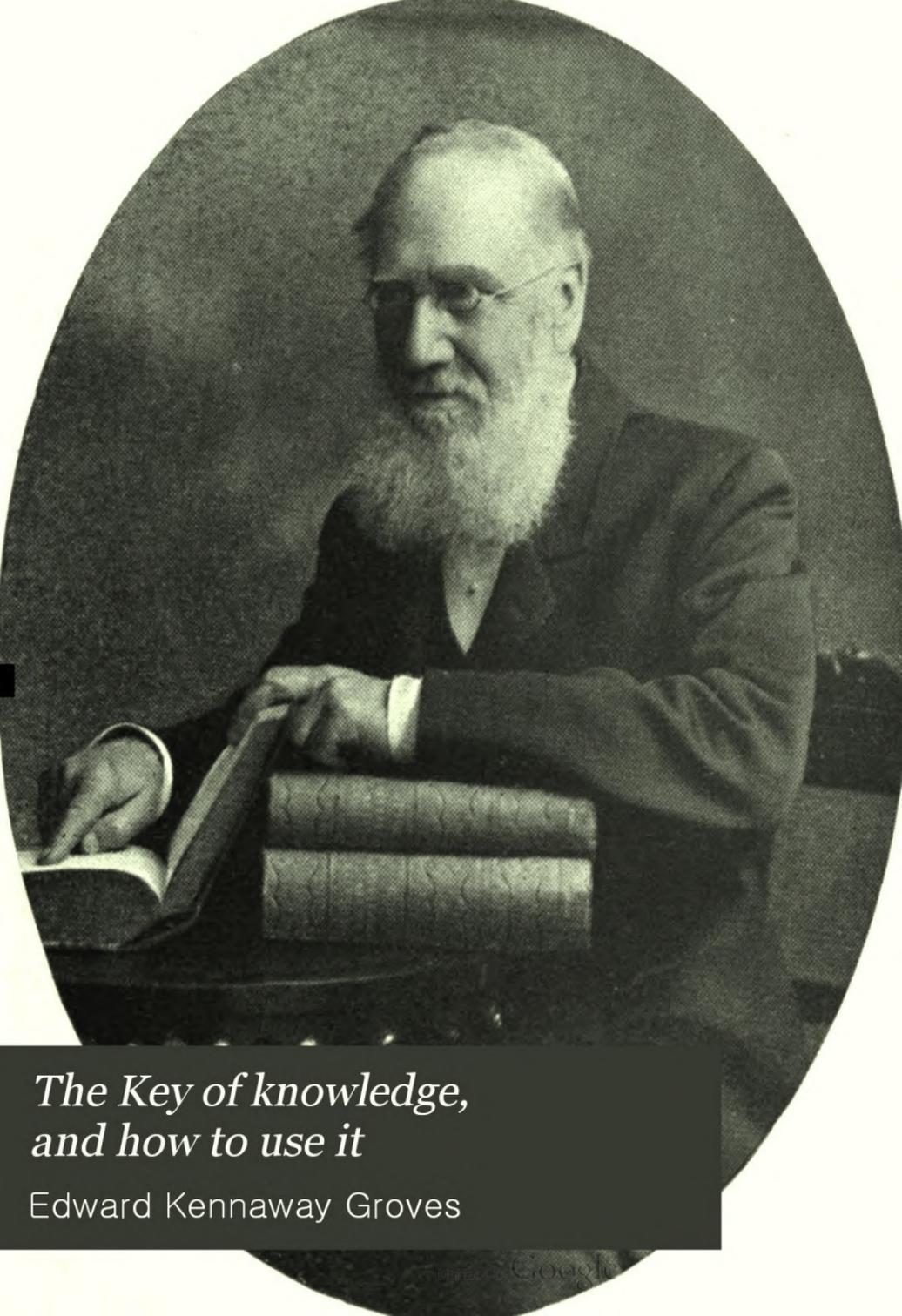

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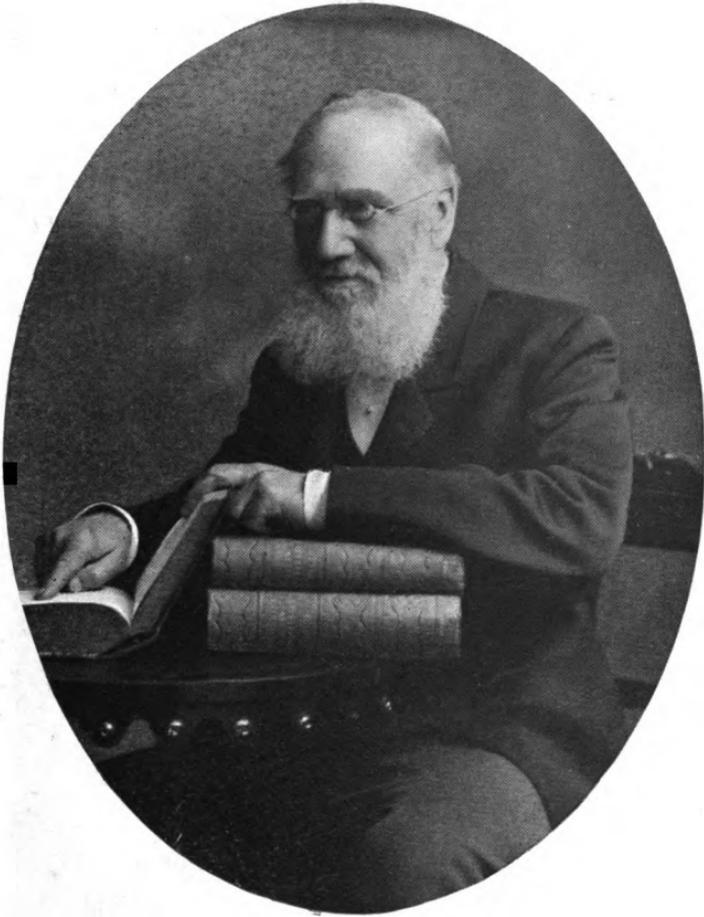


*The Key of knowledge,
and how to use it*

Edward Kennaway Groves







The Key of Knowledge

And How to Use It.

*With a Preface by the Editor of "The Faith" and
An Appendix giving some account of
REGENT EVENTS IN CHURCH HISTORY,*

BY

EDWARD KENNAWAY GROVES,

OF BRISTOL.

"I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil: I hate and abhor lying but thy law do I love."—Ps. cxix. 162, 3.

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P R E F A C E

TO THE INDEX OF THE "KEY OF KNOWLEDGE,"
BY THE AUTHOR.

IT may surprise the reader to find so small a volume supplied with so copious an **Index** as that which follows.

The reason for it will appear if he or she bears in mind that the book has not been written either to shew off the author's knowledge or to impart it to others, but with the distinct purpose of enabling all who truly love our Lord Jesus Christ to become able ministers of the New Testament.

In order to this it is necessary for them readily to find every passage of Scripture that has been quoted or referred to for their own further examination. Not one in a thousand of my readers will go through the hundreds of verses to see if the pages where they occur are correctly pointed out, but if that one becomes inspired to search the Word with the same "**weapons of precision**" (to borrow military language) he will become one of a thousand hereafter, when Continental Heathendom will appeal to us for instruction in the Word of God.

We are familiar with the advertizer who cautions the public against spurious imitations of the articles he sells, and before parting, I must warn the Bible Student *against the fallacy of supposing that more recent concordances must be an improvement on those which were published sixty years ago.*

A worthy but uneducated preacher among the Plymouth Brethren informed me that he never addressed a letter to a clergyman as "Reverend," because the term belongs to God, being found only in Psalm cxi. 9, "Holy and reverend is His name." Suppose you wished to ascertain the truth of this inference and consulted Dr. Young's Concordance, or the "Exhaustive," of more recent date, will they afford you any light? **NONE WHATSOEVER.** But if you look up the word "reverend" in the Index of the Englishman's Hebrew Concordance (p. 1619),

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you are referred to page 559 for the information you seek, and discover that the word so translated is a participle of the verb to fear, and you can see forty passages where this participle is found, shewing that the word is not exclusively divine property but is applicable also to that which God has created. This FACT taken in connection with the command in Romans xiii. 7 to render to all their dues, makes me as CERTAIN that it pleases God for me to attach this honorary prefix to the name of one of His ministers as to address the medical man as "Doctor," or the peer of the realm as "Lord."

You can obtain all the literature needful for a sound theological education for half the cost of a bicycle (say for five pounds), and the exquisite satisfaction of getting the mind of the Lord first hand amply repays the undoubted toil it often requires to obtain it.

Yours in His service,

EDWARD K. GROVES.

Preface to the Volume

BY THE EDITOR OF "THE FAITH."

IN response to the invitation of our good friend the Author, we pen a brief preface to this work.

Elder E. K. Groves is so well and favourably known that he needs no introduction to mutual friends, and such we claim are all the readers of *The Faith*, in which this work has already appeared. We can but express, however, our warm personal sympathy with him in that he has incurred, and cheerfully paid, the penalty—always demanded in religious circles—for advocating what is not popularly believed, even though it be supported by the authority of the Scriptures, and consistent with reason and justice—as in this case. It is, indeed, in days such as these, when the spirit of compromise is so highly honoured in professedly Christian circles, quite refreshing to find a pastor and teacher who is prepared to cast mere worldly prudence to the winds, in his regard for Truth.

Did but all those who stand high in the confidence and esteem of the Churches, and yet are privately believers in Conditional Immortality, as boldly avow their sympathy with this Apostolic though unfashionable doctrine, the persecution (direct and indirect), which has now lasted for more than thirty years, would cease. By such action are not these guilty of a measure of disloyalty, not only as it regards their Divine Head and the Truth He has given to the world, but also against brethren who hold "like precious faith," and who for its confession are subject to pains and penalties from which it is time, by a general confession, that they should be relieved?

One of the greatest difficulties in our personal work (editorial and publishing) is the necessity we are under to suppress the names, and so respect the silence, of those who hold but will not publicly acknowledge this "Faith once delivered to the saints." And we would hereby ask such, by some concerted effort, to have the "courage of their convictions," and own the faith that is in them.

Our first acquaintance with the Author was shortly prior to the Worcester Conference of May 1901, when we invited him to speak at two of the evening meetings. It was on that occasion

that for the first and only time we saw the Concordance, in three volumes, which forms the subject of this work on "The Key of Knowledge." We clip a paragraph from our report of those meetings:—

"Elder E. K. Groves—for more than 25 years a coadjutor of the late Mr. Geo. Müller, of "Bethesda," Bristol—placing three ponderous volumes on the table, said he had brought these to give them an object lesson. The volumes were a most valuable Greek and Hebrew Concordance, by the study of which, with his Bible, he had been led into his present light on the subject of Life only in Christ. Indeed, when he had been forced by the reading of Mr. Chesterman's pamphlet on Immortality to study the subject from God's Word, with the aid of this the most valuable Concordance ever published, he had spent 200 hours on the meanings of soul and its allied words, eternal, etc. The result was, that Satan's hook baited with error, had ceased to lure him, and he saw clearly and fully, that Christ was the alone source to men of Life and Immortality."

It was soon after this that the Author proposed a series of articles thereon in *The Faith*, to which we gladly assented. The first article appeared in our issue for April 1902 and the last in May 1903. Other articles preceded and followed, some of which, being matters of general interest, are re-published herewith, forming a valuable Appendix.

As it was desirable that the series should also appear in book-form,—for which it has been carefully revised, and an elaborate Index prepared,—it is now separately published, and we seek for it your kindly consideration, assured that if it be studied without prejudice, it will practically revolutionize the reader's eschatological conceptions,—supposing that he has not already been led into the light of The Life Truth.

Needless to say, to any who know us, that whilst in general agreement with the Author, we do not subscribe *in toto* to his views. On The Life question we are practically in agreement with him on all points, but, in consistency, we must express our decided dissent from the post-millennial views of the Author, as enunciated in the chapter on "The Kingdom of God." We are not called upon here to do more than guard our own consistency, the "Kingdom" indeed, being a secondary matter in this volume, and concerning which we can agree to differ. On all that pertains to the great theme of Life only in Christ, we can give this work our heartiest commendation.

Believe me, your servant in Christ,

CYRUS E. BROOKS,

Malvern Link, Feb. 23rd, 1904.

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THE KEY OF KNOWLEDGE AND HOW TO USE IT.

CHAPTER I.—INTRODUCTION.

THE KEY OF KNOWLEDGE was a term used by our Lord in Luke xi. 52 to describe something which the lawyers had taken away from the people and made no use of themselves.

It conveys to our minds under the simile of one of the commonest articles of daily life the idea of

A RIGHT UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORD OF GOD.

The promise in John xvi. 13 that the Holy Spirit shall guide the believer into all truth remaineth sure for all time, and therefore it is a matter of the first importance to know whether the language of our Bible correctly expresses the mind of God to man.

There is not one in ten thousand, possibly in a million of the readers of our English Bible, who is aware that we have had for more than fifty years past the means of testing the translation of any word concerning which we need more light; and that we can avail ourselves of the same on learning simply the **alphabet** of the Hebrew and Greek languages.

The Englishman's Hebrew and Greek Concordances, published in the year 1843, are three volumes which have shed light on my study of Scripture for forty years, and it is my calm conviction that with their aid we may obtain **certainty of conviction** on all TRUTH

which it is the will of God for us to know. Where they fail to enable us to understand the **former things** we may rest assured that it concerns us not to know them—and when this applies to **things to come** it is because God intends such prophecies—like the 53rd of Isaiah not to be understood in the least till they have actually taken place.

I suppose there is no difference of opinion as to the necessity of learning the alphabet of a language before we can possibly read it. God has, as it were, put the alphabet of divine knowledge in the first verse of our Bible.

IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED THE HEAVEN
AND THE EARTH.

As a rule this incomparably wonderful passage is **skipped** because it is utterly beyond human comprehension. There is not a fact concerning anything that the eye can see that is more **certain** than that you cannot make anything out of nothing, which, is the meaning of the Latin proverb: "Ex nihilo nihil fit." The word CREATE is explained in Hebrews xi. 3 to be the making of visible things out of the invisible; and this is affirmed by God as the origin of all the worlds the eye of man rests on.

Struggle as we may with the stupendous assertion of Genesis i. 1, any alternative to account for the existence of what our eyes can see is even more unthinkable.

The **VALUE** of the first text in the Word of God lies in its placing the power and wisdom of the Almighty at an infinite distance from that which has been bestowed upon man, and it has its due effect upon us when it leads us to realize in the light of what God **HAS DONE** that we can be absolutely sure of the fulfilment of what He says He **WILL DO**.

What is the practical value of meditation on the opening sentence of God's revelation to man seeing it takes him at once out of his depth? Much every

way, and the book of Job which follows Genesis in chronological order affords a perfect example of its divine application. The fiery trial which that patriarch was called to pass through in the loss of all things, bereavement and constant acute bodily suffering, was borne by him in a way that never has and never will be surpassed in human experience. But it pleased God in order to prevent His servant from becoming exalted above measure in the remembrance of the grace that he exhibited to ADD to all that Satan had laid upon him the **false accusations of his friends**. Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, like true conservatives, argued that because God had never yet allowed a really righteous man to be thus overwhelmed by calamity, He never would do so, and therefore concluded that Job had indeed transgressed. If you look at chapter xxii., verses 6, 7, and 9, you will see six falsehoods as to matters of FACT in the compass of three verses. This treatment fairly drove Job out of his mind, and he proceeded to take God to task as a man might deal with a neighbour who had committed an unprovoked assault upon him. **The Infinite distance between Creator and creature was lost sight of** and the process of divine healing of the unsound mind was to restore Job's consciousness in this respect. God put scores of questions to His afflicted servant without waiting for a reply. The effect of each was to make the greatness of his God and the smallness of himself more and more distinct. At last Job comes to the point of saying "I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." The restoration to sanity was complete, and Jehovah grants His honoured servant compensation for past injury in a manner worthy of Himself.

It must be more than ten years ago that I heard of a man whose parents were believers and who had been brought up, as we say, under the example and teaching of Mr. Müller, resigning fellowship with the church of Bethesda because he had discovered the

untrustworthiness of Scripture. I was so astonished at the fact brought under my notice that I resolved to call upon him, and reason upon the position which he had taken. One summer Sunday evening I met him seated in his own doorway, enjoying a pipe and saw his peaceful expression clouded by the recognition of his visitor. "It is of no use, Mr. Groves," said he, "for you to argue with me on the step I have taken. One sentence—Exod. xx. 11—has been proved by science to be utterly untrue, and I am justified in discarding the volume that contains it." Having said these words he withdrew into the house and I had to retreat, baffled in respect of the conversation I sought—and take home the text that had been thrown at my head to be subjected to the microscope.

IN SIX DAYS THE LORD MADE HEAVEN AND EARTH THE SEA AND ALL THAT IN THEM IS was the passage that discredited the authenticity of Holy Writ, so I searched out the word MADE on which everything else rested. I found it on page 981 of the Englishman's Hebrew Concordance—one of the commonest words in the language, occurring in the Old Testament Scriptures over two thousand five hundred times! How should such a discovery help me? By the most remarkable fact that, following the passage under consideration, it was repeated **fifty** times in unbroken succession in connection with the MAKING of the Tabernacle—and nothing is more certain than that all of it was constructed from **visible** material.

What though man had discovered by the closest observation of cause and effect that this world of ours was CREATED countless ages before the commencement of the Mosaic record? "**In the beginning**" includes that distant point in past time—"The Story of Creation," as it is loosely called, is but a brief record of how this world of ours which had been for some unknown period (as we learn from other Scripture) the prison of fallen angels was transformed into a sphere suitable for the habitation of man and beast—out of

material that had already been created. No one who has learned the Divine Alphabet, or in other words has reverently accepted as the TRUTH the first verse in Genesis, can find any difficulty in believing that it took the Creator no more than a week to prepare a habitation for the human race replete with everything necessary for their comfort.

It is related of man that God said "Let us make man in our image after our likeness" (Gen. i. 26). From this statement the most wonderful inferences have been drawn, which will not stand for a moment in the light of other Scripture. "God is a Spirit" we are told by Him who alone really knew Him (John iv. 24). God is also invisible as we learn from Col. i. 15. So that the "image" and "likeness" cannot exist in the form upon which the eye rests but in some character or quality of soul which separates him from the brute creation. The children of Israel to whom this revelation was first made knew enough about "images" and too much. There was all the difference between the image and the original it was intended to represent. I am weak in mathematics but I will attempt to set forth the statement under consideration in the form of an equation. As the Creator is to the man whom He created so is created man to the image which he is clever enough to carve and then fool enough to worship.

The Infinite distance between God and man is thus graphically stated in terms which are quite within the comprehension of the latter.

The physiologist asserts, it may be, that the distinguishing power of the human being is in the brain. Now those who, like Sir John Lubbock, have made the ant a life study inform us that an average ants' nest contains as many inhabitants as our own city, and in their search for food can at once recognize in any ant they may find in the field one of their own community to be helped, or one from another nest (of the same species precisely) to be robbed of its

spoil. Imagine a citizen of Bristol able to detect a fellow townsman or woman in any part of England at first sight! He would be considered a perfect miracle of intelligence, and yet God has bestowed on a tiny insect which anatomically has no brain at all, a gift which all the culture of human intellect would fail to produce! Man—let us ever remember—is intellectually so feeble that he cannot listen to even two of his fellows at the same moment without becoming hopelessly confused.

For all that, God has made him the Lord of creation, and endowed him with peculiar faculties which fit him for the office, and which are wholly wanting in the brute creation. He is able to record the events of his time for the information of succeeding generations, and he is able to take pleasure in and search out the works of God apart altogether from any necessity for his own existence.

The nations which are alive to-day enjoy the fruit of the labours of preceding centuries, and it is most interesting to notice in Scripture how the revelations of God to man are graduated to the intelligence of each generation. It was no part of His purpose to reveal to him the nature and extent of His material kingdom, and there is no doubt that in the earlier ages of humanity this earth was considered to be far and away the largest and most important of the works of His hands. **Now** we know that this world is to the Universe but as one of the smaller gravel stones on the Chesil beach at Portland to the millions of larger pebbles of which it is composed. In the region of the minute also discoveries have been made which our forefathers would have considered absolutely incredible.

“What should you think represented the **middle** of living creatures?” asked a microscopist of an intelligent youth. After pondering he came to the conclusion that between the elephant and the smallest of animalculi, a dog or perhaps a cat would represent

the mean distance between the extremes. However the man of science told him that he had placed it far too high—a house fly would be nearer the mark.

All these discoveries of the nineteenth century do not however touch the impregnable rock of Holy Scripture, and though I can not follow Sir Robert Ball into the depths of astronomical research I can sing with dear old Andrew Bonar:—

“ That Thou shouldst think so much on me
Being the God Thou art,
Is **darkness** to my intellect
But **sunshine** to my heart.”

Here and there we find in the Old Testament a glimpse of what later ages were to discover, as when Job said in chapter xxvi. 7, “ He hangeth the earth upon nothing,” but nevertheless God has treasured up the words of that blessed woman Hannah, who set all succeeding ages an example of keeping both her temper and her word in spite of her ignorance that such was the case. She said “ The pillars of the earth are the Lord’s and He hath set the world upon them,” in sublime indifference as to the nature and extent of the foundation upon which the said pillars must have rested.

The first lesson in CREATION that God teaches man can be stated in the words of our Lord in Matt. xix. 26. —“ **With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.**” One of the earliest divine communications in the New Testament (Luke i. 37) is that “ **With God nothing SHALL BE impossible.**”

Rightly grounded in the lesson of Gen. i. 1 we can easily as little children accept the latter declaration. We are told that the governing principle of the human being (soul or spirit) is preserved after death in a condition of “ **sleep**” till the day of resurrection. This is not on account of its inherent vitality but is as distinctly the result of the power of God as the creation of the world in which it was born. No such

condition pertains to the animal creation over which man rules.

By and bye the redeemed of the Lord, "clothed upon with their house which is from heaven," will appear in resurrection glory, with their Redeemer, and, later on, the rest of the dead will be raised in bodies suitable for their respective destinies. Nothing that we know of in the past of God's wondrous power at all resembles this future action which His Word makes known to us, but again Gen. i. 1 makes it easy for us to believe that it shall indeed come to pass.

WITH GOD ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE. Stay! does a search of the Word confirm this? With a single exception and that exception is His crowning glory—Heb. vi. 18 tells us

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR GOD TO LIE.

We have yet to bring forward the faculty with which God has endowed man, that makes him only a little lower than the angels and capable of responding to the message of His love. It can be found in the 23rd and 24th verses of Jeremiah ix.

"THUS SAITH THE LORD—LET NOT THE WISE MAN GLORY IN HIS WISDOM, NEITHER LET THE MIGHTY MAN GLORY IN HIS MIGHT, LET NOT THE RICH MAN GLORY IN HIS RICHES, BUT LET HIM THAT GLORIETH GLORY IN THIS, THAT HE UNDERSTANDETH AND KNOWETH ME, THAT I AM THE LORD WHICH EXERCISE LOVING-KINDNESS, JUDGMENT AND RIGHTEOUSNESS IN THE EARTH, FOR IN THESE THINGS I DELIGHT, SAITH THE LORD."

In these magnificent verses the high and lofty One who inhabiteth eternity, actually *invites* man to study His character, and says that he has good reason to be proud (speaking after the manner of men) if he succeeds in understanding it.

In order rightly to use that which I have described as the KEY OF KNOWLEDGE it is necessary first to

accept this invitation with all reverence and godly fear.

I have found in His Word ample material for arriving at certain most important conclusions which I must reserve for the next chapter.



CHAPTER II.—THE CHARACTER OF GOD.

“Thus saith the Lord. Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches, but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth, for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.”

—JER. ix. 23, 24.

THE principal object of the Word of God is to enable man to attempt this study, and the principal part of the Old and New Testaments have been written so as to be within the capacity of human intelligence.

“THE KEY OF KNOWLEDGE,” as I have presumed to call it, is intended to facilitate the search after truth by the simple expedient of causing the whole light of what God has said on any subject to shine upon each word under investigation.

I read that all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father (John v. 23); and accept the opening verses of the Epistle to the Hebrews as the Divine description of Him who is elsewhere spoken of as GOD MANIFEST IN THE FLESH; in other words that the character of the Father is also the character of the Son.

When there came a voice from heaven, saying “This is my beloved SON in whom I am well

pleased" (Matt. iii. 17), God made use of a word with which every one was familiar.

At the same time, the opening verses of the Gospel of John and many other Scriptures describe the Divine being whose public ministry then commenced, as one who could not be a SON in the common sense of the word. That He is God, that He always existed, and that without Him nothing was made in all creation—these are mysteries which (to use a modern and very expressive word) are **unthinkable**. Yet like the first verse in the Bible—the subject of our opening chapter, we must receive these statements from the mouth of God as a little child, before we can advance a step into the kingdom of God.

Here we find God taking a common word, expanding its meaning, and hallowing it to His own use, without at all interfering with its ordinary use, and our business is to find out God's meaning, and explain it to the outer world who know Him not. The devout Mohammedan raves when he hears the expression "**The Son of God.**" "Does not every one know that a SON is the result of a father and a mother, a being who had no existence before his parents came together?" He will not allow God to explain Himself and, so to speak, slams the door of his heart against the only Saviour.

God might in sovereignty have given man a word which none on earth had ever heard, but what would that have revealed to him? He takes the **only** word in human language which brings out in its highest aspect the relationship of one who is united with Himself in heart and purpose, and at the same time perfectly obedient to His will. There was no other word He could possibly use in order that lost sinners should understand what was essential for them to know, in order that they might be saved.

A greater difficulty, still, presented itself in conveying to the intelligence of man the Person and dignity of **THE HOLY SPIRIT**. This was met in a

manner which few have any idea of. While there is only one word for **son** in the Greek language, there are two for **wind**, which was the word God chose as the medium for conveying to man His thought concerning Him whom He elsewhere calls the Paraclete or Comforter.

Of these two words, He selected one to signify The SPIRIT. It occurs more than three hundred times, whereas the other word, which is used only of literal wind, we find only about thirty times. The only time when the word for SPIRIT is translated **wind**, is in John iii. 8, and, as Mr. Trench has lately shewn, this is an error, because the same word that commences the verse also ends it.

If therefore it is right to read "The **wind** bloweth where it listeth," the verse should conclude, "so is every one that is born of the **wind**!"

If however the verse is translated "The **Spirit** breatheth where He willeth, and thou hearest His voice, but can'st not tell whence He cometh and whither He goeth, so is every one that is born of the **Spirit**"—we have a profound truth which harmonizes with all other Scripture.

How important it is here to notice the pains taken by our Heavenly Father, in the choice of His **words**, that our feeble minds should not be confused on these vital points.

Inasmuch as SATAN, by means of evil spirits, lures man to sin and destruction in the same invisible manner that the **Spirit of God** reveals to him the things of God—the latter bears also the distinguishing title of THE HOLY SPIRIT.

THE SPIRIT is a neuter word, because in the original it signifies merely a thing, a breath of wind, that which is often used to express what is without any value, yet it is the **only** word in any language that conveys to human understanding **the manner** in which the knowledge of God is conveyed to man. Accordingly God took it up and hallowed it to express

one equal with Himself in power, love, and wisdom, and not only so, but the wilful rejection of the Holy Spirit is said by our Lord to be a crime of the deepest possible dye.

The foregoing definitions are necessary as an introduction to the subject in hand—namely THE CHARACTER OF GOD.

In the first place we see that however varied the dealings of God with man have been, or may be, His **character** remains the same. “**I am Jehovah, I change not**” we read in the closing book of the Old Testament; “**Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day and for ever**” is to be found in the last chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, whose opening verses declare His glory.

The importance of this characteristic in its relation to the theme under consideration cannot be over estimated. If God delighted in exercising loving-kindness, judgment and righteousness in the days of Jeremiah, He will continue to do so while man remains upon earth. If He delights in these things in **time**, He will no less enjoy their exercise throughout **Eternity**.

I will not do more than touch upon the exercise of His **loving kindness**, for it forms the principal theme of every discourse, the staple of our spiritual food. The main purpose I have in view is to explain the **judgment** and **righteousness** which He also takes pleasure in.

The lessons which God has given to man on the distinction between **RIGHT** and **WRONG** have been carefully graduated to his condition.

Before the flood we do not hear of any written revelation of His will. The father was entrusted with the upbringing of the child. The first crime committed by a Son of Adam was **murder**, and God spared that murderer's life, with the result that all his seed became wicked and the earth was filled with violence. Judgment swept the whole race away except

Noah and his family. When Noah was given the restored earth we read of two commands only being laid upon him :

First—That man should not eat blood.

Second—“Whosoever sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed.”

Man may despise the first of these injunctions, and think to improve upon the second by substituting perpetual imprisonment, but they continue unrevoked while the earth remaineth.

A remarkable feature in God’s dealings with His children in the book of Genesis is that He never rebukes them for transgression.

