that now at the close, after centuries of failure, their feet were standing on "divine ground." But a rude awakening has come, and hopes have been shattered. How many have said, "All seems crumbling under my feet; I am full of fear, and don't know who to trust"?

It is just here where the addresses to the

Seven Churches come in to encourage the heart as well as to appeal to the conscience, but it is individual work.

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches: To him that overcometh,” &c.

The ruin had come in Paul's day; all sought their own and not the things of Jesus Christ. It was to the elders of Ephesus that Paul spoke words of special warning (Acts xx.)—words that at that time may have seemed improbable of fulfilment, that the danger was from *within* and not from without, and that from amongst their own selves men would arise to draw away disciples after them, and so lead to the break up and scattering of the saints. But Paul, in view of all this, commended them to God and the word of His grace. And is it not the same in the days of John? The assembly as a whole had “ceased to be the expression of the love in which God had visited the world,” but the individual saint is cast upon God Himself and His Word; the individual it is that is called upon to hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies.

And first to **Ephesus**. In this first address all is very general; this is seen both in the character in which Christ presents Himself at the beginning as well as the promise to the overcomer at the end.

“These things saith He that holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.”

The Lord does not here assume some special character relative to some special state of the assembly, but one which is applicable during the whole length of the Church's history here below, whatever the special condition at any particular period.

He holds the "stars" in His right hand, not one only, but the "seven," proving the general character of this first address. The stars, as we have seen, are those who hold a place of special responsibility in the assembly—it may be by gift or ministry. But then, besides this, each individual in the assembly has his or her responsibility to hear, for the words addressed to the angel are spoken to the Church as a whole, yet the promised reward to him who hears is given to the individual overcomer.

A. H. B.

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### Extract.

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"**WHEN** the Apostle John puts himself down as 'partaker with you in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus' (Rev. i. 9), does he not expect us also, and invite us, as it were, into this fellowship? And must we not, in some true sense, be there in order to profit aright by this communication? If we will be friends with the world, can we expect to understand or be in sympathy with the prophet of Patmos?"

(GRANT.)

## The Love of the Disciples at Antioch.

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IT is one of the glories of Scripture that it contains no idle word. No incident is recorded there apart from the moral purpose it is intended to serve, but this could hardly be said of any other extensive collection of writings judged as a whole. Accordingly, what is written in Acts xi. 27-30 is rich in spiritual instruction.

In those important days at Antioch as referred to in this scripture, much must have transpired among the brethren of which we have no account ; but the coming famine as signified by the Spirit through Agabus is written for our profit. Now Agabus prophesied that a great famine was impending throughout all the world. The writer of the Book of Acts adds the historical fact that this famine came to pass in the days of Claudius Cæsar.

The Emperor Claudius reigned from A.D. 41 to A.D. 54. Profane history shows that there was more than one great famine in Judæa and other parts of the Roman Empire during that period. But it is not certain how much time elapsed after the utterance of this prophecy before its fulfilment. It may have been years after. It does not appear that Agabus thus spoke because a drought had already manifested itself. We are assured that it was "by

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the Spirit" that this prophetic signification was given, and evidently apart from any outward or additional indication of what was coming.

But let the reader carefully consider the immediate effect of this prediction on the disciples themselves as there assembled. We read—

"Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judæa : which also they did, and sent it unto the elders by the hands of Barnabus and Saul" (Acts xi. 29-30).

It was not that these beloved brethren waited until after the famine came, and the needs of their brethren in Judæa had been pressed upon them by some visiting brother ; but before the famine came—perhaps years before—as a result of a few words spoken in the Spirit, they determined to send relief. There is nothing to show that they were asked to do this, though, in all probability, it was with this object in view the Holy Spirit led the prophet to speak. And we may gather that this incident is recorded in Scripture for all time, not that we may know how Agabus prophesied of a famine merely, but to show the moral result of his prophecy. Not that the prophet himself knew all this when he spoke. Moreover, the leading of the Spirit of God should be seen as much in this practical determination of the brethren to send help as in the prediction of the calamity by the prophet. The whole incident illustrates the action, the leading, and the power of the Holy Spirit in the

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Assembly. It shows, too, the ways of God in government and blessing, undertaking for His own in the midst of the troubles of the world. It might have seemed easy for the disciples to excuse themselves on the ground that the need was not urgent or pressing, but there is no sign of the brethren seeking to evade God's message in this way.

Incidentally this whole narrative is full of helpful instruction for us. Sometimes we are told that prophecy is only meant to be of value after it is fulfilled. It is taught that the practical result is only to be realised then. Indeed, reading, teaching, explaining unfulfilled prophecy is regarded by not a few Christians as very much a matter of speculation. And there is some reason for the ground they take when we consider the wild theories of unfulfilled prophecy that are abroad to-day. But in this scripture we see an example of faith in unfulfilled prophecy producing the fullest practical result, because financial help reaching the children of God in Judæa in the crisis of their need was not to them a matter of speculation, but of timely relief.

There are no prophets now, as there were then, to stand up in our midst and predict, apart from the written Word of God, what is about to happen, as Agabus did. We should be justified in discrediting any who attempted to do so. Nevertheless, the Holy Spirit remains,

and the unfulfilled, as well as the fulfilled prophecies along with all Scripture remain for the exercise of faith. The truths of the coming of our Lord, of our being caught up to meet Him in the air, and our appearing with Him in glory, the restoration of Israel to their own land, and kindred subjects—these are not less coming facts of the future than was the famine foretold by Agabus, and the Christian love exhibited by the brethren at Antioch as a consequence of his prophecy has now become a fact of the past. And these coming events are revealed to us not only to be of value after they are fulfilled, but to act on our hearts and consciences now, to fashion and prepare us for what is certain to come ; that by these things we may indeed learn to “number our days and apply our hearts unto wisdom.”

Thus, Peter speaks of himself as a “witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a *partaker* of the glory that shall be revealed” (1 Peter v. 1). The apostle was living in the power of the coming glory, and could thus, speaking practically though not actually, already regard himself as a *partaker* of it. In like manner these dear brethren at Antioch, and not the prophet only, were made to feel by the Holy Spirit the coming sufferings of their brethren, and to provide for them. What a reality the word of God must have been to the brethren in those days! God had only to make known



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through the lips of one of His servants that a famine was coming, and they set to work at once to act on the word of the Lord.

But let us Christians learn another lesson. Sometimes it is said, in regard to the matter of prayer, that we only get what we ask for. Christian life ought to be a life of prayer. This is our privilege, and we suffer loss if we do not fully avail ourselves of it. But we are never told in Scripture that we only get what we ask for. On the contrary, we are assured that God is "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Eph. iii. 20). Now in the case we are considering, the providence of God and His love of the brethren were in advance of the prayers of the saints in Judæa. No doubt the time came when they saw with their own eyes the failing crops. Anxious thoughts would be awakened, and the serious prospect of things would give rise to fears. Then they would betake themselves to prayer, as we have often done in times of trouble. But it is good to see that as regarded the care of His saints, God was in advance of all this. The love of the saints is the outcome of the love of God.

"If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us" (I John iv. 12).

It was the same God not only that foresaw and foretold the famine, but the same God that sent it, who made this special provision for those

in need by means of the expression of Christian love from Antioch. Thus we see an illustration in Christian times of an Old Testament promise—

“Before they call, I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear” (Isaiah lv. 24).

An incident like this ought to encourage us, as God's children, to trust in Him. He does not provide for some of His children and leave others uncared for. He sees as far in advance as He did in ancient times, when He declared the end from the beginning, and a good many of the events—who can tell how many?—that were to happen in between. He is not less concerned for us now than He was for those Jewish brethren. He still goes before each one of us in the active exercise of His infinite love. There are greater proofs of His love for His children than His special provisions for their temporal calamities, but the greater are not intended to obscure the less. It is certain that many truths of the greatest importance must have been taught in those days of blessing at Antioch of which we are not told here; but we are told how God provided for the sustenance of His people in a time of famine. It is better not to be ultra-spiritual. God would not have us regard temporal matters as beneath us. As a matter of fact the bodies of His children need caring for. In this scripture is an instance of God caring for them, and to this particular end

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the love of the brethren, the love of the Spirit, and the foreknowledge of God are seen in exercise.

Let us see here, too, what blessed results may follow a few words fitly spoken. The words spoken by Agabus on this occasion may have been very few. His message did not take long to deliver. It was not a studied sermon. It was a message easy to understand, yet it had far-reaching results. Servants of God in these days are not prophets in the way Agabus was, but God still speaks to us, sometimes powerfully and plainly, by His Spirit, through His servants.

“A word spoken in season how good it is.”

Taking this incident as an illustration of the present, we see how it raises the duty of “distributing to the necessity of the saints” above the methods which worldly Christians use to obtain money, by bazaars, concerts, and such like things. For we see in this case the reality of the Spirit of God. It resulted in blessing to all. It was more blessed for those who gave than for those who received. The disciples at Antioch were not by any means losers. The God who could care for saints in Judæa could care for them as their future needs arose.

“There is that scattereth and yet increaseth.”

When once we have learned to trust God, we can afford to be generous. Thanksgiving to God would ascend from the brethren in Judæa, and

grateful love would be begotten for the disciples that were at Antioch. Those in Judæa would know that the monetary gift was only an outward expression of the love that prompted it; and in their hearts they would glorify God for that manifestation of Christian charity which was "not in word only, but in deed and in truth."

**"Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift."**

T. H.



## Samuel and the Voice of God.

**H**USHED was the evening hymn,  
 The temple courts were dark,  
 The lamp was burning dim  
 Before the sacred ark,  
 When suddenly a voice Divine  
 Rang through the silence of the shrine.

The old man, meek and mild,  
 The priest of Israel, slept;  
 His watch the temple child,  
 The little Levite, kept;  
 And what from Eli's sense was sealed  
 The Lord to Hannah's son revealed.

O give me Samuel's ear,  
 The open ear, O Lord,  
 Alive and quick to hear  
 Each whisper of Thy Word,—  
 Like him to answer at Thy call,  
 And to obey Thee first of all.

O give me Samuel's heart,  
 A lowly heart, that waits  
 Where in Thy house Thou art,  
 Or watches at Thy gates  
 By day and night, a heart that still  
 Moves at the breathing of Thy will.

O give me Samuel's mind,  
 A sweet un murmuring faith,  
 Obedient and resigned  
 To Thee in life and death,  
 That I may read with childlike eyes  
 Truths that are hidden from the wise.

JAMES DRUMMOND BURNS.

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## Public Reading.

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THE following list of texts has been sent us. They well deserve a careful study. It is often distressing to see, especially amongst young people, a slovenly attitude when prayer is being offered up, and hymns are being sung. A sprawling attitude and lolling on the seats is bad manners even in the presence of man, and is an irreverence utterly unsuited to the presence of the Lord.

For the public reading of the Scriptures **standing** seems the suited posture. In prayer **standing** or **kneeling**. We do not read in Scripture of any **sitting** to sing.

ED.

PUBLIC READING.