Whether Noah, Abraham, Isaac or Jacob sin, the punishment is seen only in the record of what afterwards happens.

With Moses it is different. The anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses on more than one occasion, and he is taken roundly to task for his short-comings. The histories of God’s dealings with the Patriarchs were recorded by Moses, so that he ought to have known better than to doubt that he would be qualified to speak before the Pharaoh of his day, as Joseph had been in the early history of his race.

In all the controversy between God and the children of Israel whom He brought out of Egypt, their chief transgression consisted in refusing to learn that what He had been to them in the past, in delivering them out of every distress, He would be in the future, whatever new shape the trial might assume. In other words, no matter what God did for them they continued to misunderstand His character.

It was in the wilderness that Jehovah entrusted Moses with a code of laws for His people, and the examination of a few of these will make clearer to us, than anything else, that all we know of judgment and righteousness is learned from our God’s precept and example.

In the first place, the people to whom the law was given had been **slaves**, who were always surrounded by idolatry and, no doubt, familiar with all its corruptions. Jehovah did not legislate for every evil at once—Slavery and polygamy were still permitted—not that He sanctioned either, but He allowed man to prove through centuries, by their result, the evil of these institutions.

The number of death penalties under the law was great, and when among them we read "Whoso curseth father or mother shall surely be put to death" (Ex. xxi. 17) it appears that the sentence is out of all proportion to the crime.

But the nation had undertaken to keep all the commands of Him who had brought them out of the house of bondage, and who kept them alive from day to day. As all the sins to which death penalties were attached were **wilful transgressions**, it was necessary for God to weed out the rebels from the congregation, as true repentance was a thing unknown to their hardened hearts. The whisper of mutiny, in an army going to battle, has to be punished as severely as any other act of disobedience. In reading the accounts of swift and severe punishment coming direct from the hand of God, we can never profit by the narrative unless we read the **whole of the context**.

That Nadab and Abihu should have been struck dead while offering strange fire in their censers, is followed by the explanation that they were too drunk to know what they were doing (Lev. x. 9, 10), and the lesson to be learned by the priesthood, ever after was, that an exalted position without a holy condition was abominable in the sight of God. When we read of a man stoned to death for picking up sticks on the Sabbath day (Num. xv. 35, 36), we can easily see that it is given to illustrate a foregoing warning against setting the law at defiance.

When our sympathy is drawn out towards Uzzah

for coming to such an untimely end as the result of putting out his hand to steady the ark of God, when the oxen shook it (2 Sam. vi. 7) we can read, between the lines, that the familiarity of warehousing it so long in his father's house had bred the contempt that led him to handle it like any other piece of furniture. It is not improbable that **he** suggested the **new cart** as suitable for its removal—the ark having travelled by such a conveyance on the last occasion of its taking a journey.

This incident reminds us of the terrible consequences to the men of Bethshemesh, many years before (1 Sam. vi. 19), of **looking into** the ark on its return from the land of the Philistines.

Never was the Ark so highly honoured of God as when it stood in the bed of Jordan, and the accumulating waters were not suffered to overflow it, or to overwhelm the children of Israel while crossing its dry bed two thousand cubits lower down.

Years after this event, when sent back, without a single attendant, it seemed as if it had lost its former sanctity and could, as a returned captive, be inspected as curiously as an idol in the British Museum. Do not let us think that because the Word of God has been so vilely treated in the past years of ignorance, that we who know its origin shall escape the penalty of handling it with disrespect.

But when we come to the laws between man and man, the **due proportion** between the offence and its penalty becomes apparent. If a man stole a sheep from his neighbour he was to restore the same **fourfold**. Many years afterwards a case of sheep stealing was brought before David, by the prophet Nathan, and the anger of the King was so kindled by the narrative that he **added the penalty of death** to the fourfold restitution of the property. Was David in a right state of soul before God

when he pronounced this sentence? Read the narrative and draw your own conclusions. A hundred years ago a death penalty was attached to sheep stealing in England. With what result? Juries would not convict as their consciences preferred to deny evidence rather than be guilty of taking a man's life for that of a sheep.—Consequently the crime was rampant.

Now, thanks to the distribution of the Word of God among a nation of readers, the statute is abolished and a sentence of imprisonment with hard labour substituted for hanging.

We hardly ever see the offence among the police reports of our newspapers.

Another noticeable feature in the "judgments" of God, which He entrusted Moses to carry out, was the absence of TORTURE.

If a man deserved to be beaten the number of stripes was not to exceed **forty**. Though the laws were to be carried out in the land after the tribes were settled in it, we do not read of **chains** or **dungeons** as divine suggestions.

An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth strictly limited retribution to the exact penalty of the offence.

Adonibezek, in the first chapter of the book of Judges, affords evidence of the punishment wherewith "**God had requited him.**" Moreover human life was held so precious that if by accident one man slew another he ran the risk of banishment for the remaining years of his own life when he fled to a city of refuge.

Let us now turn our attention to the character of God as a **Judge of the character** of man. Two examples must suffice, one of the best and another of the worst on record.

EXAMPLE I.—

We read in 1 Kings xv. 5, that "**David did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and**

turned not aside from anything that He commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite."

Are we to conclude that the deception whereby David occasioned, as he confessed (1 Sam. xxii. 22), the murder of eighty-five priests and their families, was no fault? that the vengeance he was prevented from executing on the house of Nabal (1 Sam. xxv.) was not an evil passion? that the placing of the ark of God upon a new cart (2 Sam. vi.), instead of the priest's shoulders, was not a culpable neglect of written instruction? or the numbering of the people (2 Sam. xxiv.) not a yielding to temptation? By no means.

It however serves to shew that the general tenor of David's life in service and worship in God's sight made these blemishes find no place in the summary of his life.

Our Lord endorsed while on earth all that the prophets had written, so we know that the future Judge of all the earth will act upon this principle in making His awards.

Now for a different case: Ahab, of whom it is said "there was none like unto him, who did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up." On one occasion he fell under the rebuke of Elijah, rent his clothes, put sackcloth upon his loins and went softly. Of him God then said, "Sees't thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me. Because he humbleth himself before me I will not bring the evil in his days, but in his sons days will I bring evil upon his house." Brief as was his repentance, God recognised the difficulty of that acknowledgment of his sin, under such evil home influence, and rewarded it accordingly (1 Kings xxi. 27-29.)

From this we learn that however bad a man may be, God's eye does not fail to recognise and

reward a short period of repentance, and that a promise made to a bad man is as sacred in His sight as that which He assures to the good.

The Gibeonites, in the days of Joshua, were no better than the other Canaanites, and saved their lives by a deliberate fraud, yet inasmuch as Joshua pledged the name of Jehovah as their security against slaughter, Jehovah held Himself bound thereby and, hundreds of years after the event, sent a three years famine upon Israel because their king had broken the treaty (2 Sam. xxi. 2).

The next point of deep importance in the character of God which I now present for consideration is the judgment He passes on those who cling to a former statute after he has replaced it by a NEW one. There is no more sad and solemn incident in the history of Moses than that which serves to illustrate the same. We know he smote the Rock on two occasions, and on each of these the water gushed forth. Are we to judge by the result that the lawgiver acted as he was told to do in both instances? Let us turn and see. Exodus xvii. 1-7 relates the first narrative, and Numbers xx. 1-13 sets forth the second.

There is in the seventeenth chapter of Numbers that which throws a light on the latter transaction.

The rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram had just taken place, and God, Who is rich in mercy, devised a plan whereby—as He said in verse 5, “I will make to cease **from me**, the murmurings of the children of Israel, whereby they murmur against you.” A rod was to be brought by a prince of each tribe, and laid up before the Lord in the Tabernacle. On the following day Aaron’s rod was found to have budded, bloomed and brought forth almonds; the others remained dead sticks, and were returned to their owners. And the Lord said to Moses, “Bring Aaron’s rod again before the testimony, to be kept for a token against the rebels, and **thou shalt quite take away their murmurings from Me that they die not.**”

Query. Was this prediction fulfilled, and if not, why not?

During the forty years of their wilderness journey the water supply from the smitten rock had never failed till the children of Israel neared the borders of the promised land.

God permitted it to cease, partly, no doubt, to remind the people of their daily dependence on Him, and also, as we see further on, to give an occasion for bringing forth Aaron's rod for a testimony. In Numbers xx. 8, we read, "The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Take the rod (not thy rod as on former occasions) and gather thou the assembly together, thou and Aaron thy brother, and **speak** ye unto the Rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the Rock, so shalt thou give the congregation and their beasts drink." And Moses took THE ROD FROM BEFORE THE LORD as He commanded him. So far all went well.

Aaron no doubt carried his rod. Beautiful to look at, but what had it ever done for Israel? NOTHING. Moses' rod, on the other hand, had brought them water when last it was used. The brothers agreed quietly to set aside God's NEW METHOD, and to repeat what had been done before.

Moses addressed the people as rebels, and God charged Moses and Aaron with rebellion (Num. xx. 24) for their action in this matter. Not for the sin of the golden calf, but for being a consenting party to this evil course, was Aaron shut out from the promised land. Moses pleaded for a remission of the sentence against himself; he yearned intensely to put his foot upon the land on which his heart had been set for forty years, but he pleaded in vain.

Are we to look upon this punishment from the human side, till our sympathy for the man of God, who lost his temper under sore provocation, makes us side with him against God? or does it become us to examine the deed which earned such a punishment?

The lesson surely is that if God gives a NEW ORDER our preference for an old one is reckoned as REBELLION.

No language can adequately express the importance of this principle in order to a right understanding of **Dispensational Truth**. There came, about fifteen hundred years after the event just recorded, the marvellous message from heaven, "**God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.**" Here was news indeed!

Every one knew what was meant by "perish"; nobody knew that everlasting life was within reach of all who believed that a certain man then living on the earth was the SON OF GOD. When He had accomplished redemption for man, and returned to the right hand of God, this **gospel** was proclaimed as an accomplished fact by His apostles—and as we are told in Hebrews vii. 12, "the priesthood being changed there is made of necessity a change also of the law."

The handwriting of ordinances that was against us (embodied in Mosaic ritual) was blotted out—taken out of the way—and nailed to His cross (Col. ii. 14), but this did not leave the redeemed sinner to do just what was right in his own eyes. When our Lord, parting from His disciples, told them to teach those whom they instructed "**to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you,**" He included not only what we find in the four gospels, but the further information which the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles, and the Book of Revelation would impart, as these contained the additional light promised through the "Comforter," who should take of the things of God and explain them to the intelligence of man.

Very much of the mind of God, as communicated to Moses and the prophets, is re-stated in the new divine code; but many of the moral precepts are

largely expanded, and others again distinctly altered. We know that while idolatry to graven images was the besetting sin of Israel until the Babylonish captivity, it had disappeared among the Jews when Christ came among them; and yet the Apostle John, when he said "Little children keep yourselves from idols," in the concluding verse of his first epistle, gave no needless warning, for, according to New Testament doctrine, "Covetousness is idolatry" (Col. iii. 5).

Our Lord, we know, in His own person fulfilled the law, but in the estimation of the theologians of His day He had broken it (John v. 18), and was bitterly persecuted for using the Sabbath as an opportunity for activity in doing good. It was a **new departure**, for which neither the law of Moses nor the tradition of the elders afforded any precedent. Moreover, the Holy Spirit in alluding to Sabbath observance, in two epistles, made the measure to depend not on "Thus saith the Lord," but the conviction of the individual.—See Col. ii. 16, as well as Rom. xiv. 5. When our Lord said "The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath," He clearly intimated that while it is ours to enjoy and provide for the enjoyment of others, as **the day of rest**, it is no longer a matter of importance upon which day of the week it should fall. Just as a railway time table for the current month conveys substantially the same information as that for the past, so the **character of God** in the New Testament harmonizes with that given in the Old, but just as the **alterations** in the new time table set aside the order observed in previous issues—so does the authority of the "change of law," apparent in the New Testament, cancel certain observances of divine appointment in the Old.

In concluding this profound subject let me say a few words on the **character of God** as seen in the recorded **miracles** of Holy Writ. Whence comes the

scepticism, even of believers, in accepting all that the prophets have written concerning them? Simply because they have forgotten their alphabet, and need once more to learn by heart Genesis i. 1. If that is true, can anything done on this wee earth of ours prove "too hard for the LORD"? We sometimes hear this statement that the age of miracles has passed. Let me put this to the test. The generally accepted definition of a miracle is an effect produced contrary to all known laws of nature. Granted. Let us suppose for a moment, that all telegraphic communication, every telephone, phonograph, X-ray apparatus, and wireless telegraphy itself, instead of being the accumulated result of an army of intelligent men were all traceable to a single individual, and that on his death all that mysterious power known as **Electricity**, departed with him. Can anyone imagine the chaos and despair which would follow the wide world over? Would not the atheist biographer declare that neither Jesus Christ nor the prophets, if all stated of them were strictly true, had benefited mankind anything to speak of in comparison with the departed hero? And from this stand-point he would be quite correct. However, our old book says, "He taketh the wise in their own craftiness" (Job v. 13 and 1 Cor. iii. 19), and He who taught mankind in its earlier days by supernatural interpositions of His power has made the hard-headed scientist of to-day, who will believe nothing that he cannot see, His instrument for proving to the world that neither His power, wisdom or benevolence has suffered any decay.

Just as the stereoscope enables two pictures, taken in slightly different positions, to stand out solid as one, so do the miracles of Holy Writ and the miracles of the twentieth century combine to form the most awe-inspiring confirmation of the words "Heaven and earth shall pass away but my word shall not pass away."

Can man be permitted to hold converse day by day with those on the other side of the world? Can a phonograph permanently record the song of the singer and the speech of the orator long after they have turned to dust and ashes? can a Rontgen ray reveal the nail bedded in a block of timber? can ships now communicate with each other when out of sight and with no visible link whatever? and shall man succeed in hiding anything from the eyes of Him with whom we have to do?

Will anyone dare to say that "For every idle word that men shall speak they must give account thereof in the day of judgment," is a mere empty threat of Him who was the TRUTH?

The bare thought of this is enough to make the stoutest heart tremble, and I would not dare to remind you of it but for the knowledge to some extent of the character of my God.

The one whose first words on the cross were "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," added, by His apostle Peter (Acts iii. 17), "I wot that through ignorance ye did it as did also your rulers"; and further, by His apostle Paul in 1 Cor. ii. 8, "Had they known it they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory." The greatest public crime this world has ever seen was, according to **divine record**, the work of men of "unsound mind," in the strictest sense of the word. Perhaps the bulk of lost souls belong to another category, described in the latter verses of Romans i., who "had pleasure" in every form of sin on account of their possession of a fallen and corrupt nature. There is yet again a much smaller class whose guilt far exceeds that of all others, inasmuch as they have deliberately rejected the Christ of God, after a real knowledge of His character, under the Satanic inducement of present gain.

If ORTHODOXY were TRUTH our Lord might have said that it were "better for **most** men that they had never been born," but He said no such thing. There

was a certain enjoyment in life which the myriads of the former dwellers upon earth experienced, which is not neutralized by their future destiny being like that of the leaves of last autumn—extinction of being. When Jesus said of Judas Iscariot “Good were it for **that man** that he had never been born” (Matt. xxvi. 24), He distinctly intimated concerning the son of perdition a **prolonged residence** in the hands of the Prince of darkness, to whom he had given his allegiance.

The prospects of the believer, according to what is eagerly accepted as “**Precious truth**,” are that when “absent from the body he is present with the Lord;” that he will from that moment stand faultless in His presence with exceeding joy, and that the **resurrection** will practically be only an accession to his glory; that in the twinkling of an eye he shall find his place among those who are to reign with Christ for ever and ever. **The truth of God**, however, makes it plain that immediately on the departure to be with Christ, the soul of the believer is put to **sleep**. Though the period of repose seems interminable from our standpoint, it is in the light of eternity but a watch in the night. Then, before “them that sleep in Jesus shall God bring with Him” comes to pass, they shall undergo an experience which is thus described in 2 Cor. v. 10, “We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done whether it be good or bad.” We elsewhere learn that the result of this investigation will be that some shall suffer loss, yet they themselves shall be saved yet so as by fire (1 Cor. iii. 15).

Is it not a thought that should deeply exercise the conscience of every believer, whose life has been marked by a course of selfishness or slander, that he will suffer the consequences of this in an inferior position in the glory for ages and ages

after "the wicked into smoke shall have been consumed away," and every remembrance of them has perished?

There are mysteries in connection with the future which mankind is "dying to know," as we say, but concerning which the Word of God is absolutely silent. What for instance is the purpose of God towards those whose existence on earth was only a matter of days, weeks or months, and therefore cannot be included in any tribunal of justice? Enquiry is vain, but knowing the character of our God we can rest assured that His way is perfect, and He will always act worthily of Himself, as well as in the interests of the work of His hands.

How is it that the English Unitarian is so often a man of the strictest integrity? Because from infancy he has been more or less familiar with the character of God, and has unconsciously seen His glory in the history of Jesus Christ. Why is the Turkish Unitarian the reverse of all this? Because the Koran has taught him that the character of God is absolutely incomprehensible, and probably the exact opposite of the human ideal. As He is All powerful, and nothing takes place but by His decree, it follows that the worst exhibition of sensuality and cruelty that the believer in Islam can be guilty of is indirectly authorized by the Almighty, or it could never have taken place. Nothing more than this is necessary to change a man into a fiend.

I have had a Mohammedan servant who would have laid down his life for my sake, but his religion was only the result of birth and environment. I have also had experience of a type of Mussulman, who would leave any occupation to spread his carpet when the moment had arrived for one of his five daily prayers.

I will not express my own opinion of the fanatic, but quote a proverb of their own countrymen: "If a man has been three times a Hadji (gone on

pilgrimage to Mecca), avoid him as the very **Devil.**"

For an explanation of this extraordinary statement you will have to wait, kind reader, till you have perused the next chapter describing



CHAPTER III.—THE CHARACTER OF SATAN.

AS WE have seen, the most wonderful view of God is presented to the mind of man in the opening verse of His Word; so it has pleased Him to set forth the **character** of the Enemy of mankind more vividly in the chapter where he is first introduced to our notice than in all the books which follow. The **SERPENT** which appeared in the garden of Eden is none other than the **SATAN** of Scripture as we can see for ourselves in Revelation xx. 2, where two other of his titles **The Dragon** and the **Devil** are also brought before us.

The central idea of the name **SATAN** is that of one who **hates**, the meaning of **DEVIL**, where it is applied to the fallen angel whose ways we are about to consider, is that of a **slanderer**. It appears from various Scriptures that once upon a time he transgressed the divine order, by assuming the power and authority which he possessed as his own by right, instead of by the will of God. Other spirits fell into the same conclusion and were cast out of heaven.

What is **Heaven**? A very important question concerning which the greatest confusion of thought prevails in consequence of its not being known that in the Old Testament the word as constantly is applied to the **atmosphere** as to the infinite space beyond where the stars have their courses. Whenever we read of the fowls of the **air**, let us remember

that it is the same word that we find in Genesis (i. 1) as what God created "**in the beginning.**" The value of this knowledge to us lies in making it clear that when we read "In six days God **MADE** the heaven and the earth" (which was expounded in our first chapter) nothing more than the **atmosphere** that surrounds our globe was intended. **HEAVEN** as the abode of God and the future residence of the redeemed is no doubt the leading thought ever since the mind of man has been enlarged sufficiently to grasp the idea ; but in connection with the statement just made of Satan and his host being **cast out of heaven** it is very interesting to observe that the Greek language (which is marvellously accurate in definition) makes the extent of Satanic influence clear in describing the Evil one not only as the Prince of this world (John xiv. 30) but as the Prince of the power of the **AIR** (Eph. ii. 2).

This earth then was the prison in which **SATAN** and his attendant spirits were confined when the work, described in the first two chapters of Genesis began. He regarded man with **hatred** as a trespasser on his rights, and as protected by the favour of God.

He may be as much greater than man as the sun is actually greater than the moon, but in comparison with his Creator the difference between both is infinitesimal. One of his titles as found in Rev. ix. 11 signifies **The Destroyer**—and we are distinctly told in Heb. ii. 14 that he has the "power of death," and in the exercise of this he delights. But we find also in the opening chapters of the book of Job, that just as the sea is bound by the sand on the shore, so that though the waves toss themselves they cannot over-pass it (Jer. v. 22), so **Satan** exercises his will in causing humanity to suffer and to die under conditions which he cannot set aside.

We are totally at a loss either to understand or explain the nature of God's control over the action of **SATAN** and his host, but we know that He does

control it as certainly as the electrician can arrest the most powerful and death dealing current by interposing a substance which he knows to be a non-conductor.

God formed man subject to certain moral as well as physical laws—among these—as we find graphically described in the revised version of 2 Peter ii. 13—is that of “**suffering wrong as the hire of wrong doing.**” SATAN, except on rare occasions, was never permitted to act directly on the individual whose ruin he sought; but he had free scope given him to **induce** his victim into a career of wrong doing, when not safeguarded by walking with God, and this has ever been his principal occupation.

These remarks are called for by way of preface to the scene in the Garden of Eden, which the reader is now invited to ponder.

It is not the culpability of our first parents in yielding to temptation that I wish to touch on just now, but rather to bring sharply into contrast the **character** of this rival teacher.

There were two trees in Paradise of which special mention is made. One imparted **immortality**, the other **knowledge**. It was the fruit of the latter which was strictly forbidden to Adam and Eve, and the penalty of disobedience we read in Gen. ii. 17, “In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” Viewed in the light of all that God has since spoken to man, there is a key to what is apparently a sentence that was not carried out. We have already seen that God has His own meanings for certain words in human language, and in 2 Peter iii. we are told that “**one day is with the Lord a thousand years,**” and in a scene where death had not yet entered Jehovah was pleased to use, so to speak, the **unit of eternity**. We observe in the obituary of chapter v. not even Methusaleh attained the standard of a thousand years. The Lord God gave man in his fall the **utmost benefit of the doubt**. If I agree

to give a lad half-a-crown a week for weeding my garden, and I put half-a-sovereign into his hand, have I broken my word because it is not the coin he expected?

When on the other hand the Serpent said, "Ye shall not surely die, for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, ye shall be as God knowing good and evil," he covered falsehood with a layer of truth. The man and his wife did **not** die that same day, and God admits afterwards that they did "know good and evil." But what did SATAN keep back? The overwhelming fact, that though he knew the good, man could never secure it, and though he knew the evil, he could not on that account avoid it. Weighted with such a consequence the beautiful fruit would have been avoided as we would shun berries of deadly night-shade.

Our Lord on one occasion (John viii. 44) was discourteous enough to say to His audience: "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. . . . When he speaketh a lie he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar and the father of it."

Man is the "**offspring**" of God (Acts xvii. 29) by creation, he is the offspring of his parents by generation. Further we are told that we become "children of God" by faith in Christ Jesus (Gal. iii. 26) but how does anyone become like Elymas (Acts xiii. 10) a **child of the Devil**? By TRANSFUSION OF CHARACTER.

If this paper should be read by anyone who has succeeded in selling a horse, a house, or any kind of property by **keeping back** information which would have hindered its purchase, I hope he will recognize the family likeness!

One more remark before leaving the Garden of Eden. The tree of life had been untouched—as a distant boon it did not appeal strongly to our first parents, as did the forbidden fruit of the tree of

knowledge of good and evil—and the final act of Jehovah on that sorrowful day was in mercy to prevent all access to it, “lest he should live for ever.” Nevertheless the god of this world has prevailed on mankind in general, and the religious portion of it in particular, to believe that the divine precaution was ineffectual, and that, as a little hymn says, “**Our souls can never die**”!

It is an inner consciousness that God will hereafter bring him into judgment that greatly restrains the wicked from filling the earth with violence, as it was filled before the Flood. This expectation is true as to the future. The poison of falsehood lies in the doctrine that over and above receiving the due reward of his deeds, he must consciously endure the wrath of God through all eternity.

From the Fall to the Flood the influence of **Satan** over the human race grew by leaps and bounds. He had no need to set up any image of himself for mankind to worship. Whoever as he grew up thought of **himself** first, last, and all day long became unconsciously a “**child of the Devil.**”

SELF-WORSHIP was the sin that first made Satan as lightning fall from heaven, and the life that owns no authority higher than its own, before whose decrees man must bow; the mind that insists on rejecting the Word of God on the sole ground of its own disapproval, becomes an instrument of iniquity, only limited by circumstances, from doing all the devil's will.

The natural conscience graduates the standard of guilt according to the evil done to our fellows. Deceit, licentiousness, drunkenness, robbery and murder are recognized, compared and condemned according to circumstances; but all of us who read our Bibles have found cases where the judgment of God has been sudden and overwhelming for offences which the natural conscience cannot discern. It is well for us to consider this matter, lest our fear of

God become "a fear that hath torment." Two instances must suffice.

Nebuchadnezzar was deprived of reason and turned, as it were, into a beast for seven years; and **Herod** was eaten alive by worms for that which we might think to be just **nothing at all!** Both these monarchs had been grossly wicked men, judged even by the natural conscience, but what brought upon them the thunderbolt of divine vengeance was, that having a knowledge of God, they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, and the one offered to himself and the other accepted from his audience the **worship that was due to God.** They had arrived at the climax of being **SELF-WORSHIPPERS.** The Man of Sin, the lawless one, was then revealed in them and by the act of God consumed. In the one case the soul was restored, in the other it was hurried to its doom.

I do not know among Scripture biographies any more full of the most practical instruction than that of the wisest of men.

If we want to be convinced that the knowledge of good and evil alone is utterly unable to secure happiness, read the writings of Solomon. How was it that the one who wrote so graphically on the dangers of a strange woman, should have become so completely their prey in his later years? That he who knew so well how a king should administer justice, left behind him a nation whose verdict concerning him to his son was, "Thy father made our yoke grievous." That he who exposed fools and folly so unsparingly should prove as it were king of the whole fraternity? Yes, how did all this come to pass? Ecclesiastes brings the secret to light. Unconsciously he became a **self-worshipper.**

I made ME, I gat ME, I gathered ME, was the return he made to God for the gift of wisdom which he craved at the beginning of his reign; and spite of all his glory and his intellectual power, he "hated

life" as Job did when covered with boils and seated among ashes. Compare Job vii. 16 with Ecclesiastes ii. 17.

Every reader must have noticed the frequent occurrence of the words "under the sun" in Solomon's auto-biography. These words bring out the awful consequences of **self-worship**—even the cutting off of all communion with God, and having only "the light of nature," as it has been called, to examine and decide by. What Enoch enjoyed constantly, Abraham frequently, and his father David, as seen in his Psalms, all through life, was his no longer.

Every generation of man (speaking broadly) is perfectly convinced that if he had all the wealth, all the wisdom, and all the good luck (including health, freedom from calamity, or ill-will of others) he desired, nothing could prevent his being as happy as the day is long. God says—Yes, I will prevent it—I give you the alternative. Learn from the story of Solomon or prove it for yourself.

Many years ago the joyless, tortured men and women of China besought England to bestow on them a drug, which could for a time at least enable them to forget their sorrows. She complied all too readily. What **opium** is doing for China, so is **SELF-WORSHIP** for the country who bestowed it on her as the perpetual **DRINK-offering** clearly shows.

The history of **SATAN** as the enemy of man is more or less concealed in the Old Testament. We see his **close imitations** of divine methods of reasoning with man, in the magicians of Egypt, turning their rods into serpents. He possesses certain supernatural powers, and is able to give information to man of events before unknown to him. These act as baits to secure human confidence. God has strictly forbidden such enquiries on the part of man into mysteries which, in Infinite wisdom, have been and are closed to his research. Man, however, **WILL** do it, and may

take the last day of the life of King Saul as the kind of satisfaction he will ultimately get.

It was when God was manifest in the flesh in the person of His Son, that we find Satan manifesting himself in the persons of men and women who were thus possessed of evil spirits. That these individuals had a bad time of it, in consequence, we can easily learn from Mark v. and other passages. One of his devices, in making them confess Jesus to be the **Holy one of God**, was to make the multitude who hated, feared and distrusted the demoniacs, **certain that He was not!** This is why our Lord had frequently to silence those whom He was about to cure.

Of all the means used by Satan for drawing men to perdition, none is more common or deadly than his persuasion of their ability to **repent** when they please.

It will be quite news to some to hear that repentance is as much the **gift of God** as any other mercy which He can either bestow or withhold (Acts v 31; xi. 18).

Satan has a **counterfeit** for this as for every other manifestation of divine grace. Pharaoh's **repentance** did not hinder his pursuit of Israel into the Red Sea. Balaam's **repentance** proved no barrier to his counsel to Balak to corrupt those whom he could not curse; and Saul's **repentance** ended by consulting the witch of Endor. **True repentance** leads the soul to abhor itself and exalt God; but Amnon's hatred of the sister whom he had ravished and thrust outside the door was compatible with sincere commiseration for himself; and Judas Iscariot, as he cast the *thirty pieces* of silver at the feet of the priests no doubt felt that he was a very unfortunate man.

There is a point beyond which God will not suffer the soul who knows Christ to be the Holy One of God, and rejects Him, to pass with any possibility of retracing his steps—as we see from Hebrews vi. 4-6.; x. 26-29. The doomed one may or may not be conscious of having crossed the barrier. The attitude towards God may be one of fixed despair or fixed

indifference, but it is impossible to renew such again to true repentance. The friends round a sick man's bed may comfort each other by saying "While there is life there is hope," but the physician knows in many cases that the patient will presently be a corpse, as certainly as that he stands at his bedside. I have recognised such cases as I have been describing, both inside and outside of the madhouse, and were it not for knowing that we are a sweet savour of Christ in them that are saved and in them that perish, my fruitless efforts would have overthrown my reason.

Harrington Evans truly said "**There is no principle so unholy as despair,**" and this explains the condition of the Mahommedan fanatic I alluded to at the close of the last chapter. Driven to an excess of wickedness by **Satan's** whisper that unless God approved his cruel or sensual act, it could not take place, he nevertheless experiences the twinges of conscience concerning judgment to come for which the only relief is found in a ritual observance which has the advantage of deceiving the people in their estimate of his character.

Satan cannot do otherwise than continue in the career he has begun. He and all his host were triumphant at the flood in the apparent extinction of the human race.

For this cause Christ warned the wicked spirits, as we read in 1 Peter iii. 19, that they had yet to reap the fruit of their ways in judgment to come. At the cross of Christ, Satan appeared once more to triumph, and even now he taunts the believer with the question, what has your Gospel done for the world? He will presently see what it can do when he is bound; but even a thousand years of incarceration in the bottomless pit cannot change his hatred of God, and he emerges once more to do his deadly work,—but even he shall come to his end in the ages when divine retribution shall have been accomplished—**AND NONE SHALL HELP HIM.**

There are three words for **mockery** in the Greek

Testament. The open insult which our Lord suffered previous to His crucifixion (Matt. xxvii. 31) appears the grossest, but in divine estimate is the least of the three. The incredulous curl of the lip (Acts ii. 13) on the day of Pentecost, when the gift of tongues was set down as the result of **drunkenness**, comes next in order; but that which eclipses in guilt the other two we find in Gal. vi. 7, "Be not deceived God is not **MOCKED**, for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." The attitude is that of the turned-up-nose and its meaning is "I know, but I don't care." Belshazzar seemed a decent monarch compared with his tyrant grandfather Nebuchadnezzar, but the cup of his iniquity was filled when, **knowing** all that the God of Daniel had brought upon his predecessor, he deliberately spoke of that God as one to be despised. For him there was given no opportunity for repentance.



In concluding this most solemn subject, the principle can be brought home to every conscience by some of God's most recent dealings with the children of men.

At first sight, when we read of God as "Visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children and the childrens' children unto the third and to the fourth generation," it seems as if this was incompatible with absolute righteousness.

There may be some connection between the spirits of fathers and children which has not been explained to us, but when we study this subject in actual history we become greatly enlightened by subsequent events.

The **BOERS** of to-day are not responsible for the detestable compound of psalmody and perjury which characterizes their religion. It has come to them as a heritage of their forefathers in a perfectly accountable way.

The Dutch who first settled in South Africa persuaded themselves that they were the people of God and that they might shoot down Kaffir and Hottentot as a kind of wild beast. The blood of these slaughtered ones cried to heaven and, in the first instance, divine retribution began by the effect produced on the conquerors by the natives whom they kept as household slaves. The master's children absorbed all the lying and filthy habits of the nurses who carried them in their arms. When these grew up to manhood they exhibited a lower standard of morality than their parents, in consequence of their upbringing. The third generation presented a still greater advance in wickedness, but it needed the development of wealth to expose the same in its true light. The iniquity of the fathers was not visited upon the children who protested against it, but who delighted in and expanded it. The world would have lost the moral lesson that God had to teach if the iniquity of the fathers had been visited only upon themselves, but it will not soon forget the war which their descendants so boastfully declared, nor its results.

England was just as bad once as any other nation in her treatment of the slave, whom she kidnapped from African shores; but under the influence of the Word of God she **repented** and brought forth works meet for repentance. Not only in setting the captive free, but in largely compensating the impoverished owners. God was well pleased with the **RIGHTEOUSNESS** of this course, and has since made her rule a blessing to subject races whether in India or the Egypt of to-day. But the evil example of the previous century was inherited by her American children, whom she had alienated by her harshness, and God's controversy with these had to be settled in a long and terrible civil war. Righteousness once more triumphed, as all the world knows, but the Boers insisted on their right to do wrong, though

THEY KNEW ALL THIS. The prolongation of the war into the third year instead of coming to a conclusion, resembling the instantaneous overthrow of Belshazzar's kingdom, is a signal mercy to the conquered nation who needed to be taught lessons that a hasty peace would have never done. The thousands of her army who have been prisoners of war, will value their liberty as they could never else have done, and the tens of thousands of women and children, under the care of men who did not tell them lies every day and all day long, as their fathers, husbands, brothers and sons were wont to do, have received lessons in the elements of righteousness that will be an untold blessing to them in years to come.

Christians sometimes forget that the powers that be are ordained of God, to execute justice on behalf of their people, that the NEW TESTAMENT describes the ruler as the minister of God to thee for good, who bears not the sword in vain (Rom. xiii. 3, 4).

The Sovereign is not wise to compel his subject to take up arms in defence of his country, when either conscience or constitution forbids, but he is justified in demanding such service in purse or person as shall be deemed an equivalent for the same.

England could not interfere to prevent the Armenian flock from being torn by the Turkish wolf, lest the Russian bear who complacently watched the proceeding should, with the consent of all the powers of Europe, declare that her act was only a cloak for extending her already enormous empire; but when her own children were oppressed and insulted by a power that construed forbearance as cowardice and at length declared war, there was no other course open to her but to accept the challenge; and though its prolongation involved her in expenses amounting to a million a week, she will find in the bond of sympathy that has been restored between herself and all her colonies that she will not be ultimately impoverished thereby.

There never was a statesman who had the welfare of his country more at heart than the one who is affectionately remembered as "the grand old man"; nor a journalist to whom our country owes a deeper debt of gratitude than the author of "The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon," but both these leading men failed to see that the gift of "Home-rule" to a nation that had been taught from infancy to trample upon truth, could bring aught else than misery to the people and be a menace to their neighbours.

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In conclusion, let us beware of selecting from the Word of God **only that which accords with our own sympathies.**

Paul Kruger thus acted towards his own Bible. His ambition was to establish Boer rule over the whole of South Africa, and he readily listened to every falsehood which SATAN was allowed to whisper into his ear.

Instead of realizing his heart's desire he has presented to the world a type of ruler which for cowardice, greed and mendacity is unique in history. It is in vain for him in his miserable old age to remonstrate with his tutor, for he would but get the devil's own comfort, as supplied to a former transgressor—"What is that to us? see thou to that."

Having thus delineated in the foregoing pages the character of him who "deceiveth the whole world," we can return to the study of the Scriptures of truth which furnish the believer with weapons for his overthrow.

CHAPTER IV.—THE SCHOOL OF GOD.

“WHO TEACHETH LIKE HIM?”—Job. xxxvi. 22.

LANGUAGE is not an **exact** science. A word that meant one thing three hundred years ago does not necessarily mean the same thing now, and if this fact is unrecognized where it can be distinctly proved, error and confusion must follow. If, for instance, in a modern story book we came upon the sentence “That man is a **villain**” it would convey to the reader’s mind—an unscrupulous, bad man; but in early English history it had no sinister meaning. Such a statement only described a **peasant**.

The same process is going on now. In a dialogue you might read in current literature the words “She was **awfully** kind to me,” and quite understand it. When I was a boy the writer of such a statement would have certainly been thought a fool. One illustration I will add from Holy Writ. If I were to say that “a locked door **prevented** my entrance” every one would understand that to **prevent** meant to **oppose**.

In the days of the Tudors it had no such meaning. In Psalm cxix. 147-8, we read: “I **prevented** the dawning of the morning and cried. Mine eyes **prevent** the night watches.” Formerly to **prevent** was to **precede** and our concordances shew us that in Scripture it **never means anything else**.

Perhaps in the whole range of literature there is no

word of which the original idea was more widely different from its modern one than the noun we are about to consider.

In the palmy days of Grecian philosophy, only those could learn whose circumstances afforded them the necessary leisure. SCHOOL, which is the English form of the original institution, represented a group of men who had nothing to DO! Times have changed and we have changed in them, as a Latin proverb puts it.

As human knowledge has increased so the necessity for learning has made itself apparent, and it is equally plain that the early years of a man's life **must**, as a rule, be spent in its acquirement if he is to obtain a livelihood at maturity.

Thus leisure has disappeared in toto from the sense of the word school to-day.

The process by which instruction has been imparted to the intelligence of man in past days is enough to make our children shudder. I could recall scenes more than fifty years ago which few would care to hear, but things were not nearly so bad **then** as they were fifty years before that. I was reading an interesting biography of the gifted artist whose beautiful paintings of flowers and fruit fill an entire house in Kew Gardens.

Alluding to her ancestry we are told that an uncle who fled to sea to escape paternal tyranny, by-and-bye inherited the title and property through the death of an elder brother. He gave instructions that the furniture should be sold by auction, and the mansion itself mined and blown up by gunpowder, as it was impossible to return to the dwelling of his youth without recalling its harrowing associations! The vast improvement in training the rising generation, which the nineteenth century witnessed was gradually effected by the diffusion of the Word of God—yet has the nation by no means as yet walked from darkness into the light. Before establishing this fact, however,

it will be interesting to enquire into the **cause** of the strained relationship that formerly existed between parents and children. When as a little boy I was sent to England for education, I learned by heart large portions of Scripture, and was instructed in **Dispensational Truth**. There was, however, one question I used to ask for which I could get no explanation. Why were the **children** so much prized in the former dispensation, and at such a terrible discount now? The farmer whose sow presented him with a litter of ten pigs was congratulated because he could either sell or eat them, but the working-man who possessed ten children was commiserated because he could do neither the one nor the other. It was also suggested to my youthful mind that the destiny of the human race, with a few exceptions, being that of eternal torment, there was a distinct merit in not swelling the awful number.

But I have learned, both from history and from judging **cause** and **effect** during my life-time, that this unnatural state of things is clearly traceable to the effect of the teachers of preceding centuries, being members of a self-styled priesthood who were either **childless** men or **criminal** as fathers. Natural affection being withered by their unholy vow, their hearts were steadfastly turned to covetousness, and, as might be expected, the people learned to despise what God had bestowed, and worship money instead.

Dr. Arnold, of Rugby, was one of the first reformers in improving the condition of boys in England; but **Satan** was not to be vanquished by the banishment of physical torture. Thirty years ago the craze for competitive examinations made misguided parents consign their sons to a "crammer," in order to pass for a remunerative position. The boy's brain did not cost anything, and books are cheap. The youth's ambition was appealed to without ascertaining whether or not he possessed the Chinese capacity for being crammed.

Perhaps after a three years' course of arduous study, the examiners finding more candidates than vacancies, coolly put on an extra subject, which had not been thought of when the young man began to read. In more than one instance the over-tasked brain revolted, and a pistol by the student's own hand concluded his hapless career.

But for one whose life ended in this tragic manner, there were at least a dozen wrecks whom the chagrined parents sent to private asylums for mental repair.

There is one of these establishments whose external attractions are constantly set forth among public advertisements, and concerning which I am in a position to say that a patient might well prefer the fate of the suicide to entrance within its walls.

Though the evil of brain pressure is by no means yet adequately estimated, there has been a distinct swing of the pendulum of late years in an opposite direction. **Athletics** are now quite at a premium, and the intense interest in current cricket and football matches is largely a recoil from close application to study and business. **Satan**, however, is prepared to turn the blessing of recreation into a curse, and this has been manifested by the fearful passion for **gambling** prevalent to-day, among men, women, and even children.

If I do not give its equivalent in pleasure or profit for any money I take from my neighbour, I may call it **sport**, but in the eye of God it is **day-light robbery**, of which only a **self-worshipper** is capable. If **drink** destroys a man's will-power, **gambling** just petrifies his conscience. The words of Scripture for such a condition is that of being "**past feeling**," (Eph. iv. 19) the certain consequence of persisting in any known sin.

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The purpose of the foregoing remarks is to set forth briefly various aspects of **SCHOOLS** which have been

established by men in the past, and to point out how large a share SATAN has had in their superintendence. They will serve as a background for the happier theme to which attention is now invited—the METHOD of God in His instruction of man—which throws the clearest light upon the principles that should guide parents in the training of their children.

Many who take a leading position as instructors of **Public Opinion**, do not hesitate to express a feeling of alarm at the increase of population. Clearly according to the laws of arithmetical progression the world will by-and-bye have no room for the support of its inhabitants, especially if the care of human life which prevails in our highly favoured land is extended to all others.

The sweeping away of millions by war, pestilence or famine, is therefore a subject of unexpressed relief to their feelings. I have known men amongst these philosophers, who would regularly have the larger part of the viands that appeared on their table thrown into the ashpit,—because they would neither have them served up a second time nor allow the poor to enter their gates to remove them. Doubtless these imagine themselves the **fittest to survive**, but we are happy to know that God does not favour the breed.

The Christian philosopher, however, recognizes the fact, that though this world is to continue a good while longer, yet it is not **always** to remain the habitation of men. In the distant future it is to be **burnt up**. Meanwhile God arranges the increase of humanity and can check the proportion of births whenever He pleases. He is also pleased to propagate varieties of races adapted to the climate and localities of earth's various countries, and will continue to do this while His purposes towards mankind are being fulfilled. Our part is simply to obey Divine instructions in our intercourse with each other, and sleep in peace while our Captain holds the helm and guides the ship.

The first lesson in the SCHOOL OF GOD is one that we as parents instinctively impart to our little ones. It is just to say—**Thank you.** “He that offereth praise glorifieth Me” is the earliest lesson in the divine primer, and has sadly gone out of fashion.

The effect of her various revolutions on the country of France is to make her at last come to the conclusion that “Le bon Dieu” is such a doubtful character that the less her little ones hear about Him in class, the better. Our open Bible saves us from such a delusion, but, nevertheless, “Evil communications have corrupted good manners,” and the pious custom of giving thanks before meals has been largely abandoned: The Puritan preliminary sometimes continued till the soup got cold, but even the formula “For what we are about to receive the Lord make us truly thankful,” which can be got through in three seconds and a half, is too much for a great many. I would plead for the observance of this contracted thanksgiving, and only suggest an amendment—Why not say: “We give Thee hearty thanks,” instead of always “Make us truly thankful”! Is the sense of God’s mercies, which are new to us every morning, and repeated whenever food is placed on the table, incapable of inspiring **actual gratitude**? I am conscious of the practice of **punctual acknowledgment** of answered prayer being a real means of grace to my children. When in somewhat straitened circumstances it appeared that a long anticipated change was out of the question, and the means for taking it has suddenly been provided, we have called our children together and unitedly thanked the Giver of every good and perfect gift for the gift bestowed—and it made God to them a **REALITY**.

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What made David, in spite of all his manifest transgressions, the man “**after God’s own heart**”? It was that when in communion with the Lord he

was just filled with admiration and thanksgiving. Sometimes speechless (see Psalm lxxv. 1, margin) through his overpowering emotion, but when at length he sang, what incomparable, perennial melody flowed from his lips! Who can estimate or faintly imagine the blessing his Psalms have been to the children of God in all succeeding generations? He will ever remain first and foremost among all the teachers of PRAISE.

And **Praise** is but an earnest of future blessing. Only let there be a genuine giving of thanks for temporal mercy received, and God has more blessing to follow. There is no more striking illustration of this than in the history of the man who was born blind, in John ix. His delight in the gift of sight, after washing the mud from his eyelids, made him eager to thank his unseen Physician. Called up before the bench of Theologians who aspersed his Benefactor's character, he was unable at first to say whether his Healer was a sinner or no, but one thing he did know, and that was, "Once I was blind now I see." Having had the courage to say this, he presently receives more, and fairly upbraids the reverend gentlemen for not knowing anything about the person who had given sight to a blind beggar like himself. Instant excommunication followed and this leads to his meeting the Lord face to face, and in one moment passing from death unto life!

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Next among the characteristics of the SCHOOL OF GOD is that the Divine Teacher never bullies His pupils, in other words does not exercise MIGHT against RIGHT. His laws may be strict and, in some cases severe, but might always upholds right. Broadly speaking, discipline is exercised on the delinquent by his or her "receiving wrong as the hire of wrong doing"; and this process, unless the conscience is practically dead, precedes restoration into the paths

of righteousness. But He who teaches us brought us into the world, and He takes into consideration all the circumstances of birth and environment, so that what would be a serious fault in one individual is a small transgression in another. Above everything He delights in causing us to **understand** that He has a reason for all the dealings of His providence, whether or not we can trace the effect to its cause.

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The contrary principle of wielding **might** against **right** has had its foremost exemplification in **ecclesiastical tyranny**, as universal history clearly shows. The **bully** of public schools was a revolting specimen of one of their apt scholars, and he reasoned that having once had to endure constant oppression as a fag, he was justified in using the superior force that he at length grew into possession of against the junior scholars.

Injustice needs some moral support, real or imaginary, and there is no more iniquitous "code of honour" than that which compels a boy to witness cruelty, filthiness, and even crime without saying a word in its exposure, or to prevent its continuance. Anything (whispers **SATAN**) rather than earn the name of **sneak**! That an evil action be reported to superior authority without previous remonstrance is clearly wrong, but its exposure in the interests of **RIGHTEOUSNESS** is the **path of duty** when remonstrance has been in vain.

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In the **School of God** there is a divine method of dealing with a wrong state of heart, or an error of judgment, before it ripens into actual transgression or injury to one's neighbour. We have seen how God restored Job to a right condition of soul, simply by making him **THINK**.

I remember Dr. Forbes Winslow telling me that whatever the means used by a medical man for the healing of a wound, nothing more was effected than putting it into a condition favourable for its cure ; **the real work in every case was done by God**, and in his own practice, that noble physician restored many a patient from mental delusions by abruptly asking questions, which, if honestly replied to, would dispel those delusions. No reply was expected or given as a rule, but the inward struggle of thought along with kind and honourable treatment made the patient in very many instances return to a sound mental condition.

If in religious matters, or the affairs of daily life, any one goes completely off the line of TRUTH or probability, the "Boycott" of to-day is of no more value than the stake, the rack, and the dungeon, which our fore-fathers believed in. We have no liberty to go beyond asking such questions as I have suggested, leaving the answer with God to apply ; and we should continue our kindly intercourse as before.

One of our dear "Conditionals" has felt it her duty in defence of the Word of God to assert that this earth is flat as a penny, and not a globe, as we know from both navigators and astronomers to be the case. I asked her three practical questions, which caused her to take refuge in the tree of silence, and there I left her, having no authority to go further. The Directors of the Scriptural Knowledge Institution acted in precisely the same way, when I asked them for Scriptural authority as to man's possession at birth of a never-dying soul. I expect they will all alight on the ground by-and-bye, but in any case my part in the controversy is ended. God says to me "Thus far shalt thou go and no further," as distinctly as He speaks to the sea at high-tide.

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Before passing on to the last characteristic of the SCHOOL OF GOD which we can unfold in the present chapter, it is important to say something more about the "code of honour" under which all honourable consciences groan. So far from being limited to school life it pervades the professions, and what is termed—the ministry.

I have a startling fact to disclose which will have sooner or later to engage the attention of Parliament, now so occupied by home, colonial, and South African claims, and so often disturbed by Irish clamour. Few of its prominent politicians realize that an over-worked brain may without previous warning consign them to lifelong captivity! To speak more plainly, the British public do not know that all who from any cause become *insane*, are, from the moment of its being medically certified, the property of the medical profession. Without permit from one of their accredited members none can ever be restored to liberty. From the position of a responsible human being the man or woman becomes a thing or chattel, to be clothed, fed and kept out of mischief for the protection of society in general. This does not interfere largely with the freedom to which the lunatic is entitled on recovery, in our Public Institutions, because the doctors are anxious to bring about such a result where it is practicable, as well as to make room for new and urgent cases. But these conditions are altered in private asylums. Founded, perhaps, by a skilled physician of the Forbes Winslow type, they are sold as part of the deceased's estate at his death, and are purchased by a practitioner who desires first of all to make it *PAY*. If a young man whose parents are dead, and relatives indifferent about him, is brought to the purchaser of the Asylum in a state of acute dementia, and the doctor finds that his patient can pay £300 a year and extras for his keep, why should he be fool enough to cure him when he can retain him as a permanent lodger? It needs but little

ingenuity to make his mental derangement permanent, and also cause him to scare any chance visitor by his violent language. Thus he becomes a life prisoner, and a few of these cases make the whole concern a good investment. By-and-bye the Asylum with all it contains may be bought by an ardent scientist who desires to make himself famous by discovering more completely the relation between the brain and nervous system, which canine research had failed to establish. Finding among the waste products of humanity some concerning whom no enquiry has been made for years, he selects one for his experiments which perhaps terminate fatally. The only one in a position to reveal how the patient had been done to death, not in his own interest but that of SCIENCE, is the **Assistant Surgeon**.

What would be the consequences to him of exposing the deed of darkness? The Boycott of the whole profession, and compulsory emigration. Not because medical men justify the scientific doctor's act, but because they feel as one man that it were better for fifty lunatics to be done to death than for the public to believe one of their number capable of such an atrocity. So much for the unwritten "code of honour" among professional men, to which they are in bondage. It is nevertheless an honourable and indispensable profession, but the nation is not wise to consign thousands of their *afflicted relatives* to a body over whom they absolutely *have no control*. It needs but a little common sense to set matters right, but this is not the place for suggestions.

Again, how is it that the man whose genial smile has been worth thousands to the Institution he so ably superintends, is nevertheless a silent champion for Eternal Torment? Would the protector of Orphans take pleasure in the suffering of lost souls? Not for a moment. Would he not instantly reform anything in his own private conduct that could be shewn to be dishonouring to the Lord? Certainly.

But when many Christians of holy life combine to bring to his notice that the doctrine on which this belief rests is NOT found in the Word of God, that it is distinctly traceable to SATAN, that it was introduced into the Christian religion from heathen philosophy, that its contemplation by the intelligent Hindoo causes him to conclude that our Saviour is far in advance of any of their deities in future cruelty to the **unsaved**, so that the idolator turns a deaf ear to the story of His love: When, I say, all this does not move him to search the Scriptures anew for himself, what can be the reason? Simply this, that being a leading light among "Brethren," who have always rejected the doctrine of "Conditional Immortality," himself son-in-law of the justly revered George Müller, the "code of honour" by which he is bound absolutely forbids it.

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We have drawn attention to PRAISE, being the first lesson taught in the **School of God**. The second part of our subject is the RIGHTEOUSNESS of One who "knoweth our frame and remembereth that we are dust." Finally it is our privilege to shew that the VARIETY so prominently visible in all the Works of His hands, forms a striking feature in the Creator's plan for our education.

While the skill of man shews itself in the quantity and exact resemblance in every particular of all the articles he produces; whether they be bricks for his house, or a watch for his pocket, God delights in making each individual on a distinct pattern. As in "Nature," the difference in form, size and colour of flowers fill the observer with wonder and admiration, apart from their beauty, so would there be a charming variety in human individuality, if the divine training were not hindered by human ignorance.

Among the distinct features of resemblance between man and his Maker is the capacity for understanding,

investigating, and delighting in pursuits of the most **varied** character. The birds build their nests now as they always did ; the wild beasts occupy themselves exactly as did their ancestry which came out of the Ark, and the savages **who have no record of the past** continue to act like their fathers. But SATAN confirms the same conditions on **semi-civilized nations** by the persuasion that they are under moral obligation to follow in the footsteps of their progenitors. The result is that they continue to **grope in darkness**. The Mahomedan, Hindoo, and Chinese have all accepted the tradition concerning woman that she is a fountain of evil, necessary indeed but never to be taught or to be trusted ; and where this doctrine is accepted, she may be a beauty to hang jewels on, or an excellent cook, but a **help-meet** such as any average Englishman can obtain in his wife is not to be had for love or money.

The superiority of European over Asiatic races is directly in proportion to their **teachableness**. God is always bringing out something **NEW** for those who are prepared to see what He has to shew ; and the progress of the nineteenth century is distinctly the result of this wonderful fact : although **Satan** has been hard at work to introduce new forms of **evil**, to counteract the good which has resulted from a better acquaintance with God from the pages of His Word, and from a study of the Works of His Hands.

The practical point of an extensive subject which I desire the reader to grasp is, that this wonderful structure of ours, combining body, soul and spirit, requires **VARIETY** of occupation and of interest in order to develop its capacities.

I have been over a factory, and it has been explained to me that while it takes fifteen men to make a boot or shoe, yet that the establishment can turn out with the aid of its machinery more than 150 men could have done a century ago. But this does **NOT** represent the advance of the age as it is intended to do. The man who works eight or nine hours a day continuously

at one particular operation in the growth of the boot or shoe, is only one-fifteenth part as good a shoemaker as his grandfather, and his mind is so vacuous at the conclusion of his day's work that it falls an unresisting prey to any diversion that comes in its way. In this connection I state it as my firm conviction, that for one who takes to drink from natural craving, there are ten men and as many women who are coaxed or bullied into the habit by those who are already its slaves. There are not too many places of amusement in the land, probably not half enough, but the average British workman is at present too enfeebled in the possession of a mind unaccustomed to act, but by the force of habit, and environment, to choose what would renew and delight his jaded powers.

Intense mental exercise requires to be followed by physical activity to keep the balance of health in good condition. Perhaps there never was a man who endured a greater strain than the prophet Elijah, on Mount Carmel, as he watched the worshippers of Baal leaping on their altar, and realized that only Jehovah could prevent his own humiliation being greater than theirs. At the close of that eventful day, when that noble witness for God confidently reckoned on bringing all Israel back to its allegiance as one man, he required an OUTLET for his exultation, and he got it : "The hand of the Lord was upon Elijah, and he girded up his loins and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel." Do not let us think that running before the chariot, like a Cairo courier, was beneath the dignity of an Elijah. It was a safety valve for highly-wrought nerves, and is written for our instruction.

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Our religious forefathers were generally sad and serious men. When preaching on the Prodigal Son, they would let the music and dancing, wherewith the father celebrated the wanderer's return, severely alone.

David's flow of spirits as he preceded the Ark of the Lord (2 Sam. vi. 14) was as distasteful to them as to his jealous wife, who observed the royal athlete from her window ; and the fact that Isaac was once seen sporting with Rebekah his wife appeared almost as sinful as the lie that he told.

In short, it was unknown to the Puritan that, besides sleep to refresh their wearied bodies, men and women, as well as children, needed a certain amount of **amusement** to keep themselves in the best working order. Those who from force of habit never leave the **RUT** of one particular occupation are liable to become misers, misanthropes, or even **mad**. **SATAN**, who is fully aware of this necessity of human nature, long ago assumed control of its **Diversions** in the professed interest of mankind.

A gay young man persuaded an old schoolfellow, who had been very strictly brought up, to accompany him to a **ball**, just **once**, to see what it was like. He consented, and was asked by his companion how he had enjoyed the scene. "Well," he replied, "I never saw such a sight since I was **weaned**"; and thus disclosed that a passion of which he was unconscious had asserted itself. There was not the exposure of her person to the stranger, as in Bathsheba's case, but sufficient to kindle a desire, which, if unchecked, would make him at length fall into the embrace of the strange woman.

There is a grand sphere for suitably gifted men and women to provide recreation that will combine instruction with enjoyment. Many well-meaning efforts may prove failures, but the goodness of our God to this land since she has given free course to His Word is a sure token that He will give wisdom in this direction also.

Pessimists are only illustrations of an unsound mind. Our great-grandfathers would have insisted that it must be impossible for any but an acrobat to ride above two wheels without falling to the right or to

the left. But in our days it has been discovered as a **FACT** that if a **forward movement** precedes the mount, and that is kept up, the rider will have the power to control the tendency which seems inevitable. Thus if a desire to please Him who has loved us and redeemed us for Himself, rule in our hearts, He will bestow on us the **instinct** of keeping our balance, while going ahead in the path He points out, and the collective tracks of all His people are leading to the establishment in power of **THE KINGDOM OF GOD**.



CHAPTER V.—DIVINE METHODS OF
INSTRUCTION.

THE purpose of our last chapter was to point out the leading characteristics of THE SCHOOL OF GOD, and in order to bring these to light it was necessary to contrast it continually with the SCHOOLS OF MEN in which the influence of SATAN has often been paramount.

On entering as a learner the SCHOOL OF GOD the pupil is earnestly besought to be assured of His goodwill, and that this quality co-exists with a perfect knowledge of the capabilities, antecedents and drawbacks of each individual scholar. The character of SATAN, on the other hand, has been drawn in vain if the scholar has not perceived that in whatever form he presents himself—*illwill* underlies all his approaches.