“Jesus **stood up** for to read . . . and He closed the book . . . and **sat down**” (Luke iv.).

Ezra “**stood**” to read the law (Neh. viii.).

PRAYER.

“And He (Jesus) . . . **kneeled down** and prayed” (Luke xxii. 41).

“There came to Him a certain man **kneeling down**” (Matt. xvii. 14).

“There came one running, and **kneeled** to Him” (Mark x. 17).

“And he (Stephen) **kneeled down**, and cried . . . Lord” (Acts vii. 60).

“Peter . . . **kneeled down**, and prayed” (Acts ix. 40).

“He (Paul) **kneeled down**, and prayed” (Acts xx. 36).

“We (Paul and friends) **kneeled down** and prayed” (Acts xxi. 5).

“**I bow my knees** unto the Father” (Eph. iii. 14).

And “at the name of Jesus **every knee should bow**” (Phil. ii. 10).

Jesus said, “When ye **stand** praying” (Mark xi. 25).

“Solomon **stood** . . . and spread forth his hands” and prayed (1 Kings viii. 22).

SINGING.

The Levites were “to **stand** . . . and to thank and to praise” (1 Chron. xxiii. 30).

They “**stood up** to praise the Lord . . . with a loud voice” (2 Chron. xx. 19).

They said, “**Stand up** and bless the Lord” (Neh. ix. 5)

## The Word of God.

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**H**OW difficult it is to bring home to the heart and conscience all that we find in the Word of God. The mind may see it all, but there is still nothing done till God is brought to the soul and the soul takes notice of itself in the **sight of God**.

Where it speaks in Hebrews of the Word being "quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword," it passes from the **Word** of God to God Himself, adding, "all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of **Him** with whom we have to do." It is what God speaks, it is Himself who speaks. When the power of the Spirit works, and the Word is mixed with faith in those who hear it, they are before God, all things naked and opened, they have to do with **Him**.

It is this one looks for; there is plenty of taking up of the things of God by the mind, but conscience is not affected. I then lose the only thing that is real, and it is only real when the **Word** of God judges **us**. Paul, writing to the Thessalonians, states that when they received the Word of God, which they heard of him, they received it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the Word of **God**, which **effectually** works in those who believe: the Word takes effect. God is addressing Himself to and occupying Himself with us, and I am affected

by the Word as **God** speaking to **me**; it is then mixed with faith. Nothing is done till it reaches us thus. We cannot be in God's presence without being subject to God. The Lord said—

**“He that rejecteth Me and receiveth not My words hath One that judgeth him, the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.”**

The same Word that is spoken now will judge us then. It is a matter of faith now, and when it is a real work of God this same Word reveals us as in God's presence: it is that which has the power of God's judgment upon us: it is God dealing with my soul. So in preaching, reading, exhortation, if the Word brings God to the heart there is reality. The question for our souls is whether we have received it; has this Word been applied to your conscience in this day of grace? The Word of God abides for ever—

**“My word shall not pass away.”**

The same Word will judge us in the last day if we reject it now: we shall be obliged to receive it then if we slight it now, for—

**“As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me and every tongue shall confess to God.”**

**“God is not a man that He should lie, neither the son of man that He should repent; hath He said and shall He not do it, or hath He spoken and shall He not make it good?”**

He that does not believe the record makes God a liar, and where the power of the Holy Ghost is in the Word there is the resisting of the Holy Ghost.

J. N. D.



## The Promise, the Tent, the Altar, and the Name.

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**I**N the case of Abel, Enoch, and Noah, the Scripture tells us that the first obtained God's witness that he was righteous, that the second had the witness on earth that he pleased God, and that the third became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith. But in the world of their daily life no sign appeared that it was worth any one's while to be righteous or to please God.

Abel was cut off by the hand of a murderer, unavenged. Enoch disappeared mysteriously, was not found. Noah disappeared, probably amid the mockery of the world of his day, into an ark which he had prepared in obedience to God. God shut him in, and that was the last the world saw of him. So that we find very little guidance so far as to what it means to be righteous, or to please God. Only the possibility of these things is shown us, and the importance of them appears from the fact that God selects the facts concerning these three men, out of the many centuries that passed between the fall and the flood, for His divine comment.

But now the other side is to be brought out. The history of the world shall still run on. Man will show himself to be still the same.

But God will now give, not glimpses of mysterious ways, rays of light in a dark night of sin and man's will, but the slow and gradual unfolding of the dawn, the hope and promise of another day. Some must enter in. Against the background of the history of man's ways God projects the history of the course of His own ways and the unfolding of His purposes. The proportion of the two in the narrative of Genesis is interesting because it shows the hand and mind of God in the writing of the Scriptures. Two chapters (x. and xi.) are allotted to the history of the world, twenty-four chapters are then allotted to the history of an unknown, insignificant man. Nimrod, the mighty hunter, is busy founding empires, Asshur goes out and builds "the great city." The world is being settled, populated, and divided too by the judgment of God. But of all these things, so interesting to the scientists and antiquarians of our day, the Scripture speaks little. God's heart is with the solitary man who obeyed Him, and who became the object of these wonderful ways of God.

"By faith Abraham, **when he was called** to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, **obeyed** ; and he went out not knowing whither he went."

God's comment about the world of Abraham's time shows that it was pretty much our own world, "now will they be hindered in nothing that they meditate doing." So that we can

understand what it meant to God to find in such a world a man who, when he was called, **obeyed**. It was because of the necessity of this obedience that the Lord preached the kingdom of God when He began His work on earth. This is why He sent out the apostles to preach the kingdom of God. This is why Paul went preaching the kingdom of God. No work of God has ever begun without this as the first condition, submission to the rule of God, obedience. But the moment we reach this we are, in a sense, apart from the world and its spirit, and we find ourselves in a place where the real nature of God's rule, all its blessedness, its rest, its unerring wisdom, its patience, all the character of God in it, can come out and be known, as it could never be seen and known in God's dealings with a disobedient world.

“To-day if ye will hear His voice”; God is for ever calling men to go out not knowing whither they go. God knows. We shall not be put to shame if we obey. I am sure that God is presenting to our hearts afresh the challenge of faith, the test of reality. “**He obeyed,**” “**he went out** not knowing whither he went.” How small a door it seems to all the wealth and vastness of the knowledge of God thus opened up to him, and it may be to us also in the same way.

The call may be to the foreign field. God's way of blessing and revival for the Church to-day

may lie in that direction. It may be to service of a fresh kind at home. It may be to silence, to do the daily work with a new mind, a new sense of God before the soul. I know not where, when, or how to us this call may come, or may indeed have come already. But this lies at the threshold, obedience is the way into the true knowledge of God. Above all, Christ obeyed perfectly, did God's will on earth as it is done in heaven, and we can only learn obedience from Him.

So now, as we begin to trace out the history of God's ways with Abraham, we have this key, this clue to the meaning of these ways. We are to see the development of God's ways with a man who began by obeying. True, he did not always obey perfectly. Only One has done that. But obedience was the principle of his having to do with God, and we shall find in consequence the unfolding of what was not explained in the case of Abel, Enoch, and Noah, something of the way in which God shows Himself a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.

Every detail of the history has instruction, but we are trying to get outlines, so that much of the detail cannot be examined. The great point, upon which the New Testament mainly dwells, in Abraham's history is the question of **righteousness**. I think we shall find that the record of God's dealings with Abraham as to righteousness are given us with the purpose of

throwing light on the whole question of what righteousness is.

We must first run briefly over that part of Abraham's history which precedes the memorable day when "he believed Jehovah, and He reckoned it to him as righteousness." This happened within the first ten years of Abraham's sojourn in Canaan. Ishmael was not born at the time, and as he was born in the eleventh year of Abraham's stay in Canaan, we know within what time the history of Genesis xii.-xiv. falls. Abraham was seventy-five years old when he obeyed God's call. The Scripture expresses the simplicity of his obedience in a striking way:—

"They set out to go into the land of Canaan, and into the land of Canaan they came."

"By faith he sojourned in the land of promise as in a strange land, dwelling in tents."

That was the manner of his stay. The first thing that began with his entry into Canaan and never ceased as long as he was there was **intercourse with God**. The thing which Adam had enjoyed in Eden, and had lost by disobedience, is now found by the grace of God as the portion of the man who obeyed. Now this intercourse, based on obedience, at once shows what kind of God we have to do with. This intercourse did not begin by demands from Abraham, but it began with **promise**. The light of God's character at once begins to shine, and Abraham surely begins to realise in some

measure that it is good to have to do with such a God as this. "**I will make,**" "**I will bless,**" is the refrain of a God who is good, perfect good in the midst of evil, and whose delight is to give ever more and more until the heart is confounded by the largeness of a giving that is only measured by Christ.

On the other hand, the intercourse on Abraham's side is marked by the building of altars and the calling on the name of Jehovah. The altar marked the point of contact of heaven and earth, the place where man might meet a God whose delight was to bless. Nimrod founded an empire while Abraham dwelt in tents. Asshur built "the great city," while the steps of Abraham's path towards the city that has foundations, whose builder and maker is God, might be traced by the frail heaps of stones that marked the spots where that most wonderful of all wonders on earth had taken place, the intercourse of a man of faith with a God who was not ashamed to be called **his** God. Is not such a thing well worth all that the call may involve? God is not the God of Nimrod, but He has not been ashamed to be called the God of Abraham. We are not told by what name Abraham called on Jehovah. The first name used by Abraham is very important, and will be mentioned later. But the point is that his intercourse with God was according to God's own character, for that is what **the name** implies.

The promise, the tent, the altar, and the name, they are not much in the world's eyes, but how much to God, and how much to faith.

We shall also find that throughout Abraham's history there is an alternation of intercourse with God, of progress in the knowledge of Him, with steps backward, involving certain consequences which in the government of God could not be shaken off, but were taken up by God and made a part of Abraham's education and of God's further dealings in the history of his family.

The first step of this kind, as we all know, was the journey out of the Land of Promise into Egypt. He was not told to go there, but there was famine in the Land of Promise. Famine constantly enters into God's dealings. It is a test to the soul.

"The eye of Jehovah is upon them that fear Him, upon them that hope in His loving-kindness, to deliver their soul from death, and to **keep them alive in famine.**"

So say those who confide "in His holy name" (Ps. xxxiii. 18-22). It was a new challenge to Abraham. Surely the God who had given, all unasked, such precious promises, and upon whose name he had called, could keep him alive in famine. But the record is to show us both sides of the path of faith. Abraham goes down into Egypt unbidden, and the first thing we note is the cessation of intercourse with God. There is no intercourse with God in Egypt.

Abraham's stay in Egypt is marked by several things of importance which must at least be mentioned, although they cannot be spoken of fully.

There is no intercourse with God, no altar, and no calling on Jehovah's name, and hence no progress in the knowledge of God. Then God had spoken to Abraham of his seed, thus connecting Sarai with him in the promise; he now disowns the one whom God had appointed as the channel of fulfilment of the promise.

He grows very rich in material wealth but brings no testimony to the character and goodness of the God whom he knew. All Pharaoh gets through Abraham's sojourn are plagues.