The question naturally arises: How shall I recognize the voice of the enemy and so escape the snare? To this there is but one reply, and a very ancient one. It comes to us from the mouth of a teacher who had just uttered the most shameful slander against a man of God, and yet, for all that, was a man deeply taught of God. Eliphaz says in Job xxii. 21, "Acquaint now thyself with HIM and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee." In other words, if we truly love God and seek to please Him He will bestow on us the *divine instinct* for detection, just as He teaches the little birds not to eat poison berries.

The mother, whose babe has begun to make use of language, answers the little one with little words so as to bring herself into touch with her child; and there is no stronger contrast between the general character of God's Word and that of heathen philosophy and pretended revelation than the **simplicity** of the one in all that it narrates and the **complexity** of the other.

First of all let us notice that the **manner of speech current among men is the kind of language God condescends to use.**

EXAMPLE I. 1 Kings iv. 20, "Judah and Israel were many as the sand which is by the sea in multitude." This does not imply that the number of the one equalled that of the other.

EXAMPLE II. Matt. iii. 5, 6, "Then went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins." This verse is not intended to teach us that the Baptist immersed the entire population who could walk to the river.

EXAMPLE III. Luke xvi, 16, "Since that time the Kingdom of God is preached and every man presseth into it," does not denote the conversion of the nation; nor is such a thought implied in John xii. 32, when our Lord said "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto Me."

To the humble and teachable soul the foregoing verses present no difficulty, for it exactly corresponds with the expression we use "All the world was there to see," and means **Representatives of all classes of society.**

When, however, the Spirit of God desires us to know that the sentence "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God," includes the whole human race. He makes it plain by the statement "There is none righteous, **no, not one.**"

Perhaps we could find no better illustration of the same terms constantly used both in **unlimited and**

limited sense than the Greek word which is translated ALL THINGS. In the third verse of the first chapter of John's gospel we read "**All things** were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." The explanation that follows the first statement proves its meaning to be **unlimited**; but when the Apostle Paul tells the Corinthians, in the twenty-first verse of the third chapter of his epistle "**All things** are yours," its application is decidedly **limited**, for he would not have approved of the saints laying hands on all the moveable property in their city.

I was present at Bethesda when Mr. Müller uttered the most remarkable sentence of his lengthened testimony. His wife had that morning breathed her last, and commenting on Romans viii. 28, he said: "Out of a thousand trials it is not five hundred only that work for the believer's good, but nine hundred and ninety-nine and **one besides.**"

Clearly that great teacher understood "**All things**" in the verse mentioned as **unlimited**, but if he had to expound the words, "**All things** are lawful for me" (1 Cor. x. 23) he would assuredly have **limited** their meaning very much indeed.

Now we stand face to face with two great questions. Is it possible to ascertain (where the conclusions are not so obvious) to what extent the statement applies, and under what conditions it holds good?

In the second place why should not the Divine teacher safeguard His precepts from all possible misunderstanding? To the first question we are able to reply unhesitatingly in the affirmative, though in some cases it may require long and patient search.

To the second the answer is that God does not choose to allow man to come to a complete understanding of His Word from any single passage or harmonized collection of them. It is for his real good to search and to compare Scriptures, just as the ploughing of the **whole** field is necessary to secure a

good harvest ; and he will get his reward by several unexpected "finds" during his investigation.

The plan in theological seminaries, whether connected with the Establishment or Dissent, is to search for the opinions of the fathers or founders of the denomination : a proceeding just about as sensible as that of a physician who sought in ancient medical works for light on modern practice. We are far better off to-day than Whitfield or Wesley, Luther or Calvin for ascertaining the exact meaning of all that our God has to say to us. These advantages have been, however, **neutralized** by SATAN'S cunning in persuading the pious of all classes that it is impossible to get theology out of its present tangle ; that for such a happy event we must wait till the Lord Himself comes to explain everything, and that meanwhile it is a sign of grace in the believer at once to yield his own convictions to the judgment of the majority.

There has been no greater effort made during the nineteenth century to put the Bible reader into a better understanding of his book than the work of the Revision between twenty and thirty years ago. If they had done nothing more than demonstrate by the introduction of two new words SHEOL and HADES—that HELL as a place of suffering for the lost is unknown in the OLD Testament, and exists only half as many times in the NEW as it is represented in our Authorised version—their labours would not have been vain. But they have done far more than this, and we are indebted to them for countless renderings which more truly represent the original than the translation which we were brought up to read and learn by heart.

Nevertheless, our old Bibles possess Concordances which place the seeker after truth in an incomparably better position for finding it than the student of the Revised Version.

A few of the difficulties that beset the Revision of the New Testament may suitably be here recorded.

Whereas the Jews copied their ancient books with scrupulous care, not daring to add to or diminish therefrom, the Gospels and Epistles were not so reverently handled. Apart from errors of omission and the consequences of infirmity of the copyists, these scribes often exercised their own discretion in writing marginal notes, which their successors embodied in the text as helpful to its right understanding. They also, as time went on, took upon themselves the responsibility of omitting what they considered not altogether suitable.

Thus in Mark ix. 46-48, they repeated verse 44 in order to impress upon the reader the idea of eternal torment of the **living**, whereas our Lord quoted but once—from the last verse of Isaiah—the manner of destruction of the carcasses of the **dead**. On the other hand, when Infant Baptism was the order of the Church, transcribers of the Greek text found weighty reasons for omitting verse 37 of Acts viii., where Philip made the eunuch's baptism contingent on the confession of his belief.

This omission had the approval of the Revisors, because it harmonized with the bulk of modern Christian teaching, and they sought by all means to produce a work that would **sell**! The authors of the twentieth century New Testament have made a further concession to public opinion, and seeing the Revisors had placed John viii. 2-11 in brackets, they have taken it out of its place in the gospel altogether, and attached it as a legend at its close!! Anyone who has studied the passage word by word can see that it bears the stamp of inspiration as clearly as our Lord's conversation with the woman of Samaria—but of this, more anon.

I do not believe a more honest or well-qualified body of men were ever engaged in translation work, but the Revisors were hampered in various directions, and, even when they gave preference to the oldest manuscript, may yet have been nearer the truth with a later

copy of one who had access to an earlier transcript of the New Testament than they were able to obtain.

But now it is my privilege to make known to the reader that all that the New Testament has suffered from copyists and translators does not disturb its authenticity in the slightest degree. Our Lord Himself condescended to use a translation of Old Testament Scripture that was FAR INFERIOR to our Authorized version, and so did the Apostles!—I refer to the **Septuagint**.

In Luke iv. 18, our Lord read out of the book of the prophet Isaiah "recovering of sight to the blind," but you will find no such sentence in Isaiah lxi. 1. Again, in Hebrews x. 5, we find the Apostle quotes from Psalm xl. 6, "A body hast thou prepared me," and you will look in vain for these words in the Old Testament. The explanation of this is very simple. More than 300 years before Christ, Ptolemy, king of Egypt, set seventy learned Jews to translate their Scriptures into Greek for his library. The reproach of our Lord to the lawyers for taking away the **key of knowledge** was that they retained the original Scriptures as too sacred for public perusal, and substituted the SEPTUAGINT (possibly re-cast into Hebrew) for their Synagogue use and this contained the above interpolations. But this act on their part only brought out the **exceeding grace of our Lord Jesus Christ** in using this version, wherever it was sound, because the people among whom it was current were not responsible for its errors. A lesson of unspeakable value in these days of "Higher Criticism," which would throw overboard a cargo of wheat because some of the sacks contained more or less gravel.

If the copyists of the New Testament took liberties with the sacred text, these were not to be compared with the license taken by the translators of the **Septuagint**.

They sought to improve the book of Esther by

putting into her mouth a prayer full of filthy pride, and further asserted that the JEWS DID lay their hands on the spoil. When they came to Isaiah ix. 6, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and his Name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace," they considered that the circulation of such a prophecy would create a great scandal, because it seemed utterly incompatible with both law and prophets. So this is their improved rendering of the passage:—

"For a child is born to us, and a son is given to us, whose government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name is called the Messenger of great counsel, for I will bring peace upon the princes and health to him"!!!

Yet the Septuagint version that contained such alarming blemishes, was in thousands of cases a good and faithful translation of the Word of God, and our Lord's use of the same ought to teach us as our first lesson in DIVINE METHODS OF INSTRUCTION that it is far more important to insist upon TRUTH which is professed by the lip being truly believed in the heart, than to raise questions in the listener's mind which he or she is altogether too ignorant to answer, or even understand.

I am now about to bring to your notice "parts of God's ways" wherein He adapts Himself to the mental infirmity of man, which I have never heard publicly expounded. The false conclusions arising from self-conceit and presumption have been met and overcome by the Divine Teacher in using the weapon of RIDICULE: "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall have them in derision," is not found in the book of Revelation, nevertheless it is one of "the true sayings of God."

When the Almighty told His servant Job to gird up his loins like a man and answer His questions, did He expect him to do it? When He further

enquired if he could loose the bands of Orion, did Job set about considering how it could be accomplished. When God told him to cast abroad the rage of his wrath and abase every proud man, was he thereby encouraged to make the attempt? Not for a moment, and as we have before observed this **method of instruction** was perfectly successful; the unsound mind of the saint was instantly healed.

Now for an illustration from the New Testament. The Sermon on the Mount as recorded in Matthew v. seems a most unlikely portion wherein to find the **ridiculous**—but wait and see. The address was given to the disciples, whose central hope was to see their Master seated on David's throne, and themselves sharing His glory. That Jesus Christ came into the world to **save sinners**, did not interest them in the least, nor could our Lord, before He was rejected by the nation, crucified and raised from the dead, disclose God's way of Salvation. It was necessary, however, for Him to shew His disciples that righteousness before God, which could earn for its possessor **eternal life**, was as hopeless as it was for Job to perform any of the feats which God invited him to attempt. Thus from verse 17, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets, I am not come to destroy but to fulfil," to the closing sentence of the chapter which is the climax: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect," the Lord makes it clear that apart from the work of One who could satisfy God's commands on their behalf—they were indeed undone.

In the centre of this part of His discourse we find the startling injunction: "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee." The same applies to the right hand, and in Mark ix. 45, the foot is also included.

Every sane person is sure the Lord was not recommending self-mutilation. We have been taught from childhood that Jesus meant the severance from our-

selves of guilty habits, or objects of affection. How then should our obedience render us "halt" or "maimed," as Mark describes it? Would it not rather make us pure and strong?

The key to this passage lies in the fact that since the day when Adam laid the blame of his transgression upon the wife whom God had given him, all of his race have acted upon the principle of shifting the responsibility of their sins upon their Creator, or some influence outside of themselves. Now in Matt. v. 29, 30, our Lord turns this argument to RIDICULE. Was it your right eye that looked upon the woman to lust after her? Pluck it out that the left may learn better. Was it your right hand that was guilty of theft? Cut it off that the left may fear. The purpose of this form of speech lies upon the surface. Jesus meant exactly what He said. Not for one moment expecting or intending that He should be literally obeyed, but to convince His hearers that the source of their sin was not external but internal.

As the resistless hurricane is to the gentle breeze so is God's method of ridiculing His enemies to the way in which He brings His children to their right senses. God's lesson to Naaman the Syrian in sending him home cleansed without money and without price was marred by the crafty Gehazi. The prophet's servant succeeded admirably in relieving Naaman of a small part of the enormous fee he had brought to Elisha's door, and having safely stowed it away came and stood before his master. To the enquiry as to where he had been, Gehazi replied "Thy servant went no whither." Now there is scarcely a sin more hateful to God than earning money by defaming His character, and the privileges that this sinner had enjoyed increased his guilt. The punishment inflicted was altogether peculiar—not leprosy of the type that separates a man from society, for we find Gehazi afterwards talking with a king, but the innocence he

assumed was caricatured upon his person—he was made an object of **ridicule** to the nation as the prophet's servant who thought he could cheat the prophet's God. The ghastly complexion of him and his children shewed that it was indeed a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Now let me bring before you a **New Testament** scene, where man is seen attempting to "take in" the Son of God.

There is a certain insect of nocturnal habits which attains considerable size in old ships and old houses. Although hated by ordinary mortals yet it presents such interest to men of science that a German professor is said to have spent the best years of his life in examining its structure and habits. I have seen the book with a portrait of its subject on the cover and many illustrations of its parts in the body of the volume.

The same faculty of research that has been so freely bestowed on this specimen of natural history, I have spent in learning all that can be ascertained of our Lord's natural enemies—the Scribes and the Pharisees—and not without result.

Their approaches to Him, in whose mouth was found no guile, were, as we read in John viii. 6, that they might find **cause to accuse Him**—never that they might learn from His lips. They had all been, doubtless, shocked by the exceeding grace of our Lord's behaviour to the woman "**who was a sinner,**" described in Luke vii. 37, (whom monkish ignorance put down as Mary Magdalene) and reasoned that He would even acquit one who had broken the seventh commandment. Dearly as they loved **money** they were ready to part with it in order to satisfy their **hate**, as the thirty pieces of silver given to Judas, and the large hush money to the soldiers who guarded the sepulchre distinctly proves. Moreover, the doctrine that the end sanctifies the means was an established rule of life. It would be perfectly easy

for them to get up a test case wherein there could be no doubt about the actual transgression, and put the Teacher to shame therewith before the whole of His audience. Money could procure a man who would use their authority for getting an ignorant woman into his house, and they could satisfy themselves that the deed was done if they arrived in the small hours of the morning. Everything turned out exactly as it was desired and they brought the culprit to the temple court for judgment while the Lord was addressing His usual congregation. He acted in a very singular manner, but His finger did not trace on the sand the meaningless scrawls that David once drew on the door of Achish king of Gath (1 Sam. xxi. 13), and the accusers interpreted His stooping attitude as intended to cover His confusion. They became more importunate for a reply, whereupon Jesus lifted Himself up and said unto them: "**He that is without sin among you let him first cast a stone at her,**"—and proceeded to finish what He had begun to write. If the characters revealed to them not only their names but the amount that each had subscribed towards the ensnaring of the woman, it is small cause of surprise to find the conspirators soon making themselves scarce. Supposing He should read it out to His audience? In the sight of the **RIGHTEOUS JUDGE** the villany of these men who could so heartlessly betray the woman to her death, cast her sin completely into the shade.

But the Son of Man had not come to condemn but to save, and His sentence was delivered in words of **IRONY** that would never be forgotten.

* * * *

However busy the company promoter of London, or the real smart man of New York might be in answering correspondence, they would be sure to

find time to listen to the story of the latest successful swindle, and thus it came to pass that as our Lord was giving His disciples the parable of the Unjust Steward, some of the Pharisees felt irresistibly drawn to listen, and no doubt their faces shewed their sympathy with the fraudulent official whose manner of providing for the future had been described.

Our Lord's comment on the transaction was to advise his hearers to secure the friendship of those who could hereafter welcome them to the abodes of bliss by **money**, however unjustly it had been earned. That this was not meant for the disciples but for those who formed the outer circle of His audience, is apparent from the sudden and abrupt change of attitude and warning which we can see in the tenth and three following verses of the sixteenth chapter of Luke. But the arrow of the Lord's **SCARCASM** hit the Pharisees deeply and they shewed their resentment by **deriding** Him. It is a strong form of the word used in Gal. vi., where we are told God is not **mocked**, and now I draw the reader's attention to what followed.

These "silver-loving" teachers of the people had by the invention of **INDULGENCES** described in Mark vii. 11, largely added to their income, and by the same act educated those who paid them "Corban" in the breaking of the law.

They had further increased their ill-gotten gains by writing bills of divorcement which enabled a man to send his wife adrift for an outbreak of temper or an ill-cooked dinner (which is the case among continental Jews to-day), thus forcing the woman to seek the protection of some other man, or go as we say, upon the streets. In this also becoming chief promoters of national iniquity.

But all this did not satisfy their insatiable rapacity. The instinctive terror of **immediate** judgment that haunts the sinner in his dying moments was improved by them to the establishment of the doctrine of

PURGATORY. More money could be made out of the panic of ignorance than from all other sources put together. **Hades** became not a place of repose but of **TORTURE**; nevertheless, by their intercession with Father Abraham, they promised to make a way of escape for those who paid them for their services.*

It was for the especial warning of such characters as these that our Lord described the scene of "The Rich Man and Lazarus." He represented, in effect, their impious teaching, with the difference of putting one of themselves into the place of torment, instead of the beggar who could not **pay** to be delivered from it. The smile of derision must have died upon their countenances as they saw themselves entangled in their own net.

When God says "I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh" (Prov. i. 26), **SARCASM** is indeed terrible. I do not think all the sufferings of the martyrs for Christ have exceeded in mental agony what has been endured by the successors of the Pharisees and Scribes, who have used the authority of their assumed priesthood for imposing upon the people doctrine which they knew to be false, for filthy lucre's sake.

I especially refer to their dying moments when **SATAN** standing at their right hand has undertaken

* No more conclusive proof could be found, that the general belief of the people in the days when our Lord sojourned among men was that apart from payment to the Rabbis there was no salvation, than the fact recorded in three gospels of the disciples' astonishment to hear that it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle (*the name given to the smaller opening for foot-passengers in the city gates, through which no loaded camel could pass*) than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God. They were "*exceedingly amazed*," for if these who could **PAY** for future security failed to obtain it, what possible chance remained for the pauper?

to expound to them the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus in the traditional way.*

* * * *

Thus we have seen how inimitably God can use this weapon of refinement which man conceives to be his peculiar property. I have been upbraided by "Brethren," who carefully kept clear of the controversy themselves, for the "sarcastic" tone of my writing, and reply that it is at the Master's feet I have learned thus to answer those who do not say what they mean or mean what they say.

Instead of replying to a plain theological question in a straightforward way, they have treated a servant who has long, lovingly and faithfully ministered among them, with neglect and (if they could have done it) with starvation, shewing that the influence which condemned our forefathers to prison and to death is still at work among them.

We can now enter practically into the subject of real Bible searching with our Concordances, and in order to demonstrate the unspeakable value of the right understanding of a SINGLE WORD in bringing human thought into harmony with Divine, will exemplify the same in our next chapter, by explaining what has so sorely puzzled students in

THE CHARACTER OF JACOB.

* The sudden change from the *ironical* to the *severely truthful* line of teaching which has been pointed out in verses 10, 11, 12 and 13, coming after verse 9, was on account of the two classes of hearers whom our Lord addressed.

There are also two solemn truths for the general reader conspicuously brought out in this remarkable and unique parable.

First. That the dead saints cannot help the dead sinner.

Second. That one risen from the dead would not be able to convince those who rejected Moses and the prophets.

When Lazarus of Bethany was raised from the dead, were any of the Pharisees converted? Nay they rather sought to put Lazarus also to death.

CHAPTER VI.—THE CHARACTER OF JACOB.

“WAS NOT ESAU JACOB’S BROTHER? SAITH THE LORD, YET I LOVED JACOB.”—Malachi i. 2.

BEFORE, as it were, taking the volumes in hand for the purpose of explaining this enigma, it will be interesting to the reader to learn under what circumstances this Theological work of unparalleled merit came into existence.

Three-quarters of a century have elapsed since a company of four believers met to “break bread” for the first time in a private room in Dublin. They did this after a diligent search through the New Testament had revealed to them that the observance of the Lord’s Supper was not a priestly monopoly nor a ministerial function, but the privilege of those who were united by a common salvation. This I may say was a *distinctive testimony* of these Christians, above and beyond all other distinctive testimonies which had from time to time, since the Reformation, been given to men by diligent students of the Word. Side by side with this there was emphatic witness borne to the truth that in the change of law which followed the change of priesthood from the Aaronic to the Melchisedek type—no building made with hands, whether bought or built, whether subject to rent or freely lent for the assembling of believers, whether made of mud or of marble had one atom of inherent sanctity. It was shewn that our Lord in cleansing the Temple at Jerusalem of traffic on two occasions was perfectly

consistent with the law which He came to fulfil, but that when that Temple was destroyed the only "house" recognized by the Risen Lord was the assembly of His people. The presence of the Lord during their worship hallows the assembly, but the fact that the Lord's Supper has been partaken of in any building, or its consecration for worship, does not make that building sacred. Just as the earth cannot afford one ray of light to the benighted traveller after the sun has set, so there is not a particle of sanctity clinging to the walls or floor of the place of meeting when the assembly has dispersed. The third portion of TRUTH which "Brethren" rescued from oblivion was the all-sufficiency of Scripture alone for the instruction of man in the things of God. SATAN sewed tares among this wheat, which produced schism of intense bitterness, before this movement had, so to speak, come of age—and there is no more profitable study in church history than tracing the effect to its cause. I propose to do so in a future chapter.

* * * *

I think it was Lady Huntingdon who said she thanked God for the letter M. "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called," but Paul did not say not ANY. Wealth may be accumulated by industry, or inherited from parents, but the names both of the giver of the costly ointment, and of "his own new tomb wherein never man was yet laid," will ever be had in fragrant remembrance. Among the early "Plymouth Brethren" was a man endowed with wealth, and, at the same time, with an intense desire to get at the real meaning of all the words of God. George Vicesimus Wigram, as his central name implies, was the youngest son of a very long family indeed, but so far from being "one too many" (as the Babe laid in the manger was probably esteemed by the crowd who found accommodation in the Bethlehem inn)—he grew up to be a specialist in

the laboratory of Divine knowledge. The Englishmen of the Twentieth century will learn more from his legacy to them than from all the Theological works of the nineteenth century put together.

He had the education of a gentleman but not of a so-called "divine," and finding Cruden's Concordance constantly misleading as well as defective, in his study of the Word, poured out his difficulties into the ear of a clergyman of the name of Burgh, who was learned in both the Hebrew and Greek languages. This excellent man knew how a Concordance should be constructed, to give the English reader all the information he needed, but the labour of doing this would be enormous, the expense great, and the obstacles in the way of obtaining absolute accuracy almost insurmountable.

The Hebrew verbs presented a peculiar difficulty, because in some of their tenses the meaning of the word itself becomes changed. For instance, the verb **To die** would in another form mean **To kill**. In order therefore to put the English reader on the same footing as the Hebrew scholar, it would be necessary to arrange a verb that occurred whether ten or a thousand times, and in five or six tenses, in five or six distinct catalogues from Genesis to Malachi. George Wigram, however, counted the cost and determined to proceed. In the Royal Mint each sovereign is separately weighed before it is issued, because it is a sovereign, and this was exactly the estimate he formed of every verb, noun, adjective, adverb and preposition in the whole Word of God. Two Bibles had a blank sheet pasted on alternate sides of each leaf, and all the words cut and sorted with an exactness that no system of book-keeping ever rivalled. Knowing himself to be unqualified to share in the literary part of the undertaking, he obtained the services of the ablest scholars, paying them handsomely for their labour, and passing on their work to other scholars to be subjected to the closest criticism.

I have endeavoured in vain to obtain the names of these worthy men, but Mr. Bialloblotzky, a Polish Rabbi, superintended the Old Testament portion, and Dr. Tregelles the New. Before stereotyping the finished work every page was submitted to seven independent qualified editors, so that not a misprinted dot or numeral should escape detection. It was not the age of hurry when this work was wrought; more than ten years were spent over it, and George Wigram felt it an unspeakable privilege to outlay even fifty thousand pounds in its accomplishment.

The practical **VALUE** of these Concordances to every Bible student lies in the **absolute certainty** they give him as to the real meaning of every word of the original Hebrew and Greek, which is represented always by the same equivalent in English. It throws light on all the **exceptions** to the general rule, and in many cases proves these exceptions to be erroneous.

The third benefit of their use deals with that class of words which have in certain cases a **figurative meaning**. If we go through all the passages where this is apparent, we shall discover the point of resemblance between the physical and the spiritual to which God draws our attention. If we belong to the class that say "This is an hard saying who can hear it?" and drop further investigation, we shall be left to grope in darkness. But if, like Peter, with all our ignorance we say, "Lord, to whom shall we go; **Thou** hast the words of Eternal Life," the Lord reveals to us two fundamental principles of true interpretation. **First**: If the passage can be understood in its natural sense, that is the way to understand it. **Second**: If it cannot be so understood, always remember the **goodwill** of Him from whom the sentence proceeds. He has no delight in confusing His children; He is unable to find in human language a word that **exactly embodies** the divine idea, and is obliged to select the one that most nearly approaches it. If for instance

we are told that the gospel was preached to them that are dead (1 Peter iv. 6), and also that she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth (1 Tim. v. 6), whereas the individuals referred to are both alive and enjoying themselves, it was the only intelligible way of stating that as far as consciousness of GOD was concerned they were as unfeeling as a corpse.

Lastly, there are words that occur once only. Theologians call these by the Greek term "Hapax legomena," and it would appear that here our Concordances must fail to serve us, because there are none to compare them with. But this is far from being true, although it renders additional help necessary. In the first place the Concordance points out the FACT and this invests the word with peculiar interest. As a knowledge of the Hebrew and Greek letters, and the order in which they stand, is all the learning needful for using the Concordance, so is it with the Lexicon.

You will find in a Classical Lexicon the word explained by at least three consecutive meanings, and the last probably very different from the first. The primary meaning conveys the general sense of the word, and I do not remember a single exception to its being the right one.

Having had such constant experience of translators rendering a doubtful word in accordance with current theology, rather than in the sense of all other Scripture that bears upon the point, I am never satisfied without reference to the Lexicon—when they are but two or three occurrences of some rare word. One illustration will suffice. The word that we find as "punishment" in Matt. xxv. 46, is the same as that rendered "torment" in 1 John iv. 18, and this leads the superficial enquirer to take one as the explanation of the other; but on consulting the Lexicon as to the meaning of "Kolasis," we find first that it signifies "a cutting off"; afterwards that it was used for "pruning," and later still for "chastisement." Had

the translators been content to render the word in harmony with all other Scripture, 2 Thess. i. 9, would have shewn them that the punishment was "everlasting destruction"; but being one and all firmly rooted in the doctrine of "human immortality"—they refused the first and obvious meaning.

Referring to 1 John iv. 18, it is true that fear hath "torment," but that is not the truth which the text teaches. The Apostle shews that where fear of this description exists it effectually cuts off its possessor from communion with the object of his fear.

This lengthy introduction has been necessary to my subject, for the whole value of my discovery rests upon the absolute TRUTH of the volumes that revealed it.

As we have seen that there is no doctrine that alienates the heart of man from his God like that of the predestination of the bulk of humanity to the doom of **Eternal Torment**, so do we find man's natural resentment manifest itself against the especial objects of divine favour. He takes a positive delight in pointing out their transgressions and imputing every evil motive to their actions.

JACOB is perhaps the best abused saint in all Scripture. I was listening to a popular evangelist among the upper classes at the Victoria Rooms, Clifton, on a Sunday evening, who told his audience that the character of Jacob was "loathsome." Knowing what I knew I shuddered at the remark, but having only in my later years been enlightened, I prayed that he might learn what I had learned—that there was something lovely in the man whom God loved, and that this quality covered a multitude of sins.

I once knew a lady who told me she had given up reading the Old Testament when she discovered that David was "a man after God's own heart"; but I received a message from her death-bed, thanking me for having shewn her that there is nothing in man

that God so prizes as a heart that allows no sin in the past, and no punishment for that sin either present or prospective to obscure the FACT of His love or to cause His child to seek consolation outside of Himself.

Some years ago I was going through Genesis with my Bible-class, and came to the history of Jacob, where it is written that he was "a plain man dwelling in tents" (Gen. xxv. 27). I desired more light on this equivocal word, and will state exactly what I did to obtain it. The English words of our authorized version of the Old Testament occupy the last part of the second volume of the Hebrew Concordance. I found the word PLAIN in this index on page 1601. The first word, of which there are eight different Hebrew equivalents, was a noun. So I passed on to the next PLAIN, which was an adjective. My first reference is to a word of four Hebrew letters on page 817, but Genesis xxv. 27 is not to be found on that page. The second reference is to page 1348. It is a word of two letters only, and the word in our text is first out of thirteen occurrences. Reading and meditating on the following twelve passages convinced me of God's meaning in the first. If this is not sound Theology where is it to be found? The word means perfect, and nothing else!

Job is the only other man to whom this exceptional commendation is given, though we read of other "perfect" men in the Old Testament. In Psalm xxxvii. 37, where we are told to "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright—for the end of that man is peace," we have the same word which describes Jacob in his early manhood. Here was indeed a surprise! If God justifies who is he that condemns? and I asked the Lord to explain to me how the false, crafty, greedy man, that Jacob had from childhood been presented to be, could have been so described. I sought to go over the history from God's standpoint, and then to say "Let God be true and every man a liar"! I took occasion to ask one member of my

class what was to be understood as "a plain man." "Oh," was the reply, "an every day sort of man." I turned to another (whose apprehension of the term was limited to Jacob's appearance), who said that he had no hair about his face!! How completely then was the TRUTH concealed by the translation. The explanation is not far to seek. The terrible story of chapter xxvii. made it appear to the translators that there had been a **mistake**, and they undertook to correct it by supplying a word that had any meaning the reader pleased to give it.