Lastly, in direct connection with his repudiation of Sarai, as appears later in the history, he brings back Hagar from Egypt to be the source of future trouble, the consequences of this false step, consequences which are never removed through all the subsequent history of Israel.

These things are written for our admonition. But God brings Abraham back to the place where his tent was first pitched, to the place of the altar that he had made "at the first," in order that he may resume his intercourse with God. There is no progress, no fresh altar is made, but he is brought back in the mercy of God to his starting-point.

S. H. H.



## The Bible Class.

The things which are—Revelation ii. 1-8.

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**I**T is a solemn thing to remember that the Lord in His judicial character of Son of man walks amidst the candlesticks. The assembly is left here on earth during the absence of Christ to be a witness for Him, a light amidst the darkness. He has long patience, but when the assembly ceases to be a true witness for Christ, its candlestick will be removed. This will be actually done as regards the professing Church when she will be spued out of Christ's mouth, but in more or less degree it takes place with regard to a local assembly, when from one cause or another that assembly ceases to be an expression of God's character in light and love. As a matter of fact the candlestick has long since been taken away from Ephesus, and what shall conscience say as to many places where Ephesian truth has been revived in recent years? Oh, how true it is that no amount of privilege will maintain either a company or an individual when faith, hope, and love begin to wane. But here in Ephesus all seemed in good order. The eye of man could detect nothing amiss. There was much that even Christ Himself could approve.

“I know thy works and labours, and thine endurance, and that thou canst not bear evil [men]; and thou hast

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tried them who say that themselves are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars; and endured, and hast borne for My name's sake, and hast not wearied."

All this surely was high commendation, and the Lord does not make light of these things. It is ever His way to give full credit for everything that in any little measure is done for Him, and it ill becomes us to belittle it in one another. It would be well indeed if we always were to act in this Christ-like manner, and emphasise all the good we can in one another before referring to what needs correction.

Works, labour, and endurance! How often have we heard disparaging remarks passed upon some who may be more occupied with service than with worship. Each has their place.

But there was more. There were some who for reasons of their own laid claim to be apostles. Paul had spoken of such before; "false apostles," he calls them, "transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ" (2 Cor. xi. 13); men who were seeking power and importance in a fleshly way, but shirking the true and spiritual signs of apostleship such as we see them in Paul himself. That Paul had authority among the assemblies as an apostle of Jesus Christ cannot be doubted; this authority he used for edification and not for destruction (2 Cor. x. 8, xii. 12, 19, xiii. 10); but for any to assume such a place of authority to-day is lording it over God's heritage. Paul in view of his own departure commended

the saints at Ephesus to God, and to the Word of His grace, and not to any authority apostolic or otherwise. The Lord here commends the angel of the Church at Ephesus in these words,

“Thou has tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars.”

Of course we to-day, knowing that apostles were at the **foundation** of the assembly, as Paul by the Spirit writes to this same Ephesus (Eph. ii. 20), would not be likely to listen seriously to any making such a claim; but in John's day true apostles might not all have passed away; they therefore must be tried, their claims investigated. This had been done; they had been found liars, and their pretensions were refused; and this was to their credit from the Lord. How this testing had been made we are not told, but may we not infer that God's guidance had been sought in prayer, and His Word been relied on for direction? This is our resource in every difficulty that may arise to-day—an un-failing resource—**God and the Word of His grace.**

Work, labour, patience, intolerance of evil, reliance upon God and His Word for guidance in difficult circumstances; not only so, but doing it all for Christ's name's sake. Who would have thought that anything at Ephesus was amiss?

“Nevertheless I have against thee, that thou hast left thy first love.”

Here was the root of all spiritual trouble,

the starting-point of decline, which, if unchecked, would continue to utter and complete rejection. It is well to observe that the word "somewhat" is an interpolation. As the verse stands in our excellent A.V., it would look as if the leaving of first love was but a slight affair, whereas to Him whose eyes were as a flame of fire it was a danger that overshadowed all the outward appearance of service and devotedness. "Thou art fallen" was the verdict.

"Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee [quickly], and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."

Every argument that love can devise is used to bring back the erring assembly to its earlier and brighter attitude. The memory of all the infinite blessing that had been ministered to them by servants of the Lord at rest from their labours; those "unsearchable riches of Christ" that had been preached amongst them, the "riches of grace," "the riches of glory," "the love of Christ," known and enjoyed and expressed by them in days gone by; that first love of a newly captivated heart, absorbed, engrossed, and satisfied with its object and manifesting itself in an activity of love to Christ and all His own; the assurance from the Lord Himself that those **first** works of true heart consecration and devotedness to Him were cherished in His heart—"remember from whence

thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works." But all proved of no avail; declension, begun so imperceptibly, went on to complete neglect of love so great as His, until the candlestick of Ephesus was actually removed in governmental discipline. What took place there locally may elsewhere have taken place locally during the centuries that have rolled by, and, so far as the professing Church is concerned, will take place universally when, at the coming of the Lord, He takes all His own in the twinkling of an eye to where no blight of sin or worldliness can enter.

But yet again the tender heart of Christ recalls another matter for commendation, as though it might have been forgotten in the enumeration of that which won His approval:—

“But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.”

What the Nicolaitanes were we are not told. Some have thought it to be the commencing spirit of clerisy (from the derivations of the Greek word which means “conquering the laity”). For the present we leave it there; later on, in Pergamos, it appears again.

Now comes the call to the individual:—

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”

It is clear from this that it is not to the Church that we must turn, as though she had authority to teach. The voice of the Spirit speaks **to** the

Church, through the Word no doubt ; that same voice speaks through that same Word to each individual member of the Church.

And is it not a blessed encouragement to be urged on to victory by the Lord Himself?

“To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.”

No matter what the state of things in the professing Church may be, the individual Christian may always be an overcomer. The general principle is laid down in those well-known words,—

“Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good”  
(Rom. xiii. 21).

And again,—

“This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”

And what is overcoming? Well, to begin with, is it not essential that we should realise how keenly interested is the Lord Jesus Christ in the spiritual condition of each one of His own? It is not enough to be His, and to know that we are ; it is not enough to know that none can ever pluck us out of His hand, and that our title to glory we can read in His blood. Each one of His own blood-bought ones will infallibly be in heaven by-and-by, but meanwhile we are on earth, and it is here and now that He longs for faithfulness and devotedness to Himself. Moreover He points out to us what are the special dangers of the way, and

shows us the one and only secret of being well-pleasing to Him. It is to love Him with that earnest, fresh, and ardent love that at one moment of our Christian life flooded our souls, that moment when first we learnt His great love to us, when first we knew and loved to confess that "**He loved me, and gave Himself for me.**"

Are we conscious that that first love has cooled down within our hearts? Then listen to the command of injured love: "Repent, and do the first works." If Ephesus of the early centuries turned a deaf ear, and went on from bad to worse until her candlestick was removed; if the professing Church as a whole refuses to listen, and pursues her downward course until she be spued out of His mouth, yet still the individual may hear and overcome, encouraged by the promise,—

"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."

We cannot but compare that first paradise which man forfeited by his sin and disobedience with the paradise of God established in immutable righteousness. The tree of life is found in both. To have eaten of that tree when sin had come in would have been to perpetuate an existence of misery and sorrow.

"And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever."

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No, this could not be; a life of perpetual estrangement from God was not that which He had planned for man,—

“Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden, . . . and He placed . . . cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life” (Gen. iii. 22-24).

But if the gates of man's earthly paradise have been closed by sin, the gates of God's heavenly paradise have been flung wide open by redemption, and “whosoever will” may enter in on God's simple terms.

“Blessed are they that wash their robes,\* that they may have the right to the tree of life, and that they should go in by the gates into the City” (Rev. xxii. 14).

The glorified throng who walk those golden streets and repose along the shady banks of that pure river of water of life, shall ever be able to put forth the hand and pluck the fruit of that tree of life which never will cease to grow and yield her all-satisfying fruit. What a joy to the overcomer, toiling through the dust and heat of the battlefield, to look forward to that bright scene when Christ shall be the eternal source of His people's satisfaction and delight, and to know that His own hand shall press that fruit to his lips—“To him that overcometh **will I give to eat** of the tree of life.”

A. H. B.

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\* This is the acknowledged reading of the verse.



## Notes and Comments.

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**The Down-fall of Britain.** A remarkable book entitled "*Rome and Germany*," by "Watchman," gives evidence of a startling nature to prove a Jesuit plot for the downfall of Britain. It is a volume that is well worth perusing. We are not ignorant of Satan's devices, and are fully convinced that the power of Rome is on the increase.

With politics we have little to do, remembering that as Christians our citizenship is in heaven (Phil. iii. 20), but with the spread of the gospel we are deeply interested, and hence rejoice to read of many conversions amongst Roman Catholics in Ireland. The darkness is great indeed, but the true light shines here and there. We quote from the report of the Irish Church Missions :—

"In one place a Protestant lady asked her servant if she would care to go to the meetings, and she replied, 'Oh, no, ma'am.' 'Why not?' asked the lady, to which the answer was given, 'Ah, sure, ma'am, they will be singing about Jesus there. I would not put my foot inside the door.' Poor girl, she had always been taught to look for salvation to the Blessed Virgin and the priest.

"Many people ask of converts from Romanism, 'Do they stand? Does not the result of early teaching lead them to call in the priest when dying?' The reply to these questions is that all those truly converted to God—and there are many—do stand, and that, in their dying moments, they look to the Great High Priest, Jesus Christ, and none other.

“We recently read a touching account of one convert, who for many years laboured amongst his former co-religionists as an agent of the Irish Church Missions. He was a most earnest, prayerful, and devoted missionary, and when stricken down by a sudden illness he lay dying, he was asked by his Superintendent, and also by his wife and mother, ‘Tom, do you know me?’ and to each the reply was ‘No.’ After a few moments the Superintendent put the question, ‘Tom, do you know Jesus?’ Instantly the dying man sat up unassisted, and with radiant face exclaimed, ‘Yes, I know Jesus. He loved me and gave Himself for me.’ He then lay down and passed away almost immediately into the presence of the Master he had loved and served.”

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In a day like this when false  
**The** charity is tolerating the pretentious  
**Massacre** claims and daily increasing en-  
**of St Bar-** croachments of the Church of  
**tholomew.** Rome, it is well to be reminded  
of the hard facts of history. An  
article on the Massacre of St Bartholomew, in  
the *Protestant Observer* for September 1909,  
might be read with profit. It proves beyond  
question that those awful days and nights of  
bloodshed and torture had their origin at the  
Vatican, and were religious and not merely  
political, as some to-day are endeavouring to  
maintain.

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It rejoices the heart to hear of  
**Evangelistic** the great movement that has  
**Work in** been taking place in this vast  
**Melbourne.** Australian city. An eye-wit-  
ness writes :—

“I believe thousands have become personally interested, and a great and effectual door is now wide open as the result of this four-months' visit. A fine opportunity is now before all believers to become soul winners and instructors of young and newly regenerated men and women.

“Dr Chapman's testimonies against sin in all its hideous deformity, I have never heard exceeded. The heart and conscience have been dealt with in words and tones of burning and yet tender warning. The grace and love of God in the gift of His Beloved Son has indeed been magnified. The clear and constantly-repeated ring of the old, old story, of the full-orbed gospel, has charmed and rejoiced the hearts of thousands. The proper deity of Christ, His infinite and atoning sacrifice, His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension to the right hand of the Majesty on high, left neither room nor need for 'another gospel.'

“The Sunday afternoon meeting of men only (5,000 in number) in the Exhibition Building was a time of extraordinary power. Sin—dark, destroying, hateful, and tragic—was set forth with singular effectiveness. Strong men sat in strange silence and trembling, as Dr Chapman pleaded with them to turn to God and to the power of the Lord Jesus Christ, to save and deliver from the exceeding sinfulness, guilt, and doom of sin.”

The gospel is still God's power unto salvation, and where faithfully preached in the energy of the Holy Ghost, men are drawn by its irresistible power. On the other hand, many are turning to fables and infidelity. In the words of a Roman Catholic bishop :—

“It is distressing to see so many sects on the downgrade in matters of doctrine. Their churches were being emptied, and they shrank from any dogmatic assertions.

“A Free Church chapel was built near him in Liverpool ten years ago, and despite frantic efforts to get people to attend it the attendance had diminished until the deacons had twice recently offered to sell it to him for Catholic purposes.”

The infidelity that is now largely proclaimed in so-called Protestant churches is driving multitudes of troubled minds into Rome. Oh, to be able to reach such with the gospel of God's grace!

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This question has of late been ***Why Men do not go to Church.*** widely discussed. It is becoming a notorious fact that ir-religion is rapidly on the increase. Many reasons have been suggested which we need not now discuss, but one writer has enclosed a rather striking letter on the subject with the following words:—

“There is but one way, and that way will come, and is coming. The Eternal Ruler brings men to Him by bringing them to their knees, either in devotion—as the few do now—or in fear. It is quite plain that before the end of this century the centre of gravity of the world's power will have shifted from West to East. China, and a heathen China, not a Christian China, is destined to humble in the dust all the proud, boastful, and unchristian nations of Europe and America. And in that great movement no notice will be taken of the fatuous cries of our Labour demagogues as to the brotherhood of man, and so on—the heathen Chinaman will look up to his leader, as of old the Moslem Moor looked

up to the house of Osman and smote the decadent Churches of the East. And this will happen to us unless the average man learns to know that he is not a demi-god, that it is his chief and primary duty to humble himself . . . and learns also to detest those false, pernicious, and unchristian doctrines which, nowadays, seem to be taken as matters of course, but which sprang up from that source of all modern unrest and ill—the French Revolution.”

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## The Death of Christ in Relation to Our Converted Days.

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**W**E do not enter on the Christian life in a state of Christlike perfection. After trusting in the death of Christ for salvation, Christ becomes the pattern of Christian living, but we soon learn that, as Christians, there are many things unlike Christ in our lives. This is true not only of those who are manifestly unfaithful, but also of those who “follow on to know the Lord.”

Christ is the only true pattern of moral loveliness, and any want of conformity to Christ is sin; and as such to be judged, confessed, and forsaken. As the Christian learns to know Christ better, as he grows in the Christian life, and understands God's Word more fully, he becomes more acquainted with the requirements of God; his conscience is increasingly

exercised, and things which in earlier days he could allow without compunction, he finally judges and forsakes with that searching of heart which the increasing light brings.

Scripture, on the one hand, gives the Christian no licence to sin; it teaches him to reckon himself dead to it. Yet, on the other hand, if a Christian falls into sin, the Scriptures, rightly understood, will not drive him to despair. A despairing Christian becomes so under the power of Satan, who often misapplies the Word of the Lord to terrify the elect of God. Sincere souls are afraid sometimes to enter on the Christian profession because of the dread of failure afterwards. Yet all Christians come short of the perfection of Christ. It is good to distrust ourselves, but what is needed is a clearer apprehension of the atoning work of Christ, and a fuller trust in His everlasting love towards the feeblest of those who truly confess His name. Nothing is further from the mind of Christ than to discourage any from further pursuing the Christian life because of being overcome by sin. It will be seen that not a few of the saints in glory, fully conformed there to the image of Christ, morally and bodily, were but poor failing creatures during the greater part of their Christian course on earth.

The babes in Christ at Corinth were unlike Christ in their way. They were walking as men, not as saints. They were giving way to

envying, strife, and divisions. The apostle tells them of their sins, and calls such persons carnal. But he ministers this truth, not in a way to discourage them from the Christian life. He does not say, "Because of these things, therefore you are not Christians." On the contrary, in the same chapter, he assures these same persons that "all things are theirs" (1 Cor. iii. 21). Christ died once for all.

"The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin."

There is no sin in our lives for which Christ did not die. The death of Christ in its atoning aspect contemplates our converted days no less than our unconverted ones. It is not true that no atonement has been made for the sins of the Christian as such. By the death of Christ the believer has been "perfected for ever," therefore no failure in our lives has been left out.

In this connection it is instructive to understand the use of the word "after" in Hebrews x. 15. It is used to call attention to the place where the forgiveness clause comes in, in the new Covenant. It comes in **after** God's promise to put His law in His people's minds, and to write it in their hearts. It is **after** promising these things that the words are added—

"I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their iniquities will I remember no more" (Heb. viii. 12).

How could Israel under the new covenant,

the Christian now, or any one in relationship with God in any dispensation, in a state of imperfection, as all are here, survive without this saving clause of forgiveness?

“If Thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who should stand? but there is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared.”

The types of Leviticus presuppose a people in relationship with God, and the sacrifices ordained were to meet the failures of the people **in that relationship**. The leper in whom the leprosy was active was put outside the camp. But he could not have been put outside the camp, unless previously in it. And he was not thus dealt with without extremely careful examination on the part of competent judges, for all was not leprosy that had a semblance of it. Now, during the time that this afflicted soul was outside the camp he had a very unpleasant task to perform. We read—

“The leper in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be rent, and his head bare, and he shall put a covering upon his upper lip and shall cry, Unclean, unclean” (Lev. xiii. 45).

This condition and cry of the leper becomingly express in type the case of a Christian who has fallen into sin. Such a case might probably typify the wicked person put away from the assembly of God in 1 Corinthians v. (or one in like circumstances). It was undoubtedly his place and became his experience to cry, “Un-



clean, unclean." But there are cases where the terrible necessity of putting away does not exist, and yet in secret before God the cry "Unclean, unclean," is incumbent also. For it is better for a man to judge himself alone before God than to be publicly judged and put away by his brethren. It is not true to say that there was no atoning provision for any sin but the **sin of ignorance** under the law. It was the sin of ignorance that the sin-offering contemplated. But what about the guilt or trespass-offering? In Leviticus vii 1-7, an offering is provided for very heinous sins, which in no sense can be called sins of ignorance. Lying, fraud, deceit, theft, false-swearing, might all be atoned for and forgiven. Of course, where confession and restitution were not brought with the he-lamb, the forgiveness would not be real. But granted the specified conditions fulfilled, it follows:—

"The priest shall make atonement for him before the Lord, and it shall be forgiven him for anything of all that he hath done in trespassing therein."

Now it is in the restoration of the leper in the day of his cleansing that the force of this particular offering is seen.

"The priest shall take one he-lamb, and offer him for a **guilt-offering**" (Lev. xiv. 12).

It was **the blood of the guilt-offering** that was put upon the tip of the right ear, the thumb of the right hand, and upon the great toe of the right foot of the leper to be cleansed. There

were other offerings besides the guilt-offering needed for the cleansing of the leper. With reference to these, supposing a case where the leper might be poor, two turtle doves might suffice for the ordinary sin-offering and burnt-offering. But there is in this case no lessening of the value of **the guilt-offering**. No matter what the poverty of the leper may be, in the day of his cleansing he must present an he-lamb for a guilt-offering. There is no lasting relief for the conscience of the Christian who has fallen into sin, apart from faith in the blood of Christ which cleanseth us from every sin (compare also Heb. ix. 13, 14).

Because of the exceeding value of the blood of Jesus, the apostle is able to direct the brethren to confirm their Christian love and forgiveness to the vile offender (2 Cor. ii. 10). Assuredly, the love of God our Saviour was confirmed to this restored brother's heart also, and his sins and iniquities were remembered no more. Ought not the death of the Saviour to be precious to such a one? Would not his songs of praise, humble no doubt, be grateful also? He had been, as it were, a leper outside the camp, and to prevent him from being swallowed up with his sorrow was brought back into the circle of love yet again.

In Ezra x. 19 is a further instance of the use of the guilt-offering. The returned remnant had been guilty of gross sin. Ezra was broken-

hearted because of this before the Lord. Being best instructed of all in that day in the truth of God, his conviction of sin was more real than that of his brethren. Increasing acquaintance of God's Word, as already observed, leads to increased tenderness of conscience. In chapter ix. Ezra blushes to lift up his face to God. It seemed to him almost as if everything were lost. "O our God," he cries, "what shall we say after this?" After such a restoration and sinning again, the question comes—

"Wouldst not thou be angry with us, till thou hadst consumed us, so that there should be no remnant nor escaping?"

Nevertheless, in this extremity of sin, repentance is given yet again, and in chapter x. one is able to say—

"Yet now there is hope for Israel concerning this thing" (chap. x. 2).

But apart from repentance, apart from deliberate breaking with the sin, there was no hope, there never is, there never will be. It needed courage, true repentance, the fear of God, shall we say? for an Israelite to restore that which he took away by robbery, or to own publicly that he had taken a false oath, but this was required of one who desired to avail himself of the guilt-offering. Yet, what will a man truly broken down with sin not do to get rid of it? It is one of the divinest of mercies when, in the

words of the leper, a guilty person sincerely cries, "Unclean, unclean," no matter who may hear it, for there is indeed hope in that case. But the leper must be rid of his leprosy before he could be brought back into the camp. Thus we read concerning the guilty remnant:—

"And they gave their hand that they would put away their wives, and being guilty, they offered a ram for their guilt" (Ezra x. 19).

May we, my brethren, in these days, turn with full purpose of heart to the Lord, ashamed and humbled before the God of our salvation for all our sins as Christians, and the sins of our brethren, yet never forgetting that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus once for all.

T. H.

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## **"Thou hast Left thy First Love."**

THOUGHTS ON REVELATION II. 1-8.

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THE one point of the address is plain, and it is left to stand in sufficient, solemn, and decisive contrast with all else that is unmingled commendation. Works, labour, patience, abhorrence of that which is evil, trying fearlessly those who put forth the highest claims, bearing for Christ's name's sake, and not fainting,—all this, put in the balance with one solemn charge:

“THOU HAST LEFT THY FIRST LOVE.” 293

“**Thou hast left thy first love.**”

And this follows :—

“Repent, and do the first works, or else I will come unto thee, and will remove thy candlestick out of its place, except thou repent.”