My eyes were soon open to see in the events that were afterwards recorded, circumstances that I had completely overlooked. The next in order brings before us Esau returning from the chase thoroughly exhausted. Not to a desert where, if the food he craved were withheld he must die for lack of it, but to his father's house, where there was bread enough and to spare of the ordinary kind. Jacob had humbly, patiently, and efficiently tended his father's flocks, while that father's favourite son gave himself up to sport. The terms on which the brothers lived were such as we often see; relationship without a particle of sympathy. Jacob no doubt often wondered whether the fact of his brother's entrance into the world a few minutes before himself involved his having a **double portion** of all the property which Jacob alone looked after. On this day it happened that Esau coveted something that it was in Jacob's power to bestow, and being fully aware of his elder brother's independent spirit and scorn of drudgery, offered to sell that mess of pottage for his birthright. Esau, whom Scripture describes as a profane person (Heb. xii. 16), used strong language to express his own condition, and estimated the birthright as of less value than the difference between a good dinner and a plain one, and thereupon bought the pottage. God's judgment on the transaction can be found both in Genesis and Hebrews. Jacob's part in it involved **no guile or prevarication**.

We next come to the history of Jacob's fall from the path of rectitude, which did not occur till he was sixty years of age (though men were as young then at three-score as they now are at thirty). SATAN who beguiled the first woman with the words "Hath God said?" now beguiled Rebekah with one of his favourite principles—**The end sanctifies the means.** God promised the blessing to your favourite son, let me help you to obtain it. Nothing is more important in this "seed plot" of Scripture, as Genesis has been aptly called, than to notice that God proves to man, by the **result** of his evil ways, how hateful they are in His sight, rather than by previous warning against them. We have simply to notice **cause and effect.**

* * * *

In the early period of human history, except for distinct visions and divine messages, men were dependent on **parental authority** for guidance in the things of God. **Filial obedience** is what is understood by the word **Godliness**, wherever it occurs in the New Testament. The proof of this to any English reader is found in 2 Peter i. 7, where the word describes the fifth out of seven steps in Christian growth. How should such a word be understood to embrace them all?

It is difficult for the European mind to realize that the **age** of a son or daughter did not relax this duty as a religious obligation. When Rebekah unfolded her plot to Jacob, he remonstrated as far as he felt able to do ; he had yet to learn that a higher authority stood between him and the mother to whom he was bound by ties of the deepest affection. That Jacob coveted the blessing there is no manner of doubt, but that he would have thought of obtaining it in the way of fraud there is every reason to doubt. His mother both commanded obedience and undertook the responsibility of his act. He obeyed, and many years of bitter retribution followed that hour's ill-doing

the record of which teaches us that we as children cannot be shielded by our parents from the consequences of sin they have induced us to commit. Rebekah little thought her act would part her from the son of her love for ever.

We are much touched at the account of Esau's grief and disappointment, but as far as we can learn from Scripture it was the only sad day he experienced in a life of prosperity. The bargain that Jacob had made for the birthright had to be forfeited by reason of his transgression, and Esau found himself in the undisputed enjoyment of his brother's portion as well as his own.

Many have wondered why God in His Bethel interview with Jacob, on his way to Laban, made no reference to the sin that thrust him out of his father's house, as barely furnished as Ishmael had been before him. Was it not that these consequences had been heavy enough? As he remembered the ascending and descending angels on that hallowed spot, Jacob's strength to meet the unknown future was renewed, seeing the God of his father Abraham gave him no reproach, but promise of success.

The first token we get of the strongest point in Jacob's character was his readiness to serve seven years for Rachel, and the cheerful way in which he accepted the burden. Can we call that man **covetous** who gives seven years of toil without wages for the love of a woman?

Laban, the father of "**sweaters**," proved Jacob's skill and trustworthiness as a shepherd, and by a fraud secured another seven years of his unrequited labour.

Jacob was not a polygamist by preference, but he could not say NO when urged into any course by those whom he loved or feared.

When the fourteen years were ended he found himself the father of ten sons, the eldest of whom was but six years old. The responsibility of providing

for them was urgent, and he prepared to leave his uncle without putting in a claim for either sheep or goat for his fourteen years service by day and night. Was this like a scheming, grasping man? Verily not. However, Laban would by no means let him go, and told Jacob to name his own wages and he would give it.

Jacob then proposed to remove all the ring-straked and spotted among the sheep and brown among the goats, and to content himself with these and their offspring. Laban agreed in appearance, but instead of allowing Jacob to separate the flocks as he offered to do, proceeded to make the division himself, and drove away three days' journey by the hand of his own sons all the parti-coloured sheep and brown goats that Jacob had stipulated for. It was just as if a gardener took the seed of all the pink and purple sweet peas, leaving his successor only pods of white flowers with instructions to raise as many pink and purple blossoms from such pods as he pleased.

It was the most barefaced imposture, but Laban had proved by experience that he might oppress Jacob to any extent, and the reason that Jacob did not rebel, as any other man would have done, is apparent from his own words in chapter xxxi. 31: "Because I was afraid, for I said peradventure thou wouldst take by force thy daughters from me." It is just at this point where the general prejudice against Jacob, arising out of his conduct in chapter xxvii., comes into strongest relief; a prejudice in which I shared until my eyes were opened. The general opinion on the action of Jacob, in the latter verses of Genesis xxx. is, that having secured all that he had demanded, he further schemed to enrich himself by producing cattle that he could claim from those that remained to his employer. From that charge he stands **wholly acquitted**.

We can imagine his speechless mortification as he saw Laban coolly driving away what he expected to retain. But the same compassionate God who after-

wards directed Elisha to cast a stick into the rushing Jordan and cause that stick to raise the sunken axe-head, because of the distress of the man who had borrowed it, now revealed to the despairing Jacob a means whereby a nucleus of speckled cattle should be born. We find in chapter xxxi. 10-13, how these were marvellously increased by natural propagation.

Jacob's desire was single, and in every respect worthy of a servant of God, even to provide for his own house, and his God brought it to pass that he should do so. Ask the cattle breeder of this day if he could produce the same results by similar means?

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It is not sought to be shown by the fore-going, that "perfect" as applied to Jacob or Job means free from sin, but that the character of each was that of a man who sought to maintain a good conscience towards God.

The WEAKNESS of Jacob's character may now be considered.

In the last verse to which the readers attention has been directed, Genesis xxxi. 13, God appears to Jacob as the God of Bethel, reminding him of the vow he had made in chapter xxviii. 22, namely, that on his return Jacob would build a house for God where he had seen the heavenly vision, and after delivering His servant, first out of the hands of the oppressing Laban, and secondly out of the hand of the still more dreaded Esau, the way was plain for Jacob to fulfil his vow and obtain further blessing from God. But in chapter xxxiii. 17-19, we find the pilgrim building a house for himself at Succoth, and buying a field at Shechem, where he dwells **ten years** till his boys have grown into men. Why was this? Evidently because of the beloved Rachel, who still was in secret possession of her father's images, dreaded to go where the angels from the God of Abraham should find it out and

expose her. The man who could not say NO to his mother when tempted to do wrong, found himself unable to say NO to his wife when hindered from doing right. Can we wonder that God's hand is heavy on Jacob once more, that his daughter Dinah is dishonoured by the man whose field he purchased, and that her enraged brothers take vengeance in a manner that absolutely terrifies their father, and necessitates his abandoning for a time both house and field?

But his patient God again addresses Jacob in chapter xxxv. 1, and once more directs him to Bethel—further adding, “and DWELL there.”

Jacob makes enquiry about the idols now, and gets rid of them, takes his journey to Bethel, and on arriving finds, so to speak, his God ready to welcome him and renew broken communion. But to our amazement verse 16 finds the Patriarch on the move again, as if Bethel were nothing more than the previous halting places of his journey! Bethel was not an inviting place to the natural eye, the sons might have urged their father to find a resting-place more adapted to their cattle; they had obeyed in coming, and their father had poured out a drink offering; was not this enough? Was not God equally to be found in every place? Anyway, Jacob could not say NO to his sons any more than he had been able to say NO to his wives on previous occasions, and they all move on. Rachel, the light of his eyes, is taken from him on the next stage of their journey, and later on Reuben dishonours his father. Truly Jacob had to endure grief upon grief, but the chastisement came not because he sought to do his own will, but because he was always ready to yield it up. First to his mother, then to his uncle, afterwards to his wives, and lastly to his children.

But our study of Jacob is entirely defective if we omit the occasion which brought about the **change of his name.**

When in an agony of fear, as to Esau's intentions, he prayed in the touching words of Genesis xxxii. 9-12, for protection (not of his property but) of his wives and children,—no response came. Everything that he could do to appease his justly offended brother was done; night drew on and he remained alone (ver. 24) waiting for it. Imagine a father hearing that cholera was raging in a foreign town, where his sons were employed, and his sending a telegram to the house where they lodged from the village post-office that is some miles from his own cottage. The answer is prepaid but does not come, so he walks up and down all night, for he cannot return without it, and you may form an idea of Jacob's anxiety as he paced the ford Jabbok. A stranger suddenly comes and grapples with him, and the strength of parental affection is proved by his lion-like resistance of the supposed foe till break of day. Just then a touch in the hollow of his thigh cripples Jacob, and this reveals to him instantly that his assailant is none other than a messenger from the God of Abraham, his father; yea, from his very own God. Fear instantly turns to confidence. The hug wherewith he embraced the angel, who had just hurt him so severely, and the streaming tears (Hosea xii. 4) were worth all the world to the heart of God, who forthwith gave him a princely title, and confirmed the covenant that He had made with his grandfather Abraham (promising that he should be the heir of the world), even now unto ISRAEL, so as not even to exclude the most disreputable of his sons!

God revealed Himself to Moses, not as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, as we often hear it carelessly quoted, but as the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob, thus indicating His individual fellowship with each of these His servants. **Abraham**, the man of perfect obedience, unquestioning, prompt and full; **Isaac**, the man of exemplary patience, as seen when suffering wrong

at the hands of the Philistines, and **Jacob**, the man of intense and unchanging affection.

* * * *

On the other hand what of Esau? He was one who lived to **please himself**, ready to serve his father as long as that service ran in the current of his own desires, but entirely independent of that father when it was a question of fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind. A man who despised daily labour as drudgery, fond to excess of sport, and ready to pay a long price for a good dinner—a man against whom no charge could be made of violence done to another, but at the same time never known to put himself out to serve another. A man prosperous to his heart's content, and who had nothing to ask from God but to be left alone. Yes, if there was an **"every day sort of man"** described in the Bible, it is Esau, with whom the heart of the wordling immediately asserts its sympathy, but of whom it is said "Esau have I hated." Jacob, whom God loved, He has also delighted to honour. Every page of that Book which is a light to our feet and a lamp to our path do we owe to one of his seed. The whole Bible is saturated with references to Jacob, and Israel whether as representing the man or his descendants, and towering infinitely above all these was the honour, that of his seed, according to the flesh, came the Redeemer of the World. Is it then a thing of small importance whether or not we form a right estimate of his character? And if undeserved reproach has for centuries been cast upon him and this **FACT** is brought to light simply by the right understanding of one little Hebrew word of two characters, ought it not to be made known far and wide?

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Accordingly I have taken up Jacob's cause in the assembly of my brethren, and found them but little

pleased to hear it. An aged teacher remarked that Jacob had laid hold of his brother's heel in the womb, and I replied that it was hard lines to make a babe accountable for a misdemeanour before it was born! A beloved brother of exactly my own age shook his head doubtfully, as I went over Jacob's transactions with Laban, and said he thought it was a case of "diamond cut diamond." Again I pleaded the cause of the man whom God loved, with one who was ten years my senior, and whose judgment is considered in all things to be right; and he gave it as his opinion that the vision described in Genesis xxxi. 10-13, was a romance on the part of Jacob, in order to conceal his action with the rods in the gutters from the sensitive consciences of Rachel and Leah! Lastly I was interrupted by a fourth brother, before whom I sought to lay the case, by the assertion that he did not want to hear the conduct of Jacob extenuated, for he took great pleasure in sheltering behind him! And so my experience has been that a well-instructed brother, unlike a well-filled purse, which somehow opens to receive another coin, resembles a well-filled belly (can we better the Bible word?) that sternly refuses another mouthful. Of all who heard me I know of only one who was humble enough to examine my vouchers, and manly enough to come and say to me "You were right and I was wrong."

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In the next chapter I hope to show how those controversies which are kept alive from generation to generation by the Enemy of mankind, are completely set at rest when honestly examined in the light of the Word alone, and also to point out the far reaching evil influence of a wrong meaning given to a single word in New Testament Scripture.

Once more I desire earnestly to impress upon the reader, that necessity was laid upon our Lord to express Himself in obscure language on certain

occasions, because until His death and resurrection had become accomplished facts it would have been unsuitable to explain heavenly things in the terms afterwards used by the Holy Spirit ; but He never intended His disciples to be misled by what they could not at the time understand, or to live ever afterwards in the land of DOUBT.

When our children enquire minutely into particulars concerning the advent of the new baby, we are right in answering them vaguely, because the time has not yet arrived for such explanation, and a similar wisdom in the impartation of divine knowledge has ever characterized our Father which is in heaven.



CHAPTER VII.

THE DISSOLVING OF DOUBTS.

WHEN the prophet Daniel after a season of retirement was suddenly called into the presence of the affrighted Belshazzar, he had been introduced by the Queen as a man possessing the above power. The anxiety of the thousand nobles who sat at that impious feast was probably nearly as intense as that of their Royal host. GOD had written a message! DOUBT as to its meaning was altogether insupportable.

That which God had been pleased, before Christ came into the world, to communicate by direct revelation, He is now pleased to point out to us in His Word, if as little children we determine to listen only to Him.

One of the most precious results to us of doing this is the unexpected light that falls upon our way. When I look up this word DISSOLVE I find on page 1326 of E.H.C. that this Chaldean verb had been used previously in Daniel iii. 25 in the sentence: "I see four men LOOSE." Query. What became of the ropes wherewith Nebuchadnezzar had bound Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego? The fire that was not allowed to singe a hair of their heads made short work of the ropes, and this I trust we shall find as the cords of tradition become exposed to that Word which is likened to a FIRE in Jeremiah xxiii. 29.

The last verse in the Gospel of John contains a statement well calculated to bewilder the youthful mind, and I pondered long and much in my earlier years, how a comparatively brief life on earth, like that of our Lord's, could have included so many events that the earth should hardly find room for their record. I was told by my elders that it was an "Eastern hyperbole," but such an explanation was neither satisfactory nor TRUE. While our Lord used, as we have before observed, forms of speech current among men, which expressed more than was actually meant by the words employed,—He never set an example of EXAGGERATION.

The meaning of the sentence can, however, be understood without a shadow of a doubt by the use of the "Englishman's Greek Concordance."

On referring to the word WORLD we find that its use in Greek exactly corresponds to our own. It may either mean the earth on which we live, or the entire human population. Our Lord used it more than forty times between taking His seat at the last supper and His rising from the same, and generally in the latter sense. It is found nineteen times in the seventeenth of John, and only in verses 5 and 24 is the material world intended. We can then safely assert that in its final mention in the concluding verse of the Gospel, WORLD stands for MANKIND.

We next consider the word CONTAIN. The Greek word for which this stands you will find on page 805. It occurs nine times, and generally is translated receive. One of the passages, John viii. 37, where it is otherwise rendered, is very helpful. Our Lord said, "because My word hath no place in you," and the reason of this was that the mind of the audience was pre-occupied with its own false and trifling concerns.

Now let us put two and two together, as we say. What can be clearer than the Apostle's meaning in the final sentence of his Gospel to be that an entire

record of all Christ said and did would be too much for MANKIND TO TAKE IN.

This serves to establish a most important fact in the method God has seen fit to use in the instruction of man.

However highly educated a man or woman may be, they are as liable to CONFUSION as a horse of the purest breed is liable to FRIGHT.

It is therefore far better for us to hear the parable of the Sower and the Seed with its interpretation by three successive narrators, so as to impress its truth on our minds, than to have three distinct discourses from the evangelists—Matthew, Mark and Luke.

We shall learn more of Christ by being told three times of the woman who touched the hem of His garment, and by diligently comparing the narratives, than we should have done by three distinct cases of disease that He cured. "Tell me the story often, for I forget so soon," is not a sentence for children's lips alone.

* * * *

The next DOUBT that I wish to dissolve is one that works far more serious mischief, for it touches the character of our Lord in His own person. In Matthew xxvi. 50, we read that Jesus on being kissed by the traitor said to him, "**F**riend, wherefore art thou come?" Is this TRUE? We shall see. There is no more interesting circumstance in the traditions of Mohammedanism, than the fact that while the adjunct, "prophet," is applied by them to all Old Testament saints—from Abel down to Christ—they make a single exception in the case of Abraham, who is never mentioned throughout Islam but as "*Ibrahim khalil oolla*"—Abraham the Friend of God. This title of honour we find three times in Holy Writ. Once from the lips of Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. xx. 7). Once from Jehovah to His servant Isaiah (Isa. xli. 8), and finally from the Apostle James in the twenty-third verse of

the second chapter of his epistle, where it is distinctly stated to have been earned by the quality of his OBEEDIENCE.

In the fifteenth chapter of the Gospel of John our Lord makes the continuance of the title to His disciples contingent on **their obedience** (verse 14).

Did the Lord profane this sacred word by applying it to Judas Iscariot in the consummation of his crime? NEVER. What then was the term He employed? The Greek Concordance will enlighten us. You will find on page 317 that in the Gospel of Matthew a word is used four times, and in every instance describes one who is **out of touch**, as we say, with the speaker—Matthew xi. 16, "Children in the market-place calling unto their fellows." Mat. xx. 13, "Friend, I do thee no wrong," spoken to the discontented labourer. Mat. xxii. 12, "Friend, how camest thou in hither," spoken to one who was presently bound hand and foot and cast into outer darkness. THIS is the term we find employed by our Lord in the text under consideration.

It ought to be rendered **companion**, it ought never to have been translated **friend**. Acquaintanceship, not love, is the central idea. But our Revisors, willing to please the people, have failed to establish a truth of untold importance—namely, that our Lord never sacrificed TRUTH to COURTESY under any circumstances whatever.

The consequences of this failure on the Revisors' part are likely to be disastrous, because the general excellence of their work is increasingly established. I will give you an illustration that has come under my notice.

Since I have become in some sense a spiritual outcast, it has been much laid upon my heart to become better acquainted with "**the world**" from which I have been by education, occupation and inclination kept at a distance. On the same principle that a student of medicine walks the hospitals to make himself familiar with all forms of disease, whatever their origin, I have

for a couple of hours a day read the leading NOVELS of the nineteenth century. Among these I was greatly impressed with "The Mighty Atom" by Marie Corelli, and thanked God that He had caused such books to be written as would find an entrance where His Word had none.

I proceeded to read "Barabbas," and while I believe the religious novel serves a useful purpose in arousing interest in the most important subjects, I was astounded to find that Judas Iscariot had a high place in the esteem of the writer! If the Revisors re-affirmed that our Lord addressed him as "Friend," is it not easy for a woman to turn all the evidence against him upside down?

The truth on this point is of such deep importance as to call for especial elucidation.

We are told in Hebrews iv. 15 that our great High Priest "was tempted in all points like as we are yet without sin." How is that possible we may say seeing there was no corrupt nature within to sympathize with SATANIC allurements? How could our Lord enter into the experience of Paul in Romans vii. 24,—“Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?”

It was ordained that one of those who should respond to the Master's call should be a man actuated entirely by pecuniary advantage as likely to accrue to him as a disciple. As early as John vi. 70 our Lord made it manifest that Judas Iscariot, whom He did not mention by name, was in the habit of conveying to those who hated Jesus, information for which we know they were ready to pay. The word **devil** here is not **demon** but **slanderer**.

From this wicked presence our Lord, by the Father's will could not free Himself till the conclusion of the Passover. The traitor felt exasperated that the three hundred pence saved by Mary of Bethany had not found its way into his custody and so recouped himself to some extent by the thirty pieces of silver offered by

the Scribes and Pharisees. That the Master would, somehow, deliver Himself from His enemies Judas felt quite sure of, and it would then be net profit. The covetous and heartless follower at length discovered that his speculation had failed. Nay, more, retribution began by making the silver he had earned burn, so to speak, his guilty hands. No truer sign of his never having really KNOWN the Lord, in the sense of John xvii. 3, can be seen than his "repentance" leading him to apply to SATAN'S agents for relief from the "fearful looking for of judgment," which arraigned his conscience.

* * * *

The third DOUBT I desire to **dissolve**, if it exists in the reader's mind, is connected with one of the foundation truths of the Gospel—THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

When our Lord said to His assembled disciples on the evening of His resurrection: "Whose soever sins ye remit they are remitted to them, and whose soever sins ye retain they are retained" (John xx. 23). What did He mean? It would probably exhaust the patience of the ordinary Bible student to go through all the references concerning sin and its forgiveness, but the labour would not be in vain that would convince him that God, who will by-and-bye pass judgment on it in the Person of His Son, can alone forgive and put it away. Our Lord, in the second of Mark, admits the truth of what the Scribes had affirmed: "Who can forgive sins but God only." He had not yet been "declared to be the Son of God with power," and felt it due, even to His enemies, to make the **unseen** forgiveness He had pronounced on the palsied man credible by the **visible** curing of his malady. They were right in teaching that God alone could forgive sins; they had now to learn that His beloved Son, in whom He was well pleased had authority to dispense it.

We are now brought face to face with a statement that **appears** to set aside the necessity for any direct dealing with God on the part of sinners, who had access to the Apostles. How is the problem to be solved? First, by finding whether any other passages support this view, and learning under what circumstances the privilege here granted applies.

There are only two texts, and they exactly resemble each other (Mat. xvi. 19 and xviii. 18). On the first occasion the Lord said to Peter: "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." The Apostle, misunderstanding the promise, proceeded to exercise the privilege by forbidding the Lord to go to the cross, and drew upon himself the sharpest rebuke that ever a disciple received. There was no **CONTEXT** in Matthew xvi. to shew under what **conditions** the power applied; but when we find the same authority granted to all His disciples, in Matthew xviii., the fac-simile verse follows instructions which make its application **perfectly clear**. Our Lord had been dealing with sin committed by one brother against another—prescribes the mode of procedure which has His approval, and when it has been dealt with according to His instructions, He promises to ratify in heaven the judgment arrived at on earth.

The power to bind and loose does not touch those sins which do not involve a second party,—sins which are direct violations of the Divine command, and which in many cases are known to God alone.

If the question were raised as to how our Lord came to speak as He did in John xx., **without making any limitations**, the answer can be given that He knew to whom He was speaking, and they knew the extent of their future jurisdiction. Very soon these unlettered fishermen would find themselves the acknowledged guides of thousands; they would constantly be applied

to by their converts for the settlement of their differences. The gentle breathing was an earnest of the rushing mighty wind that was soon to follow, and the succeeding directions gave them the necessary courage not to shrink from a responsibility, the nature and limits of which they had before fully explained to them.

If a lady summoned hastily from home handed a bunch of keys to her daughter, to be used as the household required, the daughter would proceed to use them for that purpose; but would any true and right-minded girl take advantage of the trust reposed in her to rob her mother's jewel case, or private drawer?

Our Lord would not insult His disciples by any caution against touching His own prerogative. Of this we are assured by the action of the Apostle Peter himself, in Acts viii. Simon the Sorcerer had offered him money for the possession of the Apostolic privilege of communicating the Holy Spirit by the imposition of his hands. Although there was an insult to himself in the offering of the bribe, Peter does not for one moment assume the power to forgive the sin which he denounces in such terrible terms: "Pray God if perhaps the thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee"—are his last words to the sinner.

When any one has to deliver as his act and deed a legal instrument, which by reason of its verbosity he has been dimly able to understand, the lawyer explains to his client that it is necessary to safeguard every fresh statement by reiterating what has gone before, because it may be contested. But our God in making known His will, does not feel called upon to defend His exceptional utterances from misconstruction. There is always a CONTEXT to be found which explains them, and no difficulty need arise in defining the limits within which they apply—if the searcher after TRUTH is not hampered by some human creed. "If

we **confess** our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness," is the highway prepared by Divine grace for the greatest and the least of sinners. He invites their confidence, and never suggests to the burdened heart that the disclosing of its secrets to any human ear is well pleasing to Him. The word "I confess," in Greek, literally means, "I say the same thing," in other words **I acknowledge**.

In the above text the one who **confesses** to God does not inform Him of that which He knows not, but **acknowledges** guilt which the Spirit through the Word has brought home to his conscience,—and in another text which says "Confess your faults one to another" (James v. 16) **the very word used** tells us that an acknowledgment of wrong doing which has grieved another is right in the sight of God.

The duty of revealing to a superior, sin—which the superior knows nothing about—before the sinner can obtain its forgiveness, is taught among millions who name the name of Christ. Brought to the test of Scripture this dogma shares the fate of Nebuchadnezzar's ropes, wherewith his martyrs were bound.

* * * *

And now we come to **dissolving of doubts** concerning an institution under whose shelter SATAN has achieved his greatest successes. Its name is **THE CHURCH**.

As applied to believers in the Lord Jesus, it is found only in two senses, and the first two passages in which it occurs illustrate these senses. The Lord Himself uses the word in each case. First, "**Upon this Rock I will build My Church**"—Mat. xvi. 18. Here the word includes the whole family of the redeemed; those departed to be with Christ, those now on earth, and those yet to be brought in till He

comes again. The second is found in the words "Tell it unto the Church" (Mat. xviii. 17). Here it describes the company of believers gathered in His name in any place. Christ is the head of the one and He is the head of the other. One is called His body, so is the other; but the first as a whole is without spot, wrinkle, or any such thing, whereas the second is always found with more or less of evil and failure; the Church in the latter sense at one time is seen increasing, at another diminishing, and sometimes she is removed altogether.

There is an aspect of the word Church very common in Christian literature, representing all believers in Christ alive at any given time as "The Church on earth," during that period—but this has no sanction in Holy Writ.

Throughout the epistle to the Ephesians, in Colossians i. 18 and 24, and Hebrews ii. 12 and xii. 23, the word Church is used in the sense of Matthew xvi. In all other places it is to be understood in the sense of Matthew xviii. The words "Church of the living God" in 1 Tim. iii. 15, describe a place or sphere where Timothy's behaviour could be seen and profited by—and this very company of believers is styled in Acts xx. 28, "The Church of God."

The Apostle Paul's charge to the elders of Ephesus, from which the last quotation is taken, clearly shews that it was not the mind of God to preserve purity of doctrine among the various assemblies of believers by an appeal to the Apostles at Jerusalem. Nor could the assurance, even, that "the Holy Ghost had made them overseers" secure this assembly from error through evil teachers coming into their midst. **God and His Word** alone could keep them straight, and to this they were commended.

The divine ideal of a local "Church" was an assembly of believers, among whom precedence was gained by devoted service to its members, and whose testimony to the world outside was the simple

declaration of the TRUTH that they had received. There is no more hint of control of one assembly by another than exists in any sane ruler's mind of making the oldest inhabitant in any street responsible to direct the domestic arrangements of all the houses therein contained. Nay, more than this, when all but one of the Apostles had fallen asleep, the last of these was authorized to send seven letters to seven assemblies in Asia. (Not scattered over the continent but grouped together in a district no larger than South Wales.) And while each is exhorted according to its actual condition, none of these are subjected to the jurisdiction of the rest, or directed to appeal hereafter to any earthly tribunal.

It is at this very point where the record of God's dealings with Israel in the past is of priceless value in enabling us to understand His action in the present dispensation.

Israel at Joshua's death possessed the land and the law, and were left to enjoy the one and to put into practice the other.

We know the result. But man's constant failure did not cause God to abandon him to his own devices nor did He hold one generation responsible for the corruptions introduced by their predecessors. Through the period of the Judges and the Kings, God, as it were, came again and again to the rescue of a nation that was hastening to ruin.

With the completion of the canon of Scripture, God has again left various scattered assemblies of His witnesses to establish His Kingdom among men.

If the precepts of the Gospel had been steadfastly carried out from the commencement, this would long since have been accomplished; but the principle of gaining authority by the humblest service was as distasteful to Christendom as it was to the Apostles themselves in the days of our Lord.

Does not the Lord's desire that all His disciples

should be ONE, necessitate a central authority to which all others should bow? was SATAN'S suggestion when the first difficulties arose. The effort to secure this, the struggle to maintain the authority assumed, and its unspeakably awful results to humanity are indelibly written in the history of the Church of Rome.

* * * *

The last of the DOUBTS I propose to DISSOLVE on this occasion is found in the **single verse** which appears to establish Church authority over the Word of God.