Let us look at these things more closely. Their interest for us is of the deepest, for upon this one root of evil has grown all that has ever been in the Church's long decline through the centuries which have intervened between that day and this. And this it is which, as we see, brings about her removal from the place of witness for Christ on earth. This it is, too, which is the secret of decline in every individual Christian. For us all it should rouse the earnest, heart-searching inquiry, “Is it I?” For, if it can be truly said of any of us, “Thou hast left thy first love,” it is vain for us to think that other things can be really judged. The single eye is wanted even to see them with. We must get back to this, or there is no real recovery. Two masters, the Lord says Himself, we cannot serve.

How much there was He could commend at Ephesus! “I know thy works” is commendation clearly. But not only had they works, they **laboured**. Do you think there are really so many of whom it could be said that they **labour**? We have recognised, what is so precious to understand, that we have our different spheres of service, and that there is no mere

secular work, if really done for Christ. But to labour is to work with energy—to "toil" as the Revision gives it. How many of us toil for Christ?

Then they had patience, endurance. Many begin well, like the Galatians, but in the face of unforeseen difficulties give way. It is the mark of divine work that it endures. Human energy quickly spends itself; faith draws upon a stock that never decreases. It was true faith that wrought in these Ephesian saints.

Patience, too, is apt to degenerate into a tolerance, more or less, of evil. Finding it on every hand, and nowhere perfection, the very contact with it is apt to dull the spiritual sense, charity would fain put also the mildest construction upon everything. We are bidden to "**take forth** the precious from the vile," but we learn to tolerate the vile because of the precious. We become liberal where we have no right. The Lord praises the Ephesians for the opposite conduct:—

**"Thou canst not bear them which are evil."**

And where there was the very highest assumption, they did not fear to test it:—

"Thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars."

But more, it was true love to Christ which wrought in all this:—

"Thou hast patience, and hast borne for My name's sake, and hast not wearied."

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Yet here it follows :—

“Nevertheless I have against thee”—

not “somewhat” as if it were a little—

“that thou hast left thy first love.”

But how dreadful a dishonour to Christ is this, to lose one's first love! It is as if at first sight He was more than He proved on longer acquaintance! Is not here the very germ of final apostasy? I do not, of course, mean that the Lord will allow any of His redeemed to be lost out of His hand.

“God is faithful who hath called us into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ.”

And this faithfulness of God is our security.

“The gifts and calling of God are without repentance.”

Not only so; if we are born of God we have that within us which cannot suffer us to become what we were before :—

“Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him : and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.”

Yet while this is true on the one side, in the child of God as identified with the divine nature by which he is such, still, on the other side, it is no less true that in the believer also there remains yet the old nature. In him still there is that which lusts against the Spirit, and only

“if ye walk in the Spirit, ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.”

Here is what makes the world to us such a battlefield. Capable, on the one hand, of enjoying all the joys of heaven ; capable, on the other, of being attracted by that which lies under the power of the wicked one—the eye affecting the heart. Day by day we are solicited by that which lies before us, and from which there is no escape. Our danger here is first of all distraction, some gain to us which is not loss for Christ, or that dulling of the spiritual sense we just now spoke of ; the dust of the way settles upon the glass in which faith sees her eternal possessions. Our remedy is the presence of Him who with basin and towel would refresh His pilgrims, cleansing away the travel-stains that they may have part with Him.

Here alone first love is maintained. Here, in His presence, we learn His mind. The holiness of truth is accomplished in us. What is unseen but eternal asserts its power. The illusions of the prince of this world pass from us. The glory of Christ is revealed, and the eye here also affects the heart ; He becomes for us more and more the light in which we see light, the sun which rules the day, not only enlightening, but life-giving ; the light in which we walk is the “light of life.”

Now here, as I have said, first love cannot but be maintained. Who could be daily in His presence, ministered to by Him, having part



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with Him, and yet grow cool in response to His love? It is impossible. Where this is the case intimacy has not been kept up. We have not permitted the basin and towel to do its work. Assurance of heart before Him has been replaced by an uneasy sense of unfitness for His presence, the true causes for which we have not been willing fully to face, and for which the remedy therefore has not been found.

In this state there may be yet much work and labour and zeal, and true love at the bottom. Fruit may be on the tree, plentiful as ever, but not to the Master's taste as once, not **ripened** in the Sun. Form and bloom and beauty may be little lacking; this was the state at Ephesus. But the Lord says—

“Repent, and do the *first* works.”

What is the test, then, of “first love”? Not “work” activity in outward service; this they had at Ephesus; not even “labour,” for this, too, they had; no, nor yet “endurance”—though a more manifest sign than either of a divine work in the soul. Not zeal against evil, nor boldness to examine and refuse the highest pretensions; not suffering even for Christ's name, and that unwearied. All this is good and acceptable to God, and the Ephesians had it all, and yet, says the Lord—

“I have against thee that thou hast left thy first love.”

What, then, is the test of first love? It is in

**the complete satisfaction of the heart by its object.** You know what power often there is in a new thing to take possession of one for the time being. And in first love, it is characteristic that it engrosses the subject of it. The Lord claims again and again the power to give this complete satisfaction of heart to His people!

“He that drinketh of this water shall thirst again; but he that drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a fountain of water springing up into eternal life.”

“He that cometh unto Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst.”

“If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.”

Now this it is that will give a peculiar character to the life which nothing else will. It is of this the apostle speaks when he says—

“The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.”

It is this satisfaction with a heavenly object of which He is giving the effect when He says—

“This one thing I do: forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forth unto that which is before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

“What things were gain to me those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus

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my Lord ; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.”

This is the secret of happiness, who can doubt? That for which he counted all else dung and loss must have given him surpassing, supreme happiness. And happiness such as this, derived from nothing in the world, is power over the world. The back is upon it. The prize is elsewhere. The steps hasten upon a path that glows with the light of heaven. Holiness is found, as it only can be found, in heavenliness.

Such was the apostle, and Christianity is nothing else to-day. Blessed be God, it is not something either to be found far on in the Christian course, but at the beginning. It is **first** love which has these characteristics. In Christ Himself, at once for present need, all fulness is found, as His own words declare :—

“He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.”

It is in drinking of other streams that the old thirst comes back upon him who does so. “The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life” are “all that is in the world.” He that drinketh of this water shall thirst again. So the world holds its own by their very misery.

But we are not speaking of the men of the world. It is to Ephesus—to the saints there—the Lord is speaking ; to those to whom the

heavenly truth has been unveiled, the depositaries of it upon the earth, the representatives of the Church at large. And it is to the Church at large, through Ephesus, that this is now addressed. Can any doubt the truth of such an application?

[GRANT.]

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## God Our Saviour.

Address on 1 Timothy i. 1-5, 2 Corinthians ii. 14.

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**I**T is not now a day for questionings, but a day for setting Christ before the heart, the great object outside ourselves—"God our Saviour"—a living, present God. That is what we need—**God**.

"My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God."

It will not do for the soul to be living on past experiences; we have to do with a present, living God,

"Forgetting the things that are behind."

When David saw the sword of Goliath, he said—

"Give it me, there is none like that."

What was it? It was the emblem of a past experience. We can never act rightly in the present, even in the things of this life, unless we think of the future. That is a beautiful word—

"The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Prov. iv. 18).

You say, "I had a bright day yesterday."

Yes, but it ought to be brighter to-day, shining "more and more," and the word "shining light" is very strong, it should be "clear, shining light." This passage in Corinthians is chiefly ministerial, applying to Paul, but may also apply to us. When the heart is full of Christ, there is a savour, though you may not say much. God leads us in triumph in Christ, but you must be led.

Our hope is to be conformed to the image of Him who is "the first-born among many brethren, the 'Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope.'"

Turn to a verse in Acts x. 38—

"How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power ; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil : for God was with Him."

Though this is a description by the Spirit, a brief and marvellous description in one verse, of the life of Christ, we are not shut out from it. The Holy Ghost descended and remained on Him, it says twice in John i., and the Holy Ghost is on us.

In 1 Peter iii. 9, we get the character of our calling. I read the first words by way of contrast—

"Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing ; but contrariwise blessing, knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing."

We are called to blessing, to be a blessing to

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every one around us, and also to the inheritance of blessing.

There are three things in this fifth verse—

“Love out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience and of faith unfeigned.”

Christians say often, “My heart is so wicked.” Yes, but it ought not to be; it ought to be a pure heart. We must distinguish between the heart, and the evil nature in us, which was never so bad as at the present moment. The heart in Scripture is looked at as the vessel of the affections. When Christ is before the heart only, that is a pure heart, and other things retire from the heart, the eye is single. An impure heart is a selfish heart, vexed because people do not show it enough attention. A pure heart is glad to be nothing, to be unnoticed and unknown.

Then, “A good conscience.” Not a purged conscience, that we have on the ground of redemption, nor a conscience full of scruples, nor a crotchety conscience, nor a legal conscience, but what Paul spoke of when he said—

“Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man” (Acts xxiv. 16).

Then, “Faith unfeigned.” The man who has these is not like those Peter had to write of, who are “blind, and cannot see afar off,” and have forgotten that they were purged from their

old sins, but he can look right up to the throne of God ; he sees God.

We are "renewed for knowledge, after the image of Him that created" us ; God, who made the new creation. Subjective truth is useful, but we want to have the knowledge of God and Christ objectively, then we shall be right subjectively.

E. P. C.

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## The Bible Class.

Smyrna (Rev. ii. 5-8).

**W**E come now to a very special period of Church history ; it may be called the *persecution* period. Taking the history of the Church as a whole, it covers about the first two centuries. During that time, under the Roman emperors, persecution constantly broke out, inflicted, not by professed Christians, as happened later on, but by the heathen world.

The Lord reveals Himself here to His tried and persecuted people in a character that was specially calculated to sustain and strengthen their faith.

"These things saith the first and last, who became dead and lived" (*i.e.*, after becoming dead).

Deep and important truths, which are constantly Satan's point of attack, are wrapped up briefly in these words. In the first place, He who speaks is none other than God, for of God only can it be said that He is First and Last ; God

is unaffected by all time limits, and is *beyond* as even He was *before* all that pertains to *time*, be it prisons, persecution, or even death itself.

But more, He who here speaks, our adorable Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, was man as truly as He was God—"He became dead." This was one of the reasons for which He took part of flesh and blood—"He was made a little lower than the angels, **for the suffering of death**" (Heb. ii. 9). But He is risen from the dead—"He became dead and lived." How large the circle of truth contained in this short passage! The *deity* of Christ, the *humanity* of Christ, the *death* of Christ, the *resurrection* of Christ. Glorious amazing truths which may well bow the soul in worship and sustain in danger's hour.

"I know thy tribulation and thy poverty, but thou art rich."

In the first place, it is to be observed that in this address to Smyrna there is **nothing to condemn**, no leaving of first love, drawing forth a call to repentance. Persecution may limit the number of outward disciples, but it likewise induces intense reality in those who are true. There is no playing at being Christians when the fires of martyrdom are being lighted. It must be one thing or the other, but no neutrality, no half-and-half confession.