I Timothy iii. 14-16. "These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly ; but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth, and without controversy, great is the mystery of Godliness. God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into Glory."

The Apostle Peter remarks concerning the writings of his beloved brother Paul, that they contain some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do other Scriptures, to their own destruction.

In the foregoing verses we have a sample of such writing, and it was always a passage of great difficulty to me because of the **unfinished sentence** in the first portion of it. "That thou mightest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God which is the church of the living God"—What? Something is lacking which Timothy as Paul's disciple could readily supply in order to complete the sentence. The previous verse furnishes the clue. I write—hoping to come unto thee shortly—but if I tarry long—that thou

mightest know how to behave, etc.—the missing portion of the sentence is—I am sending this epistle now.

All the older manuscripts were written in capital letters, with **no division** between the words, so that the reader's time and intelligence was often exhausted in the task of doing this for himself. For example, a portion of the text we are considering, and of vital importance to its comprehension, would read thus :

CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD THE PILLAR AND GROUND

Of course there were no commas or stops, and no separation of sentences. This had all to be supplied in later years without the help of Inspiration. That the Church of God in Ephesus should be told that she is the Pillar and ground of the truth, is a statement clean contrary to all Scripture which describes the position or condition of any assembly in the world. I owe it to Dr. A. T. Pierson, that master workman, to understand how it comes to be stated in the text of our Bibles. In his book, "**The heart of the Gospel,**" page 63, he has recorded that Bengel states the sentence to have been formerly concluded where I have placed the dividing line. When the authority of that which took the position of an **infallible church** needed to be upheld, the whole passage was thrown into confusion.

I will now write the verses again so as to make their meaning clear.

These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly, but if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God (*I am sending this epistle now*).

The Pillar and ground of the Truth, and without controversy great is the mystery of Godliness (*i.e., the mystery of the obedience of the Eternal Son to the*

Eternal Father) is HE (R.V.) who was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

We are deeply indebted to those who shew us how "rightly to divide the Word of truth." The division of Scripture into distinct words and sentences is no small boon, and the unique arrangement of these as **verses** is one of untold value. The recasting of Scripture into newspaper paragraph form is a sign of the Times—with which I have not a particle of sympathy.

I can truly say that the dissolving of the last DOUBT I have been describing, was to me worth thousands of gold and silver; and this brings me to the practical point of asking: Are we loyal to our Master in allowing all the TRUTH which we have discovered and the ERROR we have detected to have no effect in improving the condition and testimony of our CHURCH life?

Is it reasonable to expect some one down from heaven to teach us the difference between RIGHT and WRONG, when the plainest directions we possess lie neglected?

The reason those who know the TRUTH and desire to set their brethren right, meet with such little success is, because they treat **misfortunes** as if they were **faults**. If we act thus, instead of taking into consideration that the education, the environment, the deference to visible authority that go to form a bad character are not occasions for **blame** but often for **pity**, we shut the heart that we seek to open.

Another thing I have learned in the school of experience is, that however misguided a friend may be, unless you can set before him or her a plain path—prayer is of far greater service than counsel.

The history of reformations under the kings of Judah is by no means encouraging, but exceedingly instructive. Little did the nation that celebrated

Hezekiah's passover anticipate their condition in the reign of his son; but the record of events is left for us to learn that righteousness resulting from kingly authority is an ephemeral plant; the quality that is to abide cannot be wrought suddenly, for it is the result of one individual after another discarding the FALSE through love of the TRUE, and it is in this work that the Holy Spirit delights.

The Great Western Railway having an extensive siding at their Lawrence Hill Station, required access thereto by an entrance that would undermine the Midland Railway which crossed their line at this point. It could not be done in a day or a week but done it was without any battle or even the disturbance of ordinary traffic. There are unknown numbers of His redeemed ones in each of the various "Churches" that own Christ as Lord, and He is quite able to improve them out of all recognition — when they become willing to "Learn of Him."



CHAPTER VIII.—CHURCH REFORMATION.

THE foundation stone of IDOLATRY was laid in the garden of Eden when SATAN persuaded Eve that she possessed inherent immortality. It flourishes in the heart of the pulpit orator to-day who points to the stars and assures his audience that every individual he addresses shall outlast them all. Mythology is saturated with this idea, the immediate consequence of which is that man thinks more highly of himself than he ought to think, and SELF-WORSHIP is the result.

When two trains following each other for some distance diverge at a given point and become more widely separated every moment, the parting can be distinctly traced to the action of a lever on the line whereon they both run, and which is entirely beyond their control. Just a couple of inches suffice to make one of the trains turn aside and its destination is determined by the opening which it follows.

It is possible in retracing the career of that which has assumed the title of the Church of God to go back to the place where it was unconsciously shunted on a line which took it in a wrong direction.

It pleased the Lord to bestow on the Apostles, who had been His companions during His ministry on earth, certain special privileges which were not accorded to other eminently devoted disciples. Stephen, first of the martyrs, and Philip the Evangelist, wrought signs and wonders, but it was not given to these saints to bestow the Holy Spirit on those who believed by the laying on of hands. Peter, to whom

this privilege **was** granted, learned afterwards in the house of Cornelius that there was no **necessity** for the imposition of even Apostolic hands in order to become partakers of the heavenly gift. The power was given to the Apostles to identify them with their absent Master in the minds of the people, to prove that they were acting under His authority though He was no longer visible to the eyes of men.

It was **NOT TRANSFERABLE**, yet this would prove no hindrance to the Holy Spirit's power manifesting itself wherever the **TRUTH** was received and acknowledged. It is particularly to be noted in this connection that the Apostle Paul was selected by Divine choice to occupy the place of the one who by transgression fell. In Acts xix. 6, we read, "And when Paul laid his hands upon them the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues and prophesied."

It was perfectly easy for **SATAN** to persuade the bishops, who survived the Apostles, that in order to maintain their authority they must act in precisely the same manner as Apostles. They had full directions as to what sort of men should be ordained to take oversight of the assemblies, why not **take it for granted** that they might say to the selected men "Receive the Holy Spirit by the laying on of my hands." The suggestion found a ready response in the human heart, and no miracle was required to attest the statement made. So to speak "**the Church**" train glided noiselessly into the opening, and every station arrived at in her subsequent history was but a natural consequence of that first departure, which was nothing less than the **ASSUMPTION OF THE AUTHORITY OF CHRIST**.

* * * *

The next conclusion at which "**The Church**" arrived was, that not only believers might become partakers of the benefit which she claimed the power to bestow, but that infants also might **receive the gift of the**

Holy Ghost by the action of clerical hands, and that this innovation should be called CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

So much confusion exists in the minds of Christians concerning the spiritual signification of this ordinance that a clear definition of the same is called for.

The mouth with the same set of organs effects two entirely distinct results—**speaking** and **eating**. WATER, likewise has two entirely distinct uses in common life—**Drinking** and **Washing**. Our Lord used water symbolically in the first sense when He talked with Nicodemus about the new birth, in John iii. The water of life which He caused the woman of Samaria to drink, in chapter iv., was the revelation of THE LOVE OF THE FATHER IN THE GIFT OF HIS SON. The power to accept this truth was the work of the Holy Spirit, who enabled her to drink the water there and then.

When the Apostle Paul, writing to the Ephesians, tells them, in chapter v. 26, that Christ cleanses His Church “with the washing of water by the word,” he used symbolically the **secondary** purpose to which water is applied.

In the ordinance of Baptism, however, the symbol is neither that of **drinking** nor **washing**. The water signifies DEATH. The obedient believer is for the time being passive as a **corpse** being lowered for its burial.

When our Lord insisted upon John baptizing Him, that He might fulfil all **righteousness**, He testified at the very outset of His public ministry that He was not come to reign—as the prophecy of John’s father might have led the nation to suppose—but to DIE, be BURIED and RISE AGAIN.

When those who became John’s disciples, put themselves into his hands for baptism, they acknowledged their undone condition as sinners, the hopelessness of their situation as such, in token whereof they gave up their bodies for symbolic **burial**, and testified their readiness to accept the SALVATION of God, whenever He who could bestow it should appear.

Christian baptism differs from the baptism of John only in respect of the belief and assurance that the **salvation of God has come**, in the person of His Son, and that the believer about to be immersed **has** accepted Him. This distinction is so important that the Apostle Paul **re-baptized** twelve men, in Acts xix., who had only got so far as the Baptist was able to teach—redemption in his day not having been accomplished.

I will now notice three verses which, because of the natural connection between **water** and **washing**, have obscured the signification of **baptism**.

Acts xxii. 16—“**ARISE AND BE BAPTIZED AND WASH AWAY THY SINS CALLING ON THE NAME OF THE LORD.**”

This is a verse which, like another lately considered, loses all its difficulties when rightly **divided**.

“**Arise and be baptized**” were the instructions of God’s messenger to Saul of Tarsus. But was he, the well-known persecutor, fit **already** for the privilege of immediate, visible association with Christ and His people? Yes. “**Wash away thy sins calling on the name of the Lord**” was the encouragement given to obedience, and the Apostle who received it reiterates the same afterwards, in the tenth of Romans, “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

* * * *

In Titus iii. 5, we read of the **washing of regeneration**. In the margin of the Revised we read “**laver**,” the word being a noun and not a verb. The symbol here is that of purification, similar to that which a filthy person obtains by the use of water, being manifest in the **changed life and character of the one who is born again**.

In Hebrews x. 22, we are exhorted to draw near in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and **our bodies washed with pure water**.

Surely this has reference—some say—to baptism? **Nothing of the kind.**

We know that human nature is given to extremes, and in writing to the Hebrews who had been brought up under a system of “divers washings” (ix. 10) it was possible that in their recoil from its bondage they would get into the habit of doing without washing altogether! There are thousands of English men and women as scrupulously clean as the Brahmin who spends three hours a day in the water, and who, notwithstanding, are as morally filthy as he. But this does not set aside the use of water for cleansing the person as well-pleasing to God, and as one of those things that are lovely and of good report, to which the Apostle Paul directs the attention of the Philippians (iv. 8).

In the verse under consideration the worshippers who are invited to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, are further directed to have their hearts free from indulging in known sin, and their bodies which are the temples of the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. vi. 19), neither smeared with ointment or with ashes, as the manner of some is, but **just washed with pure water.** Those who have asserted that “Cleanliness is next to Godliness” are challenged sometimes to give Scripture for their statement. May I be allowed to furnish it?

This seems like a huge parenthesis in our subject, but it is absolutely essential to understand the real meaning of **baptism**, in order to estimate the awful consequences of its perversion.

Our Lord’s warm welcome to the little ones, whom He was besought to bless, is ample warrant for their distinctly being presented to Him as soon as may be after their birth; and in doing this parents in the Establishment have obtained blessing which whole generations of Baptists have lost—but there is nothing in **this** act that even resembles **Baptism.** The Church was from an early period understood as the title of those who bore rule therein. But the laying on of

priestly hands effected little in sanctifying the adult or securing spiritual benefit to the babe, so it became necessary to add something more to their mysterious power.

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So careful was our Lord, when instituting the Supper which is hallowed by His Name, to prevent all possible misunderstanding on the part of His disciples, that He uttered the words "This is my body," WHILE HIS OWN BODY WAS UNBROKEN IN THEIR MIDST. Reluctant they had been, one and all, to hear that He must needs be put to death, and the bread and wine, resulting from corn and grapes that had been bruised and crushed, was a final **object lesson** to illustrate that which was about to take place. No sadder proof of the imbecility to which the laity had been reduced can be shewn than their readiness to accept the doctrine of **TRANSUBSTANTIATION**, when the food had been touched by clerical hands; and no clearer evidence of the Satanic origin of this doctrine can be adduced than the denial of any change whatever taking place in the elements, apart from those hands.

I do not follow the history of corruption in the Church of Rome any further, because the Church of England has been delivered as a whole from its more flagrant abominations, and it is concerning its restoration to a greater measure of purity and truth, than exists at the present time, that I have something to say.

We have only to compare the Prayer-book with the Missal, and we find the proportion of **TRUTH** to **FALSEHOOD** overwhelmingly in favour of the former; nevertheless those who compiled the Prayer-book had come out of the Church of Rome, and unconsciously retained some of her teachings. The error set forth in sundry sentences has become more and more conspicuous as the true light proceeding from the open Bible has shined into the hearts of the nation. Spite,

however, of these errors in her creed there are thousands of clergymen and their lay helpers whose devotion to Christ and their desire to promote His Kingdom are manifest in their lives. God is working by His servants who are entangled in a system which some of our fathers felt bound to forsake ; but, should these godly men do the same, who is to look after the flocks whom they have assiduously tended? God is never in a hurry, nor need His servants take hasty steps. "The king's business requireth HASTE" was a LIE, if you only look at the context, but this is a very favourite text with those who make urgent appeals.

The first point to be considered is whether the Church of England, as a vast spiritual organization whose functions and authority are set forth in her Prayer-book, is independent of the Word of God.

Secondly, when error is palpable how has it been dealt with in time past? Simply by dropping the statement that is manifestly no longer true. I have heard a highly ritualistic clergyman deliberately omit certain passages from the marriage service which he considered unsuitable, because he knew public opinion supported him in so doing.

Similarly I would suggest that the true-hearted servant of Christ should not suffer to pass his lips sentences that he could never utter if standing in His visible presence.

The Bishop knows that the clergyman he ordains does NOT receive the Holy Ghost with the imposition of his hands. The clergyman knows that the infant he has just sprinkled is NOT regenerated thereby. He also knows that the boy or girl whom he catechizes was NOT made a child of God and an heir of the Kingdom of Heaven on that occasion ; and that the assurance to surviving relatives that a wicked man or woman's body is buried in sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection is NOT according to truth. And we are, as teachers, held responsible for the meaning our words convey to those who are being taught,

whatever tradition may say to the contrary. Any such course as this, would, a hundred years ago have led to summary ejection, but it would scarcely be attempted now. The bishop, rector or curate who to-day would calmly say before all men that he would never again assume the prerogative of God, in uttering such language as was framed by our forefathers in an age of comparative darkness, would carry the sympathy of every real Christian. The expulsion of one from his office for such a protest would lead a hundred others similarly situated to do the same. There would be any number of worldlings and time-servers ready to fill the vacancies, but the "flocks" not being composed of sheep, but of men and women quite as capable as their teachers of estimating the value of TRUTH, would never consent to accept these hirelings.

There is no occasion for rending asunder Church and State, there is no need to withdraw a form of prayer from the public worship of those who have always been accustomed to it; there is nothing to be gained by depriving the Establishment of its influence or of its income, but there is everything to be gained in the future prosperity of the nation, if its recognized teachers are known as men who never tell a LIE, whether in or out of the pulpit. There is much to reform, very much indeed, but if the first step is taken of restoring to God that which is His due, He will help in every succeeding difficulty which has to be overcome, by giving the necessary wisdom to those whom He has placed in a position of authority.

It must not be thought that having had no share in framing the belief in which we have been brought up, that we escape the consequences. We have all heard of colour-blindness, and I know more than one estimable man who lost a good position, for which he was otherwise perfectly competent, through inability to distinguish one signal from another. I now give it as my calm conviction, that no one who has accepted at his ordination that which is known as APOSTOLIC

SUCCESSION has retained thereafter the ability to detect falsehood in his own utterances, whatever Scripture might be brought to bear upon them. That blinded his eyes.

I briefly alluded in the beginning of chapter VI. to SCHISM of intense bitterness developing itself among those known as "Plymouth Brethren," before that movement was twenty years old. A brief sketch of its development will illustrate this ancient heresy to have been at the bottom of all the trouble.

John Nelson Darby, whose portrait may be seen in Mr. W. Blair Neatby's "History of the Plymouth Brethren," is largely believed to have been the father of the sect. While this is not the case, it is no doubt true that through his devotion, talent and untiring energy of character the movement speedily became a distinct spiritual power. That hundreds of men and women passed from death unto life as the result of his preaching, there is no question. The entire consecration to the Lord's service which marked many of their lives being ample testimony to his having been called of God to the ministry. He discarded the prefix "Reverend" as appropriated by "priests," to which fraternity he no longer owned relationship, and wrote in the strongest terms denouncing the Establishment in which he had been ordained. But he could not divest himself of the prestige of having been a **real clergyman**, and this gave him an overwhelming influence on the minds of men and women, who stood in doubt of the meaning of Scripture, especially in its relation to **things to come**. He further perceived that by adopting the mediæval ideal of sanctity he should commend himself to those whom he taught; and he secured the homage of a thousand women by denying himself the possession of one.

I remember when I was about ten years old, having the honour to carry a lantern before this great man as he returned with the members of our household from some village meeting in Devonshire. As I held it

before me I did not realize that my body cast a shadow on the path of all who followed, and was roused from my reverie by the words: "Hallo there! young SCATTER-BRAINS! hold the light where others can see it." All laughed at the apt description of the most absent-minded little beggar in that part of the country. But I endeavoured to profit by Mr. D.'s directions, indeed, it is what I am occupied with now.

When on his return from a prolonged residence on the Continent, Mr. Darby found the influence of Mr. Benjamin Wills Newton eclipsing his own, and that their interpretation of unfulfilled prophecy was divergent, he began to take advantage of the reverence in which he was held, by reason of his ordination, to state whatever he pleased against the rival teacher, who, though educated as highly as himself, had not come under priestly hands. I do not suppose Mr. Darby was conscious of uttering untruth regarding the acts and motives of those whom he denounced, it was, however, the distinct result of the taint to his moral nature in the APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION received at the bishop's hands.

When a man or woman of blameless personal character is constantly found making false statements on a certain class of subjects, we have no hesitation in saying, that he or she is of unsound mind; but this mental disease was not recognized fifty years ago as it is now, and the havoc wrought in hundreds of households by the plague of evil-speaking, thus introduced, none will ever be able to estimate. I must refer the reader to Mr. Neatby's book, in order that he may obtain some insight into a condition of church life which amazed and scandalized all who were not involved in its conditions. He will not fail to see that the unuttered conviction of "Brethren" who seceded from the Church of England, was, that the gift of the Holy Ghost by imposition of the bishop's hands was in SOME cases a reality. The devotion of their chief to Christ and many seals to his ministry was sufficient PROOF of

his being sent of God with the glorious message that they, like Enoch, might expect to be translated so that they should not see death.

There was one characteristic of the Early Brethren which is especially worthy of notice. They were diligent students of the Word, and desired above everything to know the Lord's will, that they might obey it; and whether it were seven days or seven years before they arrived at a conclusion, they let nothing stand in the way of their obedience, when they were once certain about the command.

Abraham might have shrunk from the knife being applied to his own person as an aged man, and nature could have argued that his whole life had been sufficient testimony as to his being in covenant relationship with God. Why not leave the rite of circumcision to be performed on Ishmael and the servants? But the man of God did not argue thus, or lose a single day in taking the lead in the path of obedience. It cut him still more deeply to send Ishmael away, as if he had been a beggar, but in this trial of faith he again gained the victory. So that when Isaac was by and bye asked for he was not withheld. This example led most of these Bible searchers to receive BAPTISM as believers, but to this act of submission to the authority of the Word, John Darby would not yield, and thus unpurged from the taint of APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION all his knowledge and gifts could not save him from becoming a blind leader of the blind. One sentence I quote from Mr. Neatby's narrative: "A theological lady once asked Darby what Mr. Wigram held as to Baptism. Darby, though probably annoyed, had the wit to answer 'Madam, he holds his tongue.'"

I do not think a sadder illustration can be found in history of the sweetest wine turning to sharpest vinegar than that of the man to whom we owe the only absolutely reliable commentaries on the Old and New Testaments. Freely he spent his tens of thousands

that the work should be as perfect as anything human can be, in point of TRUTH, yet he became SLANDERER IN CHIEF among the Brethren under the irresistible influence of APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION, which worked beneath an impenetrable disguise.

Evil-speaking is not pointing out the evil-doer or the evil deed in public or private, as the example of our Lord and His apostles abundantly proves, but the evil-speaker is one who is not prepared to take the consequences of his statements, one who shelters himself behind information which he declines to have sifted, and under no circumstances acknowledges the wrong done to the character he has maligned, when his information is proved to be incorrect.

* * * *

Whatever deficiency may exist in the standard of walk and doctrine among believers in any denomination, it is far more for the general good that they bear distinct witness to their special line of truth, and hold it direct from the Word, than that they should endeavour by compromise to obtain uniformity with other denominations.

When George Fox observed the corruption of the professing church, he abandoned baptism because it was supposed to regenerate; he set aside the Lord's Supper because some worshipped "the elements" (as the bread and wine were called) after consecration; he dispensed with singing because it was often a mere pastime, and his followers are deprived of these benefits to this day; added to which they leave their Bibles at home, and the result is a meeting which gives me the "blues."

On the other hand this sect, which was more bitterly persecuted than any other of the Nonconformist bodies, infused into the English character one of its noblest features. Who would not to-day as readily trust a Quaker's affirmation as a Churchman's oath?

Another priceless outcome of this movement has been to shew, after a period of two hundred and fifty years trial, that the liberty accorded to women at Pentecost of taking part in the prayer and exhortation of the Assembly, does not deteriorate woman's character or unfit her for her place in family life. On the contrary a far larger number of women coming up to the Apostle Peter's ideal, as set forth in the third chapter of his first epistle, may be found among the Friends than among any other of the denominations of equal numerical strength.

We cannot dispense with the Friends, though unable to worship happily in their assemblies.

If we turn our attention from them to the Salvation Army, we see men and women qualified by their very deficiencies for doing work that no other body of Christians could undertake. When asked if they possessed a doctor of divinity on their staff: "Our divinity don't want no doctoring," was the S. A. captain's unabashed reply, but, in spite of this pleasant delusion, it was a loyal heart and true that entertained it.

As I have already observed the infatuation that rests upon all the leading religious denominations of our land is, that the men of God to whom they owe their separate existence in the way of testimony, were fully qualified to declare to them **the whole counsel of God**. But if we reflect for a moment on the times in which John Wesley lived, it was impossible for him to arrive at those certainties of interpretation which we are privileged to possess; and it is just as absurd for an engineer to copy Robert Stevenson's first locomotive, because no one has since arisen to whom we are more indebted for power of locomotion, as it is for a student to expect to find accuracy in Wesley's System of Theology, or Watson's Institutes.

* * * *

To the text (Isa. lxiv. 6) "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags," both "Open" and "Exclusive"

Brethren would say **Amen**. They have yet to learn that no more filthy rag was ever worn than one of these "righteousnesses"—namely, their plan of **DISCIPLINE**.

When it was discovered and made known that the **Eternal Torment** of the unsaved was exactly the inference **SATAN** intended man to draw, as the purpose of his Maker, when in the form of a **SERPENT** the enemy of the human race assured our first parents that they would **never really die**—many searched the Scriptures and found that it was even so.

Although these two divisions of Plymouth Brethren are not on speaking terms, they are unanimous in deciding that as these transgressors can neither be beheaded nor imprisoned, it only remains for the saints to neglect and if possible to starve all who confess **CONDITIONAL IMMORTALITY** as the **TRUTH OF GOD**.

If when the Son of Man descends in His glory, men and women will be sentenced to "everlasting punishment" for precisely similar conduct to theirs, what shall the **REWARD** of these saints be at the Judgment seat of Christ, which precedes this Tribunal??

By and bye, when purged from this iniquity they set themselves to study the meaning of Scripture, before attempting to expound it, they will prove invaluable as stop-gaps in every drooping cause, as they possess perseverance and assurance beyond many of their fellow Christians.



CHAPTER IX.—THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN.

SEVERAL years ago I called on a Christian man who had been married, as he told me, eighteen years, and had passed through a variety of trials both in family and business life.

Knowing his wife to be a believer of long standing, I spoke to him of the privilege they had of together bringing their troubles to the throne of grace, and of how when the Spirit helped the infirmities of each in pouring out their hearts before the Lord the soul of husband and wife were wondrously drawn together.

I remarked a peculiar smile on the man's face, and asked what it meant. I found that in all these years he had never heard his wife open her lips in prayer. Her part had been only to add the **Amen** to his petitions! I was filled with pity on account of the blessing lost by this mutual arrangement, and mentioned the fact to one of our most esteemed elder brethren, who as pastor, teacher and husband had been an example throughout his long life.

To my amazement he expressed his approval of that which had caused me such regret.

This circumstance led me to study afresh the whole subject of what is called "Woman's Ministry," and the conclusion to which I have been brought is—that just as FOOT BINDING in China instead of adding charms to the woman deforms and renders her less efficient as a helpmeet for man—so the quiet stifling

of her voice in prayer, on the plea of what is becoming, both cripples her as a worker for Christ and robs her Christian husband of great spiritual support.

It is not upon the manifest blessings that have in our days rested upon the testimony of women, when these restrictions are removed, that I take my stand—but will bring the matter directly to the touchstone of the Word, and introduce it by some general remarks on the condition of women in the Old and New dispensations.

* * * *

From the day when it was said to the woman “Thy desire shall be **subject** (margin) to thy husband and he shall rule over thee,” until God was manifest in the flesh in the person of His Son, the history of woman has been generally one of servitude, where the companion character of Eden gave place to that of a **bearer of burdens**. In more than one savage tribe **this** is the meaning of the word which expresses her name. Before the flood we read of men “that they took them wives of all which they chose,” and the custom of polygamy with its far reaching consequences was established.

The woman of the Old Testament, except in the rarest cases, was also a wife and there is no **holy maiden** of whom we have any record. Miriam, if she was the sister who watched over the infant Moses, was probably an aged widow when she lifted her timbrel on the shore of the Red Sea. In His covenant with Abraham, God required a mark to be made in the flesh of every male child of his seed. Thus we see in the former dispensation Jehovah regarded every female as the property of some man, and he was responsible for her faith and practice.

Solomon in the last chapter of Proverbs gives us his ideal of the wife whom he would probably have given half his kingdom to possess; but he had

transgressed the law in multiplying wives and concubines (Deut. xvii. 17), and all the wisdom that he gathered "under the sun" never taught him that the helpmeet God intended a man's wife to be, was destroyed when a second was brought in to share that position.

But when in the fulness of time God sent His Son into this world of ours, the Lord Jesus lifted woman from her low estate in three most important ways.

FIRST:—In that a pure and holy woman was not only the dwelling from which He first made His entry into the world, but further that the precious body in which He made atonement for our sins was formed of her very substance. (Gal. iv. 4).

SECOND;—By restoring the wife to her position as the companion of her husband, and forbidding him either to divorce her or take to himself another during her lifetime.

It is a remarkable but well established fact that however corrupted in other respects Christianity has been, during what are rightly called the "Dark Ages," and whatever other commands of our Lord have been ignored—**this rule** has prevailed wherever the name of Christ was named.

THIRD:—By His intercourse with women of all descriptions during His life on earth, shewing on the one hand how He regarded them, and on the other how He estimated their service. On this most important subject it will be necessary to go more into detail and I gather from the Gospels seven illustrations unfolding various aspects of our Lord's character.

I.—HIS COURTESY. (John iv. 5 to 30.)

The woman of Samaria was a type of the **rude** and **careless** sinner. The Master without a word of reproach cures her instantly of this demeanour, by His gracious reply to her rebuff. We may see this.

by her addressing Him as SIR in verses 11, 15, 19, which she never thought of doing when He first asked her for water.

But further, when in the interests of her soul, the Lord had to convict her of living in adultery and she immediately turned the subject,—He graciously followed her lead and explained to her the principles of true worship, as if the query had been put by Nicodemus a ruler of the Jews.

II.—HIS TACT: (Luke vii. 36 to 50.)

By this is meant His skill in granting an interview under the most difficult conditions. The only individual whom we are told of as seeking the Lord to be relieved of the burden of sin was a **woman**, and the difficulties in her way were extreme.

Watching her opportunity, when no longer surrounded by His disciples who formed a barrier she could not penetrate, she followed the Lord into a Pharisee's house with a box of ointment in her hand, knowing that unless she could say for whom she brought it she might be turned away at the door. But as she stood behind the Saviour no further advance was possible—her tears rained (the same word as we find in James v. 17) on His dusty feet, which in the Eastern posture of sitting were behind Him.

The tracks made by the tears gave her courage to stoop and wipe them off. **Our Lord did not turn round or withdraw His feet.** Having been permitted to wipe she now ventured to kiss them. As her kisses were not reckoned to defile his blessed feet, a way was made for the ointment to be poured on them, and thus in a moment she relieved her heart of its burden and obtained peace in exchange. As a mother allows a timid child to handle her fingers while she is talking with a stranger, so did He leave His feet in her hands, and how it must have amazed

her to hear the Lord speak of what he had suffered her to do, as if it were a grateful and acceptable service!

III.—HIS DEFENCE OF HER AGAINST HER TRADUCERS. (John viii. 2 to 11.)

This scene has already come under our notice, and a reference to Chapter V. will remind the reader of the scathing sarcasm which, by revealing to her accusers their plot, made one and all beat a quick retreat.

But there are two points which remain to be noticed in connection with our Lord's way of meeting this painful interruption of His early morning discourse.