On the other hand, days of persecution are not days of great activity in Christian work, hence in these addresses "works" are left out.



At Ephesus there were many works, but first love was wanting. At Smyrna hearts beat true to Christ, but "works" were not in any prominence. They were a poor and an afflicted people, despised by the world, no doubt, and poor in the eyes of men, but in God's sight, how rich!

But not only was there persecution from without, there were dangers within. The *judaisers* were at work in the midst of the assembly. This had been a source of trouble even when the apostles were alive. The Epistle to the Galatians furnishes an inspired antidote to their pernicious teaching. Very early came the effort to destroy the peace and liberty brought in through grace, and based upon the accomplished redemption at Calvary, but apostolic power was present to keep this in check (see Acts xv.). No sooner, however, had the apostles been removed than these judaisers began to form themselves into a compact body.

"I know the railing of those who say that they themselves are Jews, and are not, but a synagogue of Satan."

This that began so early has spread and spread to such an extent that it almost characterises the whole Church. For we must remember that while each of the seven assemblies portrays successive stages, yet seeds of evil once implanted take permanent root.

In Smyrna we cannot say that those judaisers characterised the whole Church. There was the beginning of a system, small at first but rapidly

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to increase, which soon swamped the whole in legal bondage.

Are not masses of even true children of God to-day practically on Jewish ground? They are put under the law by their very religious exercises, and those who never were intended by God to be so are kept constantly groping in bondage and darkness. The sacerdotal and clerical system in vogue to-day is but a revival of Judaism, Here in Smyrna we see its commencement as a system, the formation of a party, a persecuting party, a veritable synagogue of Satan.

“Fear nothing of what thou art about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast of you into prison, that ye may be tried : and ye shall have tribulation ten days.”

Dark days were in store. There were gathering clouds of trial and persecution. And yet by all this God was accomplishing His purposes of grace towards His people, recovering them from that fatal torpor of waning first love.

“Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give to thee the crown of life.”

Martyrdom in some cases would take place. How graciously the Lord prepares His people for the coming storm! Sufferings they should have, imprisonment too, all the malice of Satan let loose upon them, even a martyr's death—but, if so, they should have the martyr's crown, the crown of life. This was a special reward for faithfulness amidst special circumstances of tribulation, and this reward will be bestowed

upon multitudes who in after-years, whether in the Middle Ages or more recently, have laid down their lives for Christ.

The promise to the overcomer in this case was of a special kind, and most suited to the martyr period.

“He that overcomes shall in no wise be injured of the second death.”

Here we get the assurance in the very strongest language that death in its final form as the judgment of God would never be theirs. The unbelieving sinner who dies must die twice, and the second death will be his final doom, not extinction, not annihilation, but the lake of fire (Rev. xx. 14). But for the saint it will never be so. He may pass through tribulation, but the period is limited—“ten days”—it will not be the endless tribulation of the ungodly.

How comforting while passing through times of suffering for Christ's sake to know that all is in God's hands, and even though persecuted, His people are never forsaken. How brightly the crown of life will shine on many a brow that now lies cold in death. How near a place will the crowd of martyrs have to Him who became dead but lives! What a special link will exist, and that for ever, between him who died in love to us, and those who have been actually and in their bodies conformed to his death! We shall not grudge them their special recompense.

A. H. B.

**“So to Walk even as He Walked.”**

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**O**H ! for a closer walk with Thee,  
My gracious, loving Lord,  
That I may here more like Thee be,  
More subject to Thy Word.

My walk on earth should be like Thine,  
This truth I fully own ;  
But, ah ! this wayward heart of mine  
To failure is so prone.

Too oft I linger on the way,  
Seduced by this world's smiles,  
Though Thou hast bid me watch and pray  
Against temptation's wiles.

Oh ! draw me nearer to Thy side,  
That side once pierced for me ;  
There may I cast away all pride,  
And meekly learn of Thee.

Yes, truly learn from day to day,  
Thy doctrine to adorn,  
Thus be more faithful on my way,  
And worldly proffers scorn.

And keep me, Lord, in lowly guise,  
Abiding in Thy love,  
Whilst waiting for Thee from the skies  
To call Thine own above !

U. U.

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Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted,  
**forgiving one another**, even as God for Christ's  
sake hath forgiven you. . . . And walk in love,  
as **Christ also hath loved us** (Eph. iv. 32, v. 2).

## Notes and Comments.

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***The Strength of the Korean Converts.*** “Two facts have recently come to light about the converts in Korea. A Bible School was recently held for a week in Yungbyen, and two of the students walked no less than 175 miles there and back to attend. Three of them walked 120 miles, and others less distances. These men have to work for their living. The other fact relates to the examination of those seeking Christian fellowship; it is of a searching character, their knowledge of the Christian faith and their life being closely reviewed. The final question is always this, ‘Have you led some soul to Jesus Christ?’ If the candidate is able to answer in the affirmative he or she is immediately approved; but, if not, they are asked to wait until their Christianity has borne some visible fruit.”

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“*China's Millions*” reports: “The ***Revival in the East.*** revivals in Korea and Manchuria, as well as here and there in China proper, stirred the people greatly, and wonderful confessions were made. Let no one think that these times have been times of spiritual enjoyment. On the contrary, the workers have expressed their horror at the  
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revelation of sin, and awe at the manifestation of God's holiness and power. One writes: 'I simply cannot describe the scene: it made one think of the day of judgment; God had come among us. All knew it, and every heart was open before Him.'"

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It is awful to think how quickly *Defying* God is forgotten and His visitations *God.* ignored. San Francisco has forgotten all about the earthquake, we are told; "no one even mentions it," so says the correspondent of a daily paper. The city is rapidly rising from its dust, and all the world stands by in wonder and flattery of man's marvellous achievements. At the stroke of noon, on a certain day recently, all over the States work ceased, trains stood still at whatever point of their journey they might be, ships stopped their engines, whilst every man was expected to drink prosperity to the city that God had but a short while before shaken to its foundations. God has spoken, not only to San Francisco but to the whole earth, "yet man perceiveth it not."

"And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts" (Rev. ix. 20, 21).

We have received a wise and thoughtful letter from a Christian friend dealing with the present divided state of the people of God, and considering the question now exercising the minds and consciences of vast numbers with reference to practical unity and fellowship. We feel compelled to quote his closing sentences, and hope to see the whole printed in separate form, which we believe will soon be done under the title, "**Step by Step until He Come**":—

"What the Lord's way (*i.e.*, of practical unity) might be we cannot tell, but it would be such as to carry the conviction to every godly heart that Himself hath done it and not man.

"Should the Coming One tarry a little longer we know not what lies ahead of those who fear the Lord and think upon His name. Events are moving with marvellous rapidity, and for aught we know the age of tolerance may be near its end, and persecution (probably disguised under some other name) may be at hand. . . . If it came to pass it might be the means of driving the flock close in upon each other and the Shepherd for comfort amid the storm, and thus good arise out of evil. But far be the thought of waiting for any outward events," &c.

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We have been obliged to hold **The Bible Class** over our *Bible Class* article this month: We hope to pass on in the January number to consider the address to the assembly at **Pergamos**.

## Notes on the Temple—No. 7.

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**WE** come now to practice again. Before,\* David was on the ground of duty, and he commanded. Now he is on the ground of love, and he appeals. After I have set such an example—after I have shown my love in this way (1 Chron. xxix.).

“Who, then, is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord?”

There is the appeal. “Who, then, is willing to fill his hand” (as the margin has it) “this day unto the Lord?” After such an example as Christ has left us, where are the willing-hearted ones such as we read of in the Epistle to the Corinthians?

“And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord and unto us, by the will of God” (2 Cor. viii. 5).

Remember Christ's glory in the salvation, edification, progress, and blessing of precious souls: that is the object. Who, then, is willing, after such an example of princely liberality as this?

Then we get the answer to the appeal:—

“Then the chief of the fathers and princes of the tribes of Israel, and the captains of thousands and of hundreds, with the rulers of the king's work, offered willingly.”

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\* This article follows on from page 212 of Vol. X.



When the Lord Jesus was here on earth He sat over against the treasury, and marked that which was put in ; and the poor widow's two mites, as we all know, were not overlooked, but they were put down in the book of God's remembrance. Ah, yes, no cup of cold water is left out of the account kept. Every act of willing-hearted devotedness is registered in God's book. We get not only the contributions of David, but the contributions of the princes obedient to his word and following his example ; but there is one feature I have been struck with here.

“Then the chief of the fathers and princes of the tribes of Israel, and the captains of thousands and of hundreds with the rulers of the king's work, offered willingly, and gave for the service of the house of God of gold five thousand talents and ten thousand drams.”

The drams are put down here. How striking that is! As we have already intimated, the two mites were taken account of as well as the abundance of the rich. He puts down the drams—the halfpence, if you please—as well as the sovereigns and half-crowns.

“And gave, for the service of the house of God, of gold five thousand talents, and ten thousand drams, and of silver ten thousand talents, and of brass eighteen thousand talents, and one hundred thousand talents of iron.”

We notice here again something which is very striking. David gave of **gold**, one hundred thousand talents (1 Chron. xxii. 14). The people

gave one hundred thousand talents of **iron**—the same amount, but not of the same preciousness. Ah, we can never come up to the surrender and service of the Lord Jesus Christ!

“And they with whom precious stones were found gave them to the treasure of the house of the Lord, by the hand of Jehiel the Gershonite.”

There are two things mentioned—the service and the treasure of the house of the Lord.

“Then the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly.”

That is the secret of their joy.

“Because with perfect heart they offered willingly to the Lord: and David the king also rejoiced with great joy.”

Devotedness to the service and treasury of God will lead to joy, if it is a willing-hearted surrender. And there is not only joy to those who thus willingly offer; but just as this gave joy to the heart of David, so there is joy to the heart of the Lord Jesus when there is this willing-hearted surrender of all we are and all we have to God's glory.

There was not merely joy to the people and joy to the heart of David, but there was something now which sprang from this.

“Wherefore David blessed the Lord before all the congregation, and David said, Blessed be Thou, Lord God of Israel.”

When there is willing-hearted surrender, there

will be thanksgiving and praise to God, and our own hearts will be cheered. It will be pleasing to the heart of the Lord Jesus, but it will abound with thanksgiving to God.

“Blessed be Thou, Lord God of Israel our father, for ever and ever.

“Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty, for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is Thine ; Thine is the kingdom, O God, and Thou art exalted as head above all.

“Both riches and honour come of Thee, and Thou reignest over all ; and in Thine hand is power and might ; and in Thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all.

“Now, therefore, our God, we thank Thee, and praise Thy glorious name.”

As Paul expresses it :—

“God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work ” (2 Cor. ix. 8).

If we want strength, energy, wisdom, if we want means to contribute, we can seek them of God. If there is a willing mind to serve, if there is a willing heart to give, God will give us means to do as we desire. It may be there is a contribution to be made, and the little child, very likely, has not got a penny in his pocket, but he says to his father, “I should like to put something into the collection ” ; don't you think the father will slip something into his hand to enable him to give as he wishes? Will God, our

heavenly Father, withhold from us the means of serving Him? No! But as David afterwards acknowledges, we must remember it all comes from God.