He would not allow any discussion of the woman's shame to come before a general audience, so with Divine delicacy He **wrote** what he had to say on the ground before her accusers eyes.

The company was probably scattered by the interruption of this incident for we find the woman standing alone, when all who brought her for trial had departed.

Why did the Lord ask her where **they had gone**, instead of dealing with her on account of her transgression? For this simple reason: If woman had been subjected to the rule of man and man had contrived her downfall, the crime lay at his door not at hers. It was the Righteous Judge who said "Neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more." The man who seduces a girl and leaves her to bear alone the penalty of his sin, will find both here and hereafter that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

IV.—HE CAUSES A WOMAN TO SPEAK IN PUBLIC. (Mark v. 25-34.)

Very reluctant she was to do this. Her disease had been of a nature the most private, and yet she must needs testify to its cure before all the people.

But there was a cause. She had made a great discovery, the value of which to the public was as great then, as that of the telegraph now. Hitherto all who had been healed were either seen by our Lord, spoken to or touched by His hand, but this sufferer was in a position where she could neither see His face nor gain His attention.

All that she saw was His back, yet in touching the hem of His garment, her sore affliction had been made known to Him, and ere she let it go He had taken it all away? She had found out that however busy the Lord was, He could always attend to one more, and the people were not slow to avail themselves of her experience (Mark vi. 56). Moreover, the woman had a special reward for giving her testimony, in hearing the words "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole, go in peace and be whole of thy plague." The endearing title and the assurance that the complaint would not return. She would have lost all this if she had made good her escape as she thought to have done.

V.—HIS ESTIMATE OF HER GIFTS. (Mark xii. 41; John xii. 3-8.)

Of these we have two illustrations which touch the extremes of value. One so small, the other so costly.

Our Lord was seen on one occasion watching the crowd who put their offerings into the Treasury. The Temple, until the veil was rent, was still His Father's house (John ii. 16), and however the contents of its Treasury were misappropriated, as we have reason to fear they may have been, He regarded the intentions of the givers as toward God. It has been truly remarked that in estimating their value, the Lord measured what did not appear, even that which remained behind after the gift had been made. But the point of His observation in this case was the result of witnessing how others watched and appraised

the donations. He saw the ineffable contempt with which those two mites were regarded, as if the widow who brought them had trifled with the Treasury of God in casting therein her worthless offering. So He, by whom actions are weighed, was moved to declare their full value.

The other illustration, though resulting in an act we have already considered, was unique in its beauty.

The box of ointment that the woman took into the Pharisee's house was probably small and of little value, the purpose of it being in the first instance to make a way for herself. But the box which Mary of Bethany brought to the table represented the wages of a working man for a year, if estimated according to the parable of the labourers in the vineyard (Matt. xx. 1-15), a penny a day being nearly a shilling of our money. This costly spikenard was a pound in weight, and there remained enough after anointing the Master's head to pour the rest on His feet, and the sister of Lazarus, who had often sat so near them, wiped them as they had been wiped on a previous occasion by a woman who had touched them for the first time.

The position of the Apostle John, as he was in the habit of sitting by his Lord, made him see clearly the latter act, while the anointing of His head, described in Matt. xxvi. 6-13, and Mark xiv. 3-11,—was conspicuous to the rest of the company. The house was filled with the odour of the ointment, and the disciples were filled with indignation at its waste.

The Lord now speaks in full approval of the gift, as an act of faith in His approaching death which Mary alone at that time believed. "She hath done what she could." Yes, and those who do what they can, always do more than they think. The hand that anointed the Redeemer's body for its burial, by the same act anointed the King who was to ride in triumph next day into Jerusalem (John xii. 12-15), and two days later the fragrance that still hung about His

saturated locks was the only refreshment He had during the black hours of His agony.

VI.—HIS REAL MEANING IN AN APPARENT SLIGHT
(Matt. xv. 21-28).

The narrative which brings this incident before us wonderfully repays investigation. Our Lord had just crossed the border of Jewish territory and sought rest after a weary walk (Mark vii. 24). Presently a Greek woman importuned His help, and He answered her not a word. The disciples were probably likewise tired, and far more keen on sending needy ones away than in bringing them to the Saviour. They felt that this was their opportunity to put in a word, "Send her away for she crieth after us." What claim had this Gentile woman upon their Master? Now it must ever be remembered, that our Lord in His dealings with individuals of all classes, had not only His purpose towards **them**, but the education of His disciples to carry on at the same time.

If any of our children are rude in speech or uncouth in manner, is not one of the most effective means of correcting them our own imitation of that rude speech or uncouth manner?

Thus our Lord saw fit to be the mouthpiece of **their thoughts** in that which followed: "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel," are the first words He said in reply to the woman's entreaty. But her womanly intuition saw no refusal in the Saviour's face. Undaunted alike by His silence at first, and the disciples' counsel afterwards to get rid of her, she falls at His feet, saying, "Lord, help me"! He replied: "It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs," but though these words so nearly expressed the disciples' feelings, there was an important difference in them, unknown to the English reader. The word for **dogs** is not the half-savage, ownerless animal that prowls round the village, but

it is the "little dogs" that were sheltered in Gentile dwellings, who not only picked up the scraps that fell from their master's table but also came in for some odd bits of their master's **affections**.

So to speak, though the yard gates were shut, the Master opened a little door in one of them and instinctively she bounded in! Speaking of her again as a woman, she had passed through a stiff examination, and came out with the first prize, for unto which of His disciples said He at any time: "O man, great is thy faith?"

VII.—HIS CHOICE OF WOMEN AS HERALDS OF HIS RESURRECTION (Matt. xxviii. 10).

When the news of the result of the Battle of Waterloo was carried throughout England, it was the **first** who bore the glad tidings to each town and village who was sure of getting all the honour that it was in the power of the inhabitants to bestow; and it was to those women whose love to His Person brought them early to the Sepulchre, that the Lord gave the commission of declaring to the disciples that the Lord is risen indeed.

That doctrine of the Christian faith, which in every address throughout the Acts of the Apostles, takes the prominent place, it was the will of the Son of God should first be declared by female lips, to be an accomplished fact. Was there ever glad tidings of greater joy?

Such was the behaviour of our Lord towards the women whom He came to redeem, and He has left us an **example** that we should follow HIS STEPS. The Greek word for **example** is unique in 1 Peter ii. 21. It is not that of a person who can be **watched**, but of a record that is to be **studied**.



We now come to the Acts of the Apostles, and find in the first verse of the book a remarkable word touching the gospel of Luke, in which the history of our Lord from His incarnation to His ascension is given to us. It is the word **BEGAN**, and from it we learn that the whole of the Saviour's ministry was the laying of a foundation on which the Holy Ghost would presently build. The Apostles had not the least idea of God's purpose, as is clear from their asking the Lord before His ascension, whether at this time He was about to restore the kingdom to Israel. Instead of that He promised them **power**, and that not many days hence.

When the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all—a hundred and twenty men and women—with one accord in one place (Mr. Edward White believed it was in the Temple Court that this manifestation took place). Suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of a rushing mighty wind, and a tongue of fire sat upon each of them. We know what followed. The very first act of the Holy Ghost was to continue what Christ had **BEGUN**, by qualifying the women who were present for testimony to His Name, side by side with the men. There is no mention of **men** in verse 13 in the Greek, as some might suppose from the translation. The whole scene was a thorough surprise, as much to those who spake with tongues as to those who heard them, and the Spirit directed Peter's mind to the prophecy in Joel, as foretelling what was taking place among them. "Your sons and your daughters" (the upper classes), "bondmen and bondwomen" (the lower classes), were alike to share in the privilege. Nor is it any difficulty that verses 19 and 20 deal with events yet future. The prophecy which formed the subject of our Lord's first discourse in Nazareth included "the day of vengeance of our God," only He then closed the book at the point up to which the dispensation had arrived (Luke iv. 20).

Here it will be necessary to clear up the confusion that exists in the minds of many as to what is meant by **prophecy**.

Prophecy is literally **speaking before God**. It is a comprehensive word which may be described broadly in three degrees of comparison: **Great—greater—greatest**. In this respect it is like the word **Salvation**, for instance:—

Salvation in Phil. i. 19 means only deliverance from prison.

Salvation in Phil. ii. 12, means deliverance in daily conflict with sin.

Salvation in Heb. ii. 3, means deliverance from the wrath to come, the last of these being unspeakably greater than the other two. In the same way we can say—

Prophecy in 1 Chron. xxv. 2, is but a rehearsal of truth already known and includes songs of praise.

Prophecy in 1 Cor. xiv., is the declaring of God's message as the Spirit gives them utterance, but fallibly, as what one says has to be **judged** by the rest according to the standard of the Word—see verse 29.

Prophecy as contained in the Old and New Testaments, is the perfect utterance of the Spirit of God, from which nothing has to be taken and to which no word may be added.

This likewise is far beyond the other two. Its highest aspect is when it tells of things to come, and it lies altogether above that ministry, either of man or woman, which is at present exercised in the assemblies of Christians.

When we read later on, in Acts xxi. 9, that Philip the Evangelist had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy, it is not to be understood that their utterances were infallible, but that they testified to

a risen Saviour, according to the grace and gift with which each of them was endowed. They may, like Agabus, have foretold coming events, but we have no reason for believing that they did so.

There is but one word for woman and wife in the Greek language, but there two words for man, one of which is always used when he is described as a **husband**. When the name of **woman** is connected with this name for **man** it is known that she is being described as a **wife**. Thus in Eph. v. 22, to the end of the chapter, it relates to husbands and wives, also in the first seven verses of the third chapter of Peter's first epistle. When, however, the word for woman stands apart from her relationship to a man, it is rightly translated **woman**, as in all those narratives we were lately considering.

There is an incident of peculiar interest recorded in the eighteenth chapter of Acts, where a man, described as "mighty in the Scriptures," puts himself under a woman for further instruction. The Revisers, in the 26th verse have found evidence for reversing the order of the Authorized Version, and put the husband in the second place. It happened then, as it sometimes happens now, that the wife is superior in wisdom, and the power to impart what she knows, and when this is the case, there is no hindrance to the exercise of her gift, with the full sanction of her husband. It is remarkable that the Apostle Paul in taking these two helpers from Corinth, where he had been their lodger, mentions the lady first (verse 18), and when in the last chapter of the epistle to the Romans he speaks of this worthy couple having laid down their own necks on his behalf, Priscilla once more takes the lead, as probably on the occasion referred to **she** was the first to act. This, however, does not displace the husband. His name stands first when they are introduced to us (Acts xviii. 1), and when we take leave of them (1 Cor. xvi. 19), as they send a joint message of love to the Church to whom Paul is writing.

What a deeply suggestive chapter is that last one to the Romans! Have we not wondered a little that in writing to the Ephesians, where Paul was known so well during his three years sojourn in their midst, no individual gets a greeting, but in writing to Rome, which he had not yet seen, greeting is sent by name to more than thirty individuals? The reason is obvious. It would have added a postscript, perhaps as long as the letter, if he had mentioned by name all whom he loved at Ephesus, but his acquaintance in Rome was limited to those saints he had met in Asia Minor, Greece and Palestine, who happened to be there. He gave his heart full liberty to mention each by name. Now write the names of these men on one side, and these women on the other, in parallel columns, with their respective commendations, and you will possess at once a divine commentary on the expression in Gal. iii. 28 (R.V.), "There is neither male nor female, for ye are all one man in Christ Jesus."

But it is yet far more evident from another passage, that not only were men and women associated in Gospel work, but that they appeared together acting in precisely the same way. In Phil. iv. 3, the Revisers read "Help these women for they laboured with me in the Gospel." Now a fellow-labourer is a familiar idea to New Testament readers, and the woman that brings bricks and mortar (as they do in India) to the mason who is building a wall, is undoubtedly his fellow-labourer.

But with that marvellous accuracy of definition which the Greek language affords, we are presented with a word in the verse under consideration which, if literally translated, would be rendered **wrestled alongside of**. It only occurs else in chap. i. 27, as "striving together," and shews us Paul, Euodias and Syntyche carrying the Gospel to their hearers like officers of the Salvation Army—all but the concertinas!

We now come to the consideration of the seventh chapter of the first of Corinthians; one of overwhelming importance in connection with the great social questions of the day.

It must be borne in mind that nothing said or done by our Lord in rectifying the horrible abuses that prevailed in the matter of marriage relationship, in any wise discountenanced the institution. It was originally ordained by God, and was in effect the first command to man after the flood, because the results of this union was a large part of the Divine purpose. Furthermore, the blessing given to Abraham when he offered up Isaac, was distinctly that his seed should be as the stars of heaven. The Jews, therefore, were not wrong in regarding the marriage of their sons and daughters as one of their foremost responsibilities as parents, when their children came to a suitable age.

The same applies to all Eastern nationalities, and, as a matter of fact, the Scripture stating that woman was made for the man is a law of nature that in most cases cannot be set aside without sooner or later involving those who ignore it in sorrowful consequences.

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It pleased the Holy Spirit to allow the Apostle Paul to give his private judgment on a certain phase of the marriage question, which fact he in this chapter distinctly makes known. Verse 6,—“I speak this by permission, and not of commandment.” The occasion was this:—So thoroughly was it understood that the married state was the proper condition for those to enter into who were of a suitable age, that a man remaining single was viewed with distrust by the members of the community to which he belonged, and the virgin who changed not her condition to that of wife laid herself open to considerable suspicion. There is no reason to believe that any of the women with whom the Lord's conversations are recorded were

virgins,—the sisters of Bethany being probably young widows living with their brother. But God in His infinite wisdom and care for the general good has brought into the world men who are men in the highest sense of the word, in whom the purpose of life is so absorbing that their hearts do not crave a woman's love, if it involves interference with the carrying out of that purpose. Precisely the same is true of a proportion of the virgins who arrive at a marriageable age, and the central purpose in the Apostle's mind, as seen in this seventh chapter, was that these single men and single women need fear no contempt or loss of character in continuing as they were, because in the new dispensation, which was developing, the Risen Lord had abundant scope for their service.

The same chapter provides that if from any cause those who had for some time led a single life saw fit to enter the married state, they were perfectly free to do so. In fact this chapter was intended to be a charter of liberty, whereas priestcraft has made out of it precedent for the most intolerable bondage with which man has ever been cursed. The idea of taking a vow of celibacy is no more suggested to the disciples of Christ than is a yearly pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Whatever the nature of the vow Paul took at Cenchrea (Acts xviii. 18), it could not have been one of celibacy, inasmuch as he wrote later on to the Corinthians (1 Cor. ix. 5) that he was at liberty to take a wife when he pleased.

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The subject of VOWS is one of such deep importance, and attended with such far-reaching consequences, that I must be allowed to introduce a parenthesis of considerable length upon the subject.

The history of vows in Scripture is rather a warning than an example. The anguish of Jephthah, the remorse of Herod, and the hideous miscarriage of

justice in the last chapter of the book of Judges, may serve as illustrations.

The Apostle Paul being over-persuaded to join four men who had thus bound themselves (Acts xxi. 26), brought upon himself the very catastrophe he sought to avoid. We see from Acts xxi. 4, that he had neglected the guidance of the Spirit in his heroic determination to go to Jerusalem, and that he acted upon "the united judgment of brethren" when he got there.

It is not only our Lord's disapproval of taking an oath, in His Sermon on the Mount, that we have to go upon. The Holy Spirit confirmed the same by the Apostle James, in the last chapter of his epistle in these words: "But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath; but let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay, lest ye fall into condemnation."

I will now shew you how the ignoring of this command brought ruin into the professing Church of God.

From a very early date it is plain that instead of carrying out our Lord's parting charge to His disciples: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," Christians sought to sanctify themselves without taking the trouble or enduring the self-sacrifice that such service was sure to bring. The attainment of a standard of holiness that should command the admiration of the Church, put out of sight the claims of a perishing world. It was when we were "without strength" that in due time Christ died for the ungodly, and the making of a vow presumes that we possess the strength needful to keep it, and sets aside the testimony of God to the contrary.

Thus when SATAN suggested to those who sought wholly to consecrate themselves to the Lord, that they should take a vow of celibacy, he persuaded them to commence a life of devotion by an act of disobedience.

God has allowed this to continue almost unchecked

through eighteen centuries, that like **polygamy** the tree should be known by its fruits. What are these fruits?

First of all human nature asserted itself in the man by causing him to desire as never before the now forbidden fruit of a woman's love.

Next in order to protect himself from temptation he was obliged to shut out the world by retiring to cell or cloister. The immediate consequence of this step was that he became **self-excluded** from following in the footsteps of the Divine Master in the activities of daily life.

The third symptom of an unsound mind was **self-inflicted cruelty**. Instead of mortifying those members which are specified in Colossians iii. 5, he commenced to beat, starve, and otherwise maltreat himself. But the image of woman refused to forsake him even in his devotions.

The fourth stage of mental disease was a craving for something to distract his thoughts from the contemplation of his miserable self. The pages of heathen philosophy and the Jewish Talmud afforded this diversion, and it resulted in his weaving the traditions of men into the precepts of the gospel which he had received.

These "holy" men were sought out in their retreats by women who desired to lead consecrated lives, and they were persuaded to take similar vows in order to sanctify themselves.

Meanwhile the hunger of the celibate's soul for domestic and parental joy remained unsatisfied. The worship of the ideal woman centred in the person of the Virgin Mary, and everything of **love, pity and tenderness** that belongs to our Lord was transferred to His Mother, whose omnipresence and omniscience was taken for granted!

I have not been describing **wicked monks**, but the very best of whom history preserves a record, and to them the Church of Rome is indebted to the **very worst** of modern idolatries.



If you will turn for a moment to Ezek. viii. you will see four distinct idolatries compared by Jehovah, and each in turn pronounced worse than the one last described.

The image of jealousy in front of the Temple was very bad. The seventy ancient men offering incense to the pictures of creeping things in the secret chambers was worse. The sympathetic weeping of women for sorrow that had no real existence was worse still, because it shewed their hearts were estranged and their idolatry was not a mere mechanical following of custom. Then comes the fourth, which God declares to be the greatest abomination of all—**Sun-worshippers**, who turned their backs upon the temple of the Lord! Could any human mind have anticipated such a verdict? **Never.** But it is written to shew us, that the more glorious a work of God may be that usurps His place as the object of man's worship, **THE GREATER THE CRIME.**

I do not believe all the falsehoods and abominations that Rome has ever taught or practised come up to the guilt of her **Mariolatry.**

There are no less than four danger signals against such a possibility to be found in the Gospels. Luke ii. 49; John ii. 4; Luke xi. 28; [Matt. xii. 48 Mark iii. 33]—but what avails warning to the demented?

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Here let me point out what the Lord was to His mother during His life-time on earth, and I think you will agree with me that He earned His name of **Wonderful.**

We are taught in Hebrews xii. 3 to consider Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest we be wearied and faint in our minds. A very peculiar word is this **consider.** It means **measure yourself alongside of,** and in the effort to do so our horizon is generally bounded by the events of His public ministry.

Have we ever given a thought to the amount of contradiction against Himself which He underwent in that Nazareth home with four younger brothers and at least two sisters, till He was thirty years of age? As a Mother's-help His value must have been unspeakable, and our Lord's dying charge to the beloved Apostle to consider that mother henceforth as his own, shews His tender consideration for one who needed protection in her overwhelming sorrow. Do you think for a moment that the Lord would allow her gentle spirit, during the centuries since she has "slept in Jesus," to be disturbed by any whisper of the abominations done in her name? When she awakes in His likeness they will simply fill her with horror.

And, now, how do those stand who find themselves bound by a vow of celibacy? Is it lawful to break it? The answer to such an enquiry may be found by asking, did Herod do right or wrong in beheading John the Baptist? If I recognize that making the vow was an act of disobedience, but I adhere to the oath because I made it, then am I convicted as a self-worshipper, instead of a servant of Christ. The same principle applies to every association of men, where the members are bound by oath. No matter how desirable the object may be for which the association is formed; the authority of man sooner or later asserts itself, and the individual who has taken the oath is either obliged to do what he knows to be wrong, or to suffer others to do it without the power to prevent them. Christ's authority over the conscience is dethroned.

In a word a VOW is one of SATAN'S man-traps. The velvet paw felt soft at first, but the victim discovers in the swift and silent clutch of the claws that there is no escape, unless the Great Deliverer comes to the rescue.



This has been a digression from the subject under consideration but could find nowhere else so fitting a place. We will now pass on to the eleventh chapter of the first of Corinthians.

The Apostle has so far been dealing with moral departure when he reproveth for divisions, self-conceit, and fornication.

He now in the Spirit visits the assemblies of believers, and is grieved with the disorders that at once present themselves. The women, whether leading in prayer or exhortation, were regardless of appearances, and by their unseemly attire were bringing reproach upon the name of Christ. Yet the Apostle does not for a moment withdraw the privileges that were granted to them by the Holy Spirit at the birth of the New Dispensation. He only puts the House of God in order by placing before each member the duty of subjection to those above them. The liberty lately bestowed by the Spirit did not set aside in the least,—the honour and obedience of the wife to the husband: and the uncovered head in public implied her independence of him, and had a bad effect upon those who observed her.

It can be no matter of marvel that these hitherto unheard of privileges lifted up those upon whom they were conferred. Our nature being what it is, liberty too often becomes license on the first opportunity. The Apostle in true pastoral character comes in to subdue excitement, and reveals the evil example set by the sisters whose uncovered heads were a prominent feature in the assembly, and also of brethren who sometimes came drunk to the Lord's table.



We now come to chapter fourteen, and find other features of disorder which marred the profit of the meeting. These arose from their being more gift among them than grace and wisdom to exercise it.

The power to speak fluently in the language of another people, without any previous knowledge of the same, was the means first used by the Holy Spirit for stirring to its depth the conscience of a guilty nation. The rapt and eager attention, for example, of the Arabian to the gospel when presented at Pentecost, would never be forgotten by the deliverer of the message. If such a brother came to Corinth it was but natural that he should try the effect of the same tongue on the assembly, without looking too closely to see if he had any Arabians there, and the striking beauties of this unknown tongue would most irrepressibly move the women present to ask of those nearest to them what it was all about. The Apostle, so to speak, comes in and says to the brother, what avails your message when no one understands it? and to the sister, **Hush!** do not add to the confusion that prevails, ask your husband when you get home.

If the thirty-fourth and thirty-fifth verses of this chapter were the only Scriptures that speak of women, since our Lord rose from the dead, we should be quite right in understanding the mind of God as to their silence being absolute in the presence of men. But when, up to this point, their participation in Gospel work has been constantly brought before us, both as the result of being endowed by the Holy Ghost for the very purpose or describing the women themselves in the exercise of it; then we know that the righteous interpretation of the Word requires us, not to subtract one truth from another and leave nothing behind, but to examine closely the context of the apparently contradictory passages.

In 1 Corinthians xiv. before the prohibition, we find what the purpose of the prohibition was: "God is not the author of Confusion, but of peace as in all the churches of the saints."

Now let us examine the word "speak" more closely. Much harm has been done to the cause

by explaining it as "chatter." It was not only idle talk that the Apostle forbad, but any talking whatever, for the central meaning of this most common word is conversation or words that expect some reply. Thus the disciples marvelled that the Lord talked with the woman of Samaria, and the conversation, which in other circumstances was helpful, in this meeting was inadmissible. In the last verse of John xii. we hear the Lord saying, "The Father which sent Me, He gave Me a commandment, what I should say and what I should speak." Do these two words mean the same thing? They do not. What I should say has reference to His discourses to the many. What I should speak includes His conversation with individuals. The latter is the word under consideration, and the talking of the women both disturbed the meeting and annoyed their husbands.

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The other passage which is held to shut the female mouth we find in 1 Tim. ii. 11, 12. Let us turn to it, and observe in the first place that we are not in the assembly at all. The Apostle does not speak collectively of women, but individually of the woman, or rather the wife. The silence which is here enjoined is not the absolute Hush of 1 Cor. xiv., but the quietness of 1 Thess. iv. 11; 2 Thess. iii. 12. It does not bid her hold her tongue, but to refrain from any such use of it in the way of teaching as amounts to the exercise of authority over him. Such conduct completely mars the heavenly ideal of Eph. v. 22, onwards, and is to be avoided, first as displeasing to the Lord, secondly as dishonouring His name among the heathen.

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We have now considered in order—

First: The low estate of woman before our Lord came.

Second: The three great lifts whereby He raised her from this condition; dwelling especially on the last, namely His behaviour towards her when on earth.

Third: The first act of the Holy Spirit in confirming and extending all the favour that the Lord had granted.

Fourth: The union of women with men in prayer and prophecy as a recognized institution in the early Church.

Fifth: The divine approval of the choice of virgins who elected to be free for the Lord's work, to do so; rather giving them honour than reproach for not becoming wives, as was hitherto considered their only respectable position. Yet in no way laying constraint upon such to continue in single life.

Sixth: The disorders arising from the abuse of the liberty of ministry conferred upon women. This liberty being compatible with the already existing command of the subjection of the wife to the husband.

We now come to the **Seventh** and final settlement of the question. It is distinctly the will of God that wherever the voice of man is lifted up in prayer, the voice of woman may be heard likewise.

This discovery we owe to our brother, Robert Nelson of Malvern, who entered into his rest a few years since, at the ripe age of ninety-seven. He pointed out in his tract on the Ministry of Women, that this command has been so manipulated in translation as completely to obscure its meaning.

I will now undertake to translate the passage literally, and submit the same to the criticism of the most learned of my readers. It occurs in 1 Tim. ii: 8:

“I will therefore to pray the men in every place, lifting up holy hands without wrath and controversy, in like manner the women in clothing suitable, with modesty and sobriety to adorn themselves,” etc.

Before commenting on this text, let me remark that when one person desires another to act, the idiom in the Greek is exactly the same as in English—that is the person comes before the act he or she is desired to perform.

Thus we read in 1 Tim. v. 14 (also literally rendered): I will therefore the younger women to marry, and in Titus iii. 8, I will thee to affirm constantly.

Now looking back at my translation of 1 Tim. ii. 8, we read “I will therefore—to pray—the men.” Why does the act here precede the person? For the simple reason that others are to pray besides.

The same reason applies to any English sentence, as to the Greek, as an illustration will readily shew. Suppose a lady has three servants, whom we will call Jane, Sarah and Susan. If she called downstairs saying, “I want Jane to come up to me,” the maid answering to that name would respond, while the other two continued their respective employments. But if the mistress said, “I want to come up to me Jane,”—they would all continue to listen whether Sarah or Susan were also wanted, for the sentence is manifestly incomplete. So when we read: “I will therefore to pray the men in every place,” we naturally expect the women are to follow, and we are not disappointed.

The next thing that claims our particular attention in this passage is the word that begins the ninth verse. In the Greek this is *hōsautōs* and the English equivalent is *in like manner*.

It is to be found in sixteen other places, and WITHOUT A SINGLE EXCEPTION, introduces an act similar to an act that has just been described. Here they all are:—

Matt. xx. 5; xxi. 30; xxi. 36; xxv. 17; Mark xii. 21; xiv. 31; Luke xiii. 3; xx. 31; xxii. 20; Rom. viii. 26

(likewise); 1 Cor. xi. 25 (after the same manner); 1 Tim. iii. 8; iii. 11 (even so); v. 25; Titus ii. 3; ii. 6. The only one of these where the antecedent is not clear is Rom. viii. 26, but going back three versés we find that as we groan being burdened; LIKEWISE the Spirit maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered.

It is this kind of research, where God is allowed to explain Himself, and only this, wherein we can have any confidence in these days of confusion. There is no more occasion to doubt about the mind of God on this question, than that the epistles to Timothy were written by the Apostle Paul.

This is the conclusion of all I have to say in the way of argument, but it is important that I should clearly state the result of my convictions, as to the present course to be taken by women, whether virgins, wives, or widows, who are led to take audible part in prayer and ministry of the Word.

First: There is no hindrance on the part of God from women engaging in every outward act of worship or service which has hitherto been the sole privilege of man.

Second: That according to Eph. v. 22, such privilege is not to be exercised by a wife against the will of her husband.

Third: That according to Col. iii. 20 the virgin dwelling in her father's house, or the widow who has returned to her parents roof, should not in this matter act contrary to their judgment.

Fourth: That should either husband or parent not hinder the wife or daughter from praying or speaking when men are present, yet use authority over them in regard to wearing jewelry or costly array, such women should refrain from taking the position which otherwise they are free to do. This is directly taught in 1 Tim. ii. 9.

Fifth: That should it be known to any virgin, wife or widow who is gifted in prayer and exhortation, that one or more men in the assembly where she is prepared to speak—object to her so doing, as contrary in their judgment to Scripture, let her refrain from opening her lips, because we are to follow after the things that make for peace and things whereby we may edify one another (Rom. xiv. 19).

* * * *

One word in conclusion to the husbands, which will come to many as a great surprise. In 1 Peter iii. 7, we read: "Likewise ye husbands dwell with them according to knowledge, GIVING honour to the wife as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered."