“But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? For all things come from Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee.

“For we are strangers before Thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers. Our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding.

“O Lord our God, all this store that we have prepared to build Thee an house for Thy holy name cometh of Thine hand, and is all Thine own,” &c.

Both of Him and through Him, and to Him are all things!

Then, in the twentieth verse, David not only sets the example, but he calls for their praises.

“And David said to all the congregation, Now bless the Lord your God. And all the congregation blessed the Lord God of their fathers, and bowed down their heads, and worshipped the Lord and the king.”

Here we close. We have brought it up to that—joy, thanksgiving, praise, worship. And, oh, may the Lord carry home to each one of our hearts that beautiful and touching appeal, after we have seen the example of the Lord Jesus Christ thus strikingly typified. “Who, then, is willing to fill his hand this day?” It is not that we are to do it to-morrow. “Who is willing to **fill his hand?**” As Paul says to Timothy, “Give thyself wholly to these things.” Be in

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them, be for them. “**One thing I do.**” “Who, then, is willing to fill his hand this day unto the Lord?”

Oh, for hearts of more thorough devotedness, after the example of Jesus, who, though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, and who, “though He was in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation,” emptied Himself—“became obedient,” in the form of a servant. And what was the result of that? “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name.”



## The Secret of the Most High.

**A**FTER Abraham's return to Bethel there is a development. Between the man who had allowed God to choose the path of his life, and the man who preferred to choose for himself, a cleavage was inevitable. Lot had come with Abraham into Canaan, had gone down with him into Egypt, but the reality of his own relations with God had to be tested, he could not walk by Abraham's faith. The vital point about Lot's path is touched by the words in Genesis xiii. 11, and “**Lot chose**” for himself. Hence separation was inevitable. “They separated one from another: Abraham **dwelt in Canaan**, and Lot

**dwelt in the cities of the plain, and pitched tents as far as Sodom."**

In the sequel the contrast between God's government with Lot and with Abraham comes out in a very striking way.

The immediate result of the separation was a third and fuller promise on the part of God, definitely giving to Abraham the land, answered on Abraham's part by a removal of his pilgrim tent to the place where a large part of the rest of his life was spent, to Hebron; and by the building of his third altar.

While Abraham is quietly dwelling at Hebron, at peace with those who live there, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre, and able to look on, as from the vantage ground of faith, upon the course of events around him, Lot is caught in the swirl and eddy of the world's headlong stream, in that strife of wills that makes up the world's history. It is the consequence of choosing for himself. In the course of the government of God, the strife of the four kings with the five is the means of breaking up the home which Lot had formed for himself in Sodom—"for he dwelt in Sodom," is the comment in xiv. 12.

If Abraham had not been dwelling in Hebron there the story would have ended, and the picture of the character of God's government left with us would have been incomplete. But Abraham was in Hebron. He had lost his old name of nationality, no longer called Abraham the Chal-

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dæan, but Abraham the **Hebrew**, the man who had crossed the river (*cf.* Josh. xxiv. 2).

To him comes the news, by a fugitive, that Lot has been swept off by the flood of invasion. God uses ordinary methods of communication, because Abraham is sensitive to the touch of His hand in guiding. In the subsequent action there is opened out to us an extraordinary picture of the nature and extent of the kingdom of God, all flowing from the obedience of Abraham.

The action falls into three parts.

First, Abraham with his small band of trained servants (*cf.* xviii. 19), and the allies, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre, sweeps away the victorious host of the rulers of the world like the chaff of the summer threshing floor. Acting in faith on the promise of God in xiii. 14-17, he asserts his divine title to the land, not for himself, but on behalf of Lot, and completely overcomes the world.

Secondly, he is met, in the king's valley, by the strange and mysterious figure of Melchisedec, the priest of the Most High God. Passing thus briefly across the arena of God's ways, this appearance of Melchisedec is like a sudden burst of unearthly light, here for a moment and then gone. In contrast with Sodom's king of a day, he comes before us as one who has neither beginning of days nor end of life, abiding for ever. Himself, first king of righteousness, then king of peace, he owns the authority and sway of another, the Most High God, possessor of

heaven and earth, whose priest he is, and whose blessing he has power to bestow. The features of his portrait are thus outlined by the hand of God as the pattern of the Son of God, made a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec. It is the Son who is the interpreter of the Father's kingdom. He makes known to us the Father, as Lord of heaven and earth, for He Himself has taken the subject place of dependence, receiving His own kingdom and glory from the Father's hands, just as He received the cup of sorrow from the same hands.

Then, thirdly, Abraham himself, refreshed by the ministry of Melchisedec, enriched by the blessing of the Most High God, towers above the king of Sodom in the majesty of faith. He now for the first time gives a name to the God who had called him from Ur of the Chaldees, the name, and the character implied in it, that he had learnt from Melchisedec. He owns Jehovah as **Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth.** What such a God may give him is all that he can need, and he will be enriched from no other source.

So Abraham is brought to dwell in the secret of the Most High in order that he may abide under the shadow of the Almighty. The soul may be very far from realising the meaning and extent of God's government, even after the path of obedience has begun. But only the Son Himself, who has learned for us what obedience is



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through the things which He suffered, can introduce us into the secret of the Father's kingdom, even as He only can bring us into the Father's house and all the love that is at home there.

It is remarkable that this scene, unfolding the nature of the kingdom of God so wonderfully, should be introduced before the question of righteousness is raised with Abraham. It was surely fitting that the meeting with Him who is **first King** of righteousness, and the discovery from Him that the God of his intercourse is the Most High, possessor of heavens and earth, should come before the beginning of his own history and progress in righteousness.

This is the Lord's own order, "His kingdom and righteousness."

Perhaps we have not fully gathered the meaning of the linking of the two in this order. At any rate it is a matter to ponder.

So we are brought to the beginning of that righteousness whose growth is traced out in the subsequent history. Abraham had already obeyed God, but we learn that he now "believed Jehovah." It was "**after these things.**" These words are important, because they connect the fresh development of God's ways with the past. We shall meet the same words later on.

It was after he had obeyed the call, after he had gone down into Egypt and been brought back to his starting point, after he had let God choose for him instead of choosing for himself,

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and finally, after he had overcome the world and learnt from Melchisedec that Jehovah was the Most High God, possessor of heavens and earth, "after these things" we come to the righteousness. The immediate occasion was the more intimate intercourse of God with Abraham, which followed on his entry into the secret of the Most High. For the first time God says "I am" to him. Not now "I will" do something, but "**I am.**" Not what God **does** for him, but what He **is** for him, is now the subject of revelation to his soul. The result is the first conversation of Abraham with God. He speaks to God, answers Him, and lets the thoughts of his heart come out. It appears that he had not fully laid hold of the previous promises of God as to his seed. Now he is facing them, and cannot understand how they are to be carried out. The answer is striking, "**He led him out,**" made him look up to the heavens, as much the possession of the Most High God as the earth of xiii. 16, and gave him the promise of a seed as numberless as the stars of the heavens.

**Then** Abraham "believed Jehovah, and He reckoned it to him as righteousness." He did not tell Abraham so, but from that moment his history as a righteous man begins. "My just man shall **live** by faith." No analysis of a grain of wheat could discover in it the root, the stem, the blade, and the full ear which lie concealed there. But when it is grown it needs no analysis

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to tell the nature of the fruit that has sprung from that tiny grain.

So to discover the nature of that righteousness, here mentioned for the first time in Abraham's history, we need to trace its growth and development until the fulfilment of its promise is reached. Meanwhile the start is plain. Abraham has stepped off the familiar ground of natural law, of cause and effect, and has "against hope believed in hope," strong in faith, giving glory to God.

It is with this casting all on God, stepping off the line of action of what we call purely natural causes, that the righteous life begins. Everything depends on God, nothing on human calculations. The resurrection of Christ lay outside natural causes, and the beginning of the righteous life for us lies in believing on Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. We start anew with God on a line of effects only to be accounted for by what God is, His nature and character.

Hence the moment the soul drops back on to the familiar ground of natural causation the whole thing goes wrong, "My just man shall live of **faith**."

But this is what Abraham does in the sixteenth chapter.

By listening to his wife, who has not believed God as he has, he is brought down to her level, the old level of natural cause and effect. Accord-

ing to nature Abraham's belief was folly. So it appeared to Sarah.

Accordingly she takes the common-sense view of the matter, and says the thing must be brought about by natural means. Not so are the purposes of God wrought out, and not so does the just man live the life appointed for him.

The result of natural cause is natural effect; the bondwoman produces a son who by nature is not, and can never be, the son of promise. He lives and becomes the father of a race ever at enmity with the seed of promise. This is God's way of pointing out that the just **must** live by faith.

It is no use attempting to bring God's purposes to pass by our own wills, in our own time, by natural means. The only result will be a crop of thorns, that will give us many a sore thrust and many bitter reflections. Still God will use even our crop of thorns to His own ends and our blessing. His government is grace.

S. H. H.

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## Faith and Visible Evidence.

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**B**Y faith is here meant believing God, and by visible evidence is meant *outward proofs* as distinct from the spiritual power of God and Christ. Christian blessings are of a spiritual

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character, and can only be discerned and received by a spiritual faculty. Faith is a spiritual faculty, and by it we appropriate spiritual blessing. God speaks and we believe Him. Abraham believed God, believed what God said to him, and "his faith was counted unto him for righteousness." It is surely a righteous thing to believe *God*, and those who do not believe Him are in a state of unrighteousness.

Christ as a man believed God. Believing God was one of the essentials of His sinless human nature. He naturally and intuitively owned the Old Testament Scriptures as the Word of God. He was pre-eminently the Man who lived by every word which proceeded out of the mouth of God. By the Scriptures Jehovah testified *to* Him as His righteous servant, as well as *of* Him to others. But Christ needed no visible evidence to prove to Him that the Old Testament Scriptures were the Word of God.

In writing to Christians the Apostle Peter compares the Word of God to milk. He writes :—

"As new-born babes desire earnestly the pure mental milk of the Word that by it ye may grow up to salvation, if indeed ye have tasted that the Lord is good" (1 Pet. ii. 2, New Trans.).

Milk satisfies the hunger of babes ; it relieves their necessity ; and we can tell by the taste of our daily bread, without further proof, that it is good to eat. All that we ask, and all that the

new-born babe requires, is that the milk and the bread be unadulterated. This the Word of God is. It is "purified seven times" (Ps. xii. 12). Faith earnestly and readily accepts the Word of God. It is of the nature of faith so to do. But it detects an imposture. Faith is a wonderful power from God. It is a divine creation in the soul of the believer which responds to the Word of God as the bodily eye responds to the material world around it. Faith is seeing the invisible. Let the busy critics and philosophers try to understand it. We who have believed, did not believe because we saw miracles. We rested, did we not? on the Word of life for what it is worth, without any visible evidence or miraculous manifestation whatsoever. But what is that Word on which we rested not worth? We received God's testimony, and, as it were, set our seal to the fact of all facts, the fact that **God is true.**

We have eternal life, forgiveness of sins, and are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. But what has visible evidence to do with these things? The Word of God brings men into God's presence in such a way that they are conscious of His presence. Conviction of sin against Him, and the witness of the Spirit that we are children of God, are not delusions. But what has visible evidence to do with the one or with the other? These blessings fall upon weak and feeble men and women in

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times of trial, in circumstances of loneliness, in times of sickness when all the visible evidence appears against them.

*“We, through the Spirit, wait for the hope of righteousness.”*

We wait, as justified persons, for the Lord to take us home. It would not be righteous to leave justified persons for ever in an unredeemed state in any sense. We know that the resurrection to life of the justified is sure. But before the resurrection takes place, what has visible evidence to do with it? Abraham glorified God by believing what he did not see. For what prospect was there of a son to Sarah when she was past age? Yet—

*“Not being weak in faith, he considered not his own body already become dead, being about a hundred years old, and the deadening of Sarah’s womb, and hesitated not at the promise of God through unbelief; but found strength in faith, **giving glory to God**, and being fully persuaded that what He has promised He is able also to do” (Rom. iv. 19-21, New Trans.).*

It seemed to the rich man in Hades (Luke xvi. 27-31) that his five brethren only needed some visible evidence to lead them to true repentance. Too late this rich man realised his lost condition. Too late he sought for mercy. His torment must have been fearful, for he was willing that his five brethren should be separated from him for evermore rather than come to suffer where he was. He asked for Lazarus to be sent,

but no visible evidence could be sent to his brethren. For visible evidence, of one visiting them from the dead, would not have accomplished any good. The answer to the rich man's prayer is as follows:—

“They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them.”

This was not sufficient for the rich man.

“He said, Nay, father Abraham, but if one went unto them from the dead they will repent.”

Then we get the final and suggestive answer:—

“If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.”

Scripture is full of miracles, signs and wonders, but, as a rule, spiritual blessings to those who beheld them did not follow as a result. The plagues—miracles of judgment—in Egypt did not suffice to convert Pharaoh. In answer to the uplifted rod of Moses, Pharaoh saw the waters that were in the river turned to blood. The plague of frogs was palpable enough. Did not Pharaoh feign repentance to get rid of them? His repentance was not real. Yet every plague was a double miracle, if it be allowed that there was the exercise of divine power to bring on the calamity, and again to take it away. Indeed these miracles in Egypt, instead of making man better, seemed to have increased his rebellious and defiant spirit, for, despite the visible pillar of Israel's protection and the experience of the



plagues in the land, these bold enemies followed God's people into the depths of the Red Sea and perished in the returning waters. In Revelation xvi. 11 we read of men being scorched with great heat, yet blaspheming the very God who had power over these plagues :

“They repented not to give Him glory.”

The history of Israel is a history of miracle. Israel's passage through the Red Sea was miraculous. The supply of their meat and drink was miraculous. There was a daily miracle of manna. The water that came from the rock was miraculous too. The pillar of cloud and fire was miraculous, and so was the giving of the law at Sinai. “The sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the Mount **in the eyes of the children of Israel.** When sacrifice was offered, miraculous fire devoured the sacrifices. We might almost say that in Israel the miraculous ceased to be miraculous because of its continuous display.

But what was the result on the heart and conscience of Israel of all this visible evidence of the majesty and glory of God? Only increasing unbelief and murmuring against God and against His servants!

Hence we find God inquiring of Moses—

“How long will this people provoke Me? and how long will it be ere they believe Me for all the signs which I have showed among them?” (Num. xiv. 11).

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The Jews required signs, but the signs did not do them any good. It was the same when Christ came. We must not suppose that all the miracles that Jesus wrought are recorded in the Gospels.

“Many other signs did Jesus which are not written.”

Judas witnessed miracles and probably wrought them, yet his hard heart remained unbroken to the end. The miracles which Jesus wrought were one of the main causes why the Jews sought to get rid of Him. Thus we read:—

“Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council and said, ‘What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let Him thus alone, all men will believe on Him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation’” (John xi. 47, 48).

The miracles of Christ were not miracles of judgment. There were no law and terror about them; poor, oppressed man felt relief from his pain and sorrow under the gentle, healing touch of Jesus. His miracles were supernatural manifestations of tender mercy by a divine Man present on earth revealing the love of God, revealing that love by word and deed. Yet for all this love He received the hatred of the Jews. Miracles of love only made manifest the wickedness of man, of men who had the privilege of seeing the most favourable displays of visible evidence. “They had no cloak for their sin.” To believe the written record of the miracles is a very different thing to seeing them wrought.

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This also is receiving God's testimony, as is faith in the inspired record of all parts of Scripture. But it grieved the Lord Jesus when He met with those who desired signs. It was a reproof when He said :—

“Except ye see signs and wonders ye will not believe.”

He did not think much of those who believed in Him only because they saw the miracles which He did. Concerning such it is written, that “Jesus did not commit Himself unto them.” He does, however, commit Himself unto those who believe Him, to those who are born of God, who are also baptized by one Spirit into one body, and who make everything to depend for time and for eternity on the sure Word of God.

Thomas wanted to see before believing, and thus in himself furnished a type of Israel who when they see will believe in the latter day. It is to that day the following scripture refers :—

“After the glory hath He sent me unto the nations which spoiled you. . . . For behold I will shake mine hand over them, and they shall be a spoil to those that served them, **and ye shall know that the Lord of Hosts hath sent me unto you.**

“And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be My people : and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and **thou shalt know that the Lord hath sent me unto thee**” (Zech. ii. 8, 9, 11).

There will be much visible evidence “after the glory.” After the Son of man has come in His glory, and the whole house of Israel has seen

judgment executed on the last great enemy with his countless hosts in the holy land, and the nations joining themselves to the Lord for blessing, **then Israel will know** that Jehovah has sent His Messiah. They will **see** and believe. But how much better to believe **now**.

“Blessed are they which have **not** seen and yet have believed.”

Brethren, **let us continue to believe God, no matter how perilous the times.**

T. H.

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## Roast with Fire.

“Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire.”—EXOD. xii. 9.

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**WHAT** pains God takes to make His will known. He speaks by type and shadow, and by parable ; He speaks by the law and the prophets, by apostles and evangelists, and through His well-beloved Son. The Old Testament foreshadows the New, and it is a quotation from the former to which I want to draw the reader's attention. It is at the head of this paper and is a scripture that shows how Israel was to act on the night of their deliverance from Egypt.

They were to start right with God, and as His redeemed people, pass on to Canaan, the promised

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land. He would be their God, and they should be His people ; delivered from bondage, saved from Egypt, and destined for blessing in another country.

A lamb or goat without blemish had to be selected and killed ; the flesh to be eaten, and the blood used as a token upon the lintel and two door-posts of the houses in which the supper was eaten. The blood sheltered them from the judgment that fell upon Egypt, and the flesh of the slain lamb provided them with food to sustain them on their journey. Now we must note it was to be "Roast with Fire" ; no other way would do ; water must not be used, as that would retard the action of the fire, and certainly they must not eat it raw. This is most important for it cuts up root and branch what men are pleased to call the "New Theology."

Fire is a type of judgment in Scripture, and on various occasions we find God using fire as such, and in a coming day He will burn up the earth with fire (2 Pet. iii. 7). Fire, therefore, (or judgment) was to do its work upon the lamb before it could be appropriated by the people. It was the blood of the roast lamb that was needed to shelter them from the terrible judgment that overtook Egypt that night. Had they not availed themselves of it, judgment would have fallen upon them likewise. They must sacrifice the lamb or bear the penalty of their disobedience.

Now, if we note that this paschal lamb is a

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type of that one great sacrifice at Calvary (1 Cor. v. 7), we shall see it was necessary that Jesus, as the Antitype, should suffer the judgment of God against sin upon the cross. Had He not gone to the cross, He could not have fulfilled all the types and the shadows that had gone before, and He could not have been a sacrifice for sin.

The "New Theology" would retain Jesus as a pattern man to be admired and imitated, while refusing Him as a substitute; in other words, they would have Christ apart from the cross. God has, however, already tested man in this way, by sending His beloved Son into this world, and keeping Him here for thirty-three years. And what was man's reply to God's gracious favour. Why, even in His infant years they sought His life, so that His parents had to flee with Him into Egypt. Again, when He began His ministry of grace, they attempted to cast Him down from the brow of the hill upon which Nazareth was built, for they did not like grace, and were as much opposed to it as the "New Theology." And later on when He laid claim to divinity (John x. 31) they took up stones to cast at Him, for they were as much opposed to it as the most earnest Unitarian. At length, when His time had come to suffer, they were successful in their wicked plan, and betrayed and murdered the Just One, for He allowed them to carry out their fell design (Acts vii. 52).

God is not to be known now apart from faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, faith founded on the work He accomplished on the cross as the sin-bearer (1 Pet. i. 21).

To seek Him in any other way is a fatal error. It is Satan's work, although he keeps out of sight, and employs agents of a pleasing and blameless reputation; yea, even an apostle he could use in this work.

Alas! for this poor deceived world. Why are men such fools? Why not accept God's wondrous grace, and rejoice in the finished work of Christ?

It is because men look at sin from their own standpoint, and not from God's, and therefore they regard it lightly; it is not until the soul gets into contact with God that man sees the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and how he needs a sacrifice to cleanse it away. God has provided it, will you have it? But remember, if you will, that it must be the sacrifice “roast with fire.”

F. R.

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## “Watch and Pray.”

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**T**HOUGH deeper and deeper grows the gloom,  
 The deepest is still in Future's womb;  
 Then gird we our loins who have the light,  
 As children of Day, and not of Night,  
 And watch, and be instant in prayer!

If dread Persecution's fire be low,  
Its ashes yet hold a smould'ring glow ;  
And Hate in a moment with its breath  
Could kindle again the flames of Death,  
Then watch, and be instant in prayer !

Though Hate be restrained by God in love,  
Till safely He bears us Home above ;  
Its quiver is full of rankling darts  
To hurl at our feeble falt'ring hearts,  
Then watch, and be instant in prayer !

This world is in league with Scorn and Hate,  
Though clad in a garb of cultured state ;  
Conform to its ways, then smiles are thine,  
But frowns are thy lot should'st thou decline,  
Be firm then, and watch unto prayer !

It has a religion for its own,  
The harvest from seed which Thought has sown,  
A counterfeit thing which lulls to sleep,  
Enshrouding the heart in darkness deep,  
Beware then, and watch unto prayer !

Beware of beginnings ; shun its guiles,  
Deceitful, and deadly, wreathed in smiles,  
It blasts with its breath as with a blight  
Enwrapping the soul in gloom of Night,  
Resist it, and watch unto prayer !

Example is catching, Brethren, rise !  
Lest slumbers perchance ourselves surprise,  
For many who once the Course well ran  
Are snared by traditions "after man,"  
Then watch, and be instant in prayer !

U. U.