The word I have put in capital letters seems to be one of the commonest in Holy Writ, but the Greek equivalent is found nowhere else. You will find it standing alone on page 75 of the Englishman's Greek Concordance, and therefore recourse must be had to the Lexicon. There we find that its real meaning is SHARING.

If I am told to give a thing, the command implies that it is in my possession. If my Master directs me to share it with another, I perceive that HE recognizes the other as having a right to partake thereof.

Some of us have for more than a quarter of a century attended a monthly parents' prayer meeting where the custom is for the fathers to present at the throne of grace whatever matters are brought there. Should a belated mother arrive without a written request, the correct thing is for her to whisper her burden to the nearest father present, and he either attends to it himself or by proxy.

Oh what tears, what tones, what tender touches that would have drawn the hearts of the said fathers consciously closer to the bosom of their God, have

we not smothered by this hateful custom of SPIRITUAL FOOTBINDING !

Are we not all unconsciously grieving the Holy Spirit, by whom we have our access into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, in refusing to SHARE with those whom He has made heirs together with us of the grace of life,—this, the highest of all our honours ?

May this not be the reason why so many answers to constant petitions are still being withheld ?



CHAPTER X.—THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

“AND WHEN HE WAS DEMANDED OF THE PHARISEES WHEN THE KINGDOM OF GOD SHOULD COME, HE ANSWERED THEM AND SAID: THE KINGDOM OF GOD COMETH NOT WITH OBSERVATION, NEITHER SHALL THEY SAY LO HERE! OR LO THERE! FOR BEHOLD THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS WITHIN YOU”—
 Luke xvii. 20, 21.

THE Kingdom here spoken of is mentioned one hundred times in the Gospels, seven times in the Acts of the Apostles, and is often referred to in the following epistles.

John the Baptist was the herald of the Kingdom of heaven, which he declared in Matt. iii. 2, to be at hand. This announcement could only mean one thing to the Jewish nation, and it was the restoration to them of rule and authority over the kingdoms of the earth in the person of the promised Messiah. Even when filled with the Holy Ghost, Zacharias foretold at the birth of his son the purpose of the coming Christ, there is no doubt that he understood by the words “That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us” (Luke i. 71),
 FREEDOM FROM THE RULE OF ROME.

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It is very important at the outset of this enquiry to remember that inspired men do not always understand

aright the message they have to deliver. The Apostle Peter states as much in the opening chapter of his first epistle, and it may be affirmed that there is no expression in the New Testament which turns out to mean something so different from human anticipation, than that now under consideration.

One of the most startling announcements of John the Baptist to the more cultured portion of his audience, was that of God's ability "of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham."

Some might have asked themselves how—if the Creator should out of this material form a new race, as He formed our own from the dust of the earth—such could claim descent from Abraham? I believe that the forerunner of Christ would have been at a loss to explain his own words: but when the right moment had arrived the Apostle Paul had the mystery unfolded to him, and he declares it to the Ephesians (ch. iii. 6), "That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the Gospel." In writing to the Galatians (ch. iii. 29) he plainly tells them "If ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to promise."

Thus we understand that the Gentiles, whom Pharisee and Sadducee alike despised as the stones beneath their feet, were to share with Israel all the blessings of the New Covenant.

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We fail to recognize what God HAS accomplished because our minds are wholly set upon such a fulfilment of prophecy as will satisfy our ambitions. "Why then say the Scribes that Elias must first come?" asked the perplexed disciples as they walked down the Mount of Transfiguration, and were told "Elias is come already and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed."

They certainly were not to blame for failing to

recognize in John the Baptist, the promised Elias, but seeing that the Lord Himself so interpreted the prophecy, we must admit that He applied a name that belonged to a former prophet to another of His servants who had received at birth a distinct appellation by God's express command (Luke i. 13).

The divine right of bestowing names on persons or things in addition to their own is one that we should clearly recognize.

Man's impulse is to resent such an act as if it were intended to mislead, whereas it is only God's way of letting man know the secret of His purpose as far as human capacity will allow.

The meaning of Elias or Elijah is "The Lord He is God," the very words of all the people who witnessed fire come down from heaven and consume his sacrifice on Mount Carmel.

His name as a wonder-worker stood next to that of Moses among the children of Israel, yet John the Baptist, to whom the Lord here applied the title, "did no miracle." Jesus said of him he shall "restore all things," but to human reason he restored nothing. However, John the Baptist restored the authority of the law of God and lost his life in consequence of doing this unflinchingly in the presence of royalty. Though man might consider his life a failure, the future Judge of all the earth reckoned him as second to none of those who had preceded him.

We understand therefore that in calling him who came "in the spirit and power of Elias," by that very name our Lord established a divine precedent of bestowing the title of one of his specialists on such as afterwards bore the same character, whatever the apparent result of his work. It is thus more than probable that a man of the same unflinching boldness is yet to arise who shall plead the cause of the children with their fathers, and of the fathers with their children, as prophesied in the concluding verse of

the Old Testament, and that he will not fail in bringing about the purpose of God.

If any teacher of an intelligent Bible Class were to ask one of the members what the Apostle Paul intended us to understand by the prediction in Rom. xi. 26, "And so all Israel shall be saved"—there is little doubt that the reply would be, **Oh, that means the Jews.** Yet those who are recognized as such among all nations are not a tithe of what Scripture includes in the designation ISRAEL. The blessings of Jacob on Ephraim and Manasseh was that their seed should multiply as the fishes, if you look at the margin of Gen. xlviii. 16, and these were not included among the people who said "His blood be upon us and upon our children."

History tells us nothing about these or the other descendants of Israel, but the Apostle Paul acknowledged their existence when he spoke before Agrippa, in Acts xxvi. 7, and that there were godly individuals among the whole twelve tribes at the time he was speaking. In addressing his own countrymen by epistle he writes to the "**Hebrews,**" and not to the **Jews,** and that takes back their ancestry to Abraham, the Hebrew, as he is described in Gen. xiv. 13. Furthermore, the Apostle James dedicates his epistle to the **twelve tribes,** and sends them greeting.

If therefore the promise in Jer. xxxii., which is made to the children of Israel, as well as to the children of Judah, "to bring them again unto this place," and "plant them in this land," means the re-settlement of the descendants of Jacob in Palestine, we have to face a problem quite as hard as that which Nicodemus sought to solve as to the possibility of re-entrance into his mother's womb.

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It is very natural that people who do not **think,** should look upon the scattered nation known as Jews

as representing the seed of Israel, but it is a great mistake. Further, it will not be hard to prove that as the Scribes and Pharisees were the worst sinners our Lord had to deal with, so the people that have discarded the law of Moses for the Talmud are the worst of living nations.

In their hatred of Christ, for not fulfilling their ambition of a reigning Messiah, they have acquired a character exactly opposite to that of their rejected King. So far from desiring "to seek and to save that which was lost," they have concentrated their intelligence on the art of impoverishing their neighbours and driving them into sin.

From the financier of a bankrupt government to the brothel keeper of Port Said the Jew looks upon the Gentile as the vulture does on the dying camel,— if he is true to his upbringing.

In point of morality there is a refinement of cruelty in rabbinical teaching that can be hardly illustrated better than by an incident which took place a few years since, at Jerusalem. A man of sixty married a girl of eighteen, under contract of divorce if at the end of four years she did not bear him a son! As a plain matter of fact the Jew is detested because he is detestable, and not because of his descent from Abraham. The letter L which represents the pound sterling has been introduced into their ideal of GOD, and they take the lead of humanity in their worship of GOLD. If the Zionist movement were to lead to their re-occupation of what is known as the Holy Land, either by gift or purchase, and with their untold wealth they were to build a place of worship on the site of the Temple, exceeding in magnificence anything the world has seen, they would quickly draw upon themselves the curses of the many thousands their usury has starved to death in by-gone ages, and the worms of hatred and discord would ere long reduce it to a ghastly ruin.

Judah inherited the acuteness of his grandfather

Laban, and it occurred to him, that a little money might be made out of his brother in the pit. Jacob must have felt deeply indebted to this son for the suggestion that prevented the bloody counsel of Simeon and Levi from being carried into effect—but the thirty-eighth of Genesis, which relates some particulars of Judah's family life, reveals to us a very shady character indeed.

Nevertheless "It is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah" (Heb. vii. 14), and though the last of the tribes to own His Lordship, all the sins of these nineteen centuries will be no barrier to his entry into the Kingdom of God, and taking a leading position in that Kingdom, but each individual must enter as did Saul of Tarsus, who though "an Hebrew of the Hebrews" counted all the advantages of ancestry and education but as DUNG that he might win Christ.

We learn from the dispensational dealings of God with man that His purpose has been to test him under various conditions.

The result of taking out a people, descendants of a common ancestor, to rule in the fear of God, has been tried and found wanting. It is now the will of God that they should share all their privileges with the despised Gentile. Sufficient honour has been put upon the Jews that from them ALONE have we received the words of God. They forfeited the right to rule over the nations, in rejecting the Messiah, and that right as an exclusive privilege will never be restored.

It remains to be seen by what process the Lord is going to "make in Himself of the twain one new man" (Eph. ii. 15), but the marvellous mental ability of the sons of Judah, which the world admires in a Rothschild, will shine by and bye in tenfold lustre, when the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ bestows upon them such men as Thomas Barnardo.

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I am quite aware that such statements as I have made will be greatly resented by many writers on unfulfilled prophecy. What is the meaning of Ezekiel's temple, and the definite re-allotment of the land among the twelve tribes, which we find in the final chapters, if these events are not to take place? How should Zechariah in the last page of his prophecy distinctly state that from all nationalities yearly pilgrimages should be made to Jerusalem, at the feast of Tabernacles, and punishment fall on those who neglected this observance?

These questions may appear difficult to answer but their solution is not to be given to men of this generation.

Before Ezekiel's temple can be built the whole topography of Jerusalem and its environs will be changed, and a river spring from the sanctuary that will have remarkable qualities, which have their counterpart only in the last chapter of the book of Revelation.

Before the events described in Zechariah have their fulfilment the Mount of Olives is to be cleft asunder.

It is about as fruitless an occupation to seek to understand what has been written solely for the direction of generations yet unborn, as it would be to find out the places and names of all the villages described in the book of Joshua, as the inheritance of generations who have long since passed away. The profit to us in reading these ancient records is the illustration they furnish of the grand truth, "He shall choose our inheritance for us"—Psa. xlvii. 4. After the last judgment described in Rev. xx. has taken place, "the nations of them that are saved" will, it appears, inherit an earth that has been especially prepared for them, and the tribes, perhaps in their original distinctness, possess the land under conditions which it concerns us not to know.

However distant in point of time from the present moment the hour of resurrection may be, we are warranted in giving all that God has said concerning

it and the judgment seat of Christ the most careful attention, because our position and our conduct **NOW** will so largely affect our position and our reward **THEN**. Inasmuch, however, as God has not bestowed upon man the faculty of giving full attention to two individuals at once, and there is abundant scope for the believer who desires to be wholly occupied for his Master in the age and circumstances in which he has been born, he is only a loser by enquiring like Peter "Lord, and what shall this man do?" concerning those who shall dwell upon earth centuries after he has left it.

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We have already drawn the reader's attention to the fact that **Language is not an exact science**, and that words completely change their meanings in many cases as time rolls on. There is something even worse than this, that we have to contend with, namely the same word used in exactly opposite senses. Such a word is **OVERSIGHT**.

The first time it is used in Scripture (Gen. xliii. 12), it stands for **NEGLECT** of duty, and in all subsequent occurrences it expresses its **FULFILMENT**.

The general cause for **oversight, No. 1**, is pre-occupation of mind, and this is exactly what happens to the sect known as "Plymouth Brethren." "The sky, not the grave, is our goal" might have stood as their watchword in the early days of their existence.

If Paul included himself in the "we which are alive and remain," of Thess. iv. 17. If this church was to be commended for its "waiting for the Son from heaven," how much more ought we to be filled with the same hope after all the centuries that have since elapsed?

But do not all these centuries of non-fulfilment shew either that God has during this period encouraged His children to entertain a hope that maketh ashamed, or that there is some explanation of the delay that has fallen into **oversight, No. 1**?

In Psalm cx. 1, we read: "JEHOVAH SAID UNTO MY LORD, SIT THOU ON MY RIGHT HAND UNTIL I MAKE THY ENEMIES THY FOOTSTOOL." In this unique passage the Father is speaking to the Son, and the Son, when He was on earth, made this text the subject of a discourse so important that the Holy Spirit records the same in three gospels (Matt. xxii. 44; Mark xii. 36; Luke xx. 42). The Apostle Peter brings it in on the day of Pentecost (Acts ii. 34) and we find it quoted again in the first chapter of Hebrews. So far the sentence is six times in appearance, and the meaning is transparent.

The Father, who is satisfied with the work of His Son on earth, will not permit His return in visible form to the scene of His sorrow and humiliation until all the world has owned His Lordship, and the Father undertakes to bring this about. How? By the Spirit whom He sends, and by the WORD which is that Spirit's sword.

But we have not done with the text yet. In Hebrews x. 13, we have it for the seventh time, giving the Son's response to the Father's decree. From henceforth EXPECTING till His enemies be made His footstool. The word is the same as is used of the impotent folk in John v. 3, who waited for the moving of the water; the same that is applied to Abraham who looked for a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God; the same that in James v. 7 is applied to the husbandman waiting for the precious fruit of the earth; and vividly brings before us that the ever obedient Son is content to sit at His Father's right hand till His Father brings the promise to pass.

To some minds the word "footstool" suggests subjugation, such as Joshua signified by causing his captains to put their feet upon the necks of the conquered kings (x. 24), but the real way to find out the meaning of the word is to compare its use by the same writer in another passage. The E.H.C. shews

us this word on page 357, as found for the first time in I Chron. xxviii. 2. The future temple on which David's heart was set during his whole reign, is described as the footstool of our God.

Consequently we understand this oft quoted passage to mean that until the Father makes this earth, which was the scene of His Son's dishonour, a place where He is universally worshipped, He will not permit Him again to be seen of men; and to this agree the words of our Lord Himself, who told the Jews that they should not see His face till they welcomed every one who came in His Name.

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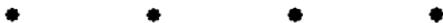
We have been taught that leaven is a type of corruption always, and so when in Matt. xiii. 33 our Lord said, the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till the whole was leavened, He intended us to understand that the professing Church would go on in error till she became wholly corrupt. Now let us put this to the touchstone of Scripture. It is true that the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod were forms of evil, and the leaven of malice and wickedness (I Cor. v. 8) speaks for itself; but this is insufficient evidence for so weighty a conclusion as a parallel type will shew. The Serpent, from Genesis to Revelation, is the symbol of craft and deadly hatred, but on one occasion our Lord, in whose mouth was no guile, said: "As Moses lifted up the Serpent in the wilderness, even so shall the Son of Man be lifted up." So we have this symbol in this single instance explained to be a type of Christ, by His own authority.

In perfect harmony with such teaching does our Lord use leaven on one occasion as a type of the Word: the point of resemblance being that while small and despised in its origin, it is noiseless and irresistible in its working, and rests not till every particle of the meal feels its effect.

Thousands of tons of rock were dropped into the sea to form the foundation of the Plymouth breakwater, and all the time the world saw nothing in the way of progress until the stones began to appear above the sea level ; so have millions of redeemed ones lived and suffered and died, leaving behind no written record of service or testimony, but the outcome of their lives is now seen in world-wide activities in the cause of Christ.

The statute books of England, a hundred years ago, contained as many as 120 death penalties. What has purified this atrocious code? The diffusion of the Word of God, largely through the efforts of the British and Foreign Bible Society.

What was the condition of the prisoner, whether simply a debtor or a criminal in those days? What were the ruffianly methods of pressing men into the navy? What the treatment of children then? And who has wrought the changed aspect of affairs to-day? The answer is not obscure. Just in proportion to the free course which has been given to the Word, spite of all SATAN'S opposition thereto, so has God been able to hasten the fulfilment of His promise to His Son. During the last quarter-of-a-century an army of young men and maidens have come forward to present their bodies a living sacrifice, that by the Gospel, they take to every land, the lost should be saved.



Immense as the distance of time seems to us, since Christ said "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," the day when His disciples will everywhere obey was foreseen, and is being provided for. As in Exodus xii. 41, we read : "It came to pass at the end of the four hundred and fifty years **even the selfsame day**, it came to pass that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt," so shall the day arrive when the exclamation shall be heard :

“Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once?” (Isa lxvi. 8).

How long will it take to bring the half-heathen villages of England under the sound of the pure Word of God, when the skill that is now being acquired in cycling shall be used for that definite object by the rising generation?

Ought not our mouths to be filled with praise to God for casting our lot in ten times better days than our fathers lived in, a hundred years ago, instead of shutting our eyes to all that HE has wrought, and declaring that everything is going to the bad?

The rapid and wonderful preparations for the extension of the Kingdom of God, need no microscope to discover in these days, but ere the outpouring of His Spirit upon all flesh, God has still a controversy with His people, and until they settle it according to Truth, the Prince of Darkness will continue to exercise his authority over them. Nor will any amount of prayer for blessing, or any number of conventions for the deepening of Spiritual life, avail any thing until a satisfactory answer is given to the question—

WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?

One of Moody's weighty words, as told in an address on the great evangelist, was—“CHARACTER IS WHAT A MAN DOES IN THE DARK. It is not in the testimonial he bears that you will be sure to find it.” If we could imagine one who lived a couple of centuries ago revisiting England, I do not believe all the inventions that bewildered his understanding would impress him more deeply than the omnipresence of the ADVERTISE-
MENT. In whatever shape or form this is seen, the public well understand that the existence and merits of the thing advertised are alone brought to their notice—the drawbacks are theirs to find out; and I boldly say that the “Gospel preaching” of to-day is essentially an advertisement of Him whom it sets forth.

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Never shall I forget a sermon preached many years ago at Bethesda, by Mr. Müller, one Sunday evening which happened to be Christmas-day, on the words: "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given," etc. It was magnificent, and carried the weight of the testimony of one who knew whom he had believed, as very few others have done.

I also remember a discourse in his closing days, wherein he described God as "a very lovely Being," and in his own practical way anticipated an eternity of bliss in the Redeemer's presence, by stating that, after he had been in the enjoyment of it one million of years, he could still feel that his happiness had only just begun.

That merciful provision which prevents a mind that is wholly occupied with acceptable service from being able to grasp the conditions of the lost, preserved his mental equilibrium. But if he had as faithfully described the obverse side of his creed, he might have said that, his brother in Germany whose eyes had been blinded by the god of this world, so that the light of the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ never shined into his heart, and whose soul was consequently lost, would, after burning in HELL a million years, along with the devil and his angels, be obliged to assure himself that his misery had but just begun!

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Just as the question on Mount Carmel, to be settled by Israel, was clear to the meanest understanding: Is **Jehovah** or is **Baal**—**GOD**? So the burning question of to-day, in the sight of the Father to His redeemed children is, Do you believe that this is the **character** of My well-beloved Son, in the dark and distant future, or do you not? Am I, in asking the question, casting reproach upon the countless believers who have been taught, and who accustomed themselves to teach this doctrine? **Not for a moment.**

Our Lord's words to the Pharisees, "If ye were blind ye should have no sin" (John ix. 41), clearly shews us that the **Righteous Judge** will not hold accountable for the teaching of false doctrine, those who honestly believed it, but rather deal with them as with such as are of unsound mind. The adversary and enemy can, so to speak, be pointed out with the finger, as Esther did before king Ahasuerus. It is the **OLD SERPENT**, who assured man that he would never really die, who is at the bottom of this hideous calumny. It is he who has succeeded in circulating his own likeness in Christendom, and labelling it as

THE JUDGE ON THE GREAT WHITE THRONE.

As the doom of the lost is what the orthodox preacher dares not ponder himself, he is unable to enforce the reality of it upon his congregation, and for want of the simplicity of faith which enables him to declare unhesitatingly, Whatsoever a man soweth **THAT** shall he also reap,—whether tribulation in time, or death after judgement in eternity,—he practically allows both saint and sinner to go unrebuked and unwarned,—except in terms too general and vague to make any impression whatever.

A distinct type of teacher, takes it for granted that the constant, consecutive reading of Scripture is all that is necessary for enabling him to expound the deep things of God, and he is able to pronounce the most terrible doom without hesitation, being incapable of realizing the import of his words.

If the errand boy in a chemist's shop, desiring to relieve the suffering of a child brought in by its mother in acute colic, was to take upon himself to mix a white powder, as he had seen his master do, and the result of taking it was death in a few minutes,—would the lad's benevolent intentions screen him from a life-long reproach, in having administered

corrosive sublimate instead of carbonate of soda? But this kind of thing goes on in the religious world every day, without let or hindrance.

I have heard the well educated Plymouth brother, as well as the Salvation Army captain, assure his hearers that the unrepentant sinner leaves earth for HELL,—on the strength of the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus.

That God has allowed many of these discourses to awaken in men a concern about their souls, no more proves the truth of the doctrine, than water flowing from the Rock, when Moses struck it the second time, proves that he acted in obedience to the command of God. Certain portions of the discourse were according to truth, and the rest evaporated from the hearer's memory in all cases where the soul turned to God. But while there were many such instances in the days of Wesley and Whitfield, when the Gospel was still imperfectly understood, this kind of preaching hardens ten sinners where it softens one, in the days wherein we live.

The evangelist, seeing the teaching of this portion of the Word is in direct contrast to all other Scripture that tells of the condition of humanity when the breath has left the body, ought never to attempt its exposition until by the study of the context he has brought it into harmony with the uniform testimony of all other parts of the Word.

If he accepts it as the Lord's account of what actually takes place, and leads his audience to believe it in its entirety, then it follows that Cain will have been six or seven thousand years craving in vain for a drop of water to cool his parched tongue, before he stands at the Great White Throne to answer for the blood of Abel his brother! Can we wonder at the sinner concluding that if this is the RIGHT-EOUSNESS of God, he may as well continue to serve the devil all the days of his life? There is no excuse for such conduct in the days wherein we

live, when any one, who will take the necessary pains to learn, can inform himself of what God says concerning death and judgment to come. Such preaching is not manslaughter but **SPIRITUAL MURDER**.

The Italian priest who honestly insists on the latter part of the sixteenth of Luke, as his warrant for teaching the doctrine of **PURGATORY**, and assures the laity that their poet Dante's description of it is no inspiration of **SATAN**—is bound in all equity to accept and present the earlier portion of the chapter as shewing, Christ's approval of the servant who cheats his master in order to provide for number one.

If the reader desires at this point to understand the purpose of our Lord in the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus, he will find it fully explained in harmony with all that precedes it in Chapter V., on **DIVINE METHODS OF INSTRUCTION**.

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In concluding the first part of this subject, let me impress on the mind of the reader, especially if called to teach Divine Truth to others, the immense importance of arranging **FACTS** and **INFERENCES** separately. The latter may be true or false, and I shall endeavour, in the second portion of this paper, to illustrate how the majority of false doctrine becomes established in the minds of men because, after a time, universal **inference** is asserted with as much confidence as if it was an indisputable **fact**.

Having been more than once deceived in consequence of accepting the **inferences** of my teachers as **facts**, and suffered the humiliation of discovering so-called "Precious Truth" to be a delusion and a snare, I rejoice in having found a way of testing all that I hear which, though sometimes tedious to apply, is nevertheless incapable of leading me much astray, and, moreover, I am prepared to give up

anything I may have taught, if another can by means thereof shew me wherein I have erred.

It must be now six-and-thirty years ago that I was asked by a coffee planter in Coorg if I would come and set up a water-wheel on his estate. The parts had all arrived safely from Glasgow; three years before, and the place for its erection was already prepared. I had not been long married at the time, and the invitation to spend a fortnight in that delightful part of India was extended to us both, so, having obtained leave of absence from the Works which I superintended, I accepted the undertaking, and, accompanied by three or four artizans, went to work, with every confidence of immediately succeeding. I found that three years in that damp climate had completely obliterated all the marks shewing how the segments fitted each other, but they looked so precisely similar that, having cleaned everything up, I proceeded to construct without delay.* But the last segment required to complete the circle refused to harmonize with those already in position, and evening found me in great perplexity. I might be weeks, or even months, in ringing all the changes that were possible, and in this case I should have the humiliation of returning home defeated in what every one expected me easily to do. My wife and I prayed together for guidance, and the following morning I had to take down every atom of the previous day's work and lay the shrouds, as they are called, on a level spot to be re-arranged till they fitted. Suffice it to say that I received the required guidance, and within three days the wheel was doing the work for which it had been imported. But the purport of this little narrative is to show that because one part of a piece of machinery exactly fits another,

*A cog wheel eighteen feet in diameter was bolted in sections to one side of the wheel, so that perfect accuracy was imperative.

you cannot conclude that they are intended to be in juxtaposition; and if it turns out that another piece which fits equally well, but is only discovered when the whole is almost put together, is the right one, there is nothing for it but to undo the whole work, however nearly completed.

* * * *

It pleased God to allow SATAN to corrupt the Gospel that was originally given to the world by the Apostles of our Lord, for a period of time equal to that of the Aaronic priesthood, before actively interfering to restore TRUTH to Christendom.

Wickedness could not exceed the public permission to sin in exchange for money, which was the latest papal decree when LUTHER was raised up to restore the doctrine of **justification by faith**. Wycliffe, Savonarola and Huss, who in various places had been previously God's witnesses for truth, prepared the darkened consciences of men to receive further light from the great Reformer, as well as from Calvin, Zwingle, Tyndale, and a host of others who followed. But to no single man was it permitted to obtain, by **his own research**, what any honest believer can find out for himself in our days.

In the one brief and weighty sermon of John the Baptist, recorded in the latter part of John iii., occurs the sentence: "A man can receive (literally, **take unto himself**) nothing except it be given him from heaven;" and God has not chosen to purify a corrupted earth by the sudden enlightenment of one or of a thousand of His witnesses, but, as a rule, one generation of these has taken up the work of restoration where the last left it, and fresh light has been given to the humble seeker after truth, so that the aggregate knowledge of the mind of God has slowly yet steadily been increasing among His children.

But further, that no flesh should glory in His presence, God has been pleased conspicuously to

honour those who, while foremost in a special line of testimony, were absolutely wanting in another direction. The blessing brought to Christendom through the testimony of the "Friends" can never be told, in spite of their neglect of the ordinances appointed by our Lord. The value of John Wesley's work, and that of the Methodists has been inestimable, although they taught the insecurity of the believer; and the Salvation Army to-day, which combines all these defects, has yet put all other denominations to shame in the matter of self-denial. To these may I add the Plymouth Brethren, who while establishing the all-sufficiency of the Word of God, yet cling to the tradition of men in their **darling doctrine of Eternal Torment**. I speak as one who knows. A girl who is deeply in love with a man seldom breathes his name, but the secret transpires in her behaviour towards any who may abuse him. I cannot resist, in this connection, recording the response of a valued friend among them to the query, "Would it be honest to translate 'Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction' as 'Who shall be preserved in everlasting misery'?" She was an elderly lady who could read Greek, and a staunch Protestant, but I suppose it was her Irish blood that made her evade a direct reply with the assertion that "the more unreasonable the doctrine the greater the merit in the faith that believed it"! Ah no! The delight that God has in communing with His children is because He has created them with capacities which can respond to His invitation "Come now, let us reason together." They are incapable of understanding the mystery either of Himself or themselves, as they shall know it hereafter, but they can understand His revealed CHARACTER, and when we are told to be "imitators of God, as dear children," the very REASON He has bestowed teaches us that He is incapable of anything so inconceivably horrible.

* * * *

Now I will proceed to explain the painful process of **unlearning**, which appears like the amputation of a limb, but proves when the soreness is healed to have been after all only the excision of a tumour.

Having been a child of "Brethren," I was taught that between the coming of our Lord in the past, and the last day when every eye shall see Him there is an **INTERMEDIATE** coming expressly for His Church. That this highly favoured body is limited to those who have believed between Pentecost and such appearing. Further that all Old Testament saints, from Abel to John the Baptist, stand in relation to the Church much as the brides-maid to the bride, and that the countless millions of millennial saints form a kind of third class passengers to glory, after the Bride has been caught up to be for ever with the Lord. "The rapture of the saints" described in 1 Thess. iv, 15-18, was exclusively a description of this **intermediate appearing**.

The child is in duty bound to accept the religious teaching of the parent, or (as in my case) the guardians to whose care those parents committed him, and I found that one of the foundation stones on which this stupendous erection was based was the scripture in Matt. xi. 11, "Verily I say unto you. Among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist, notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." I must have attained nearly forty years of age before I began to suspect that this view of "the Church" was **INFERENCE** rather than **STATEMENT** and I began to study the above text in real earnest. My first discovery which you will find confirmed by the margin of your revised Bible, was that the word **least** should have been **lesser**. It is an entirely different thing to say one tree, for example, is **lesser** than its neighbour, than to describe it as the **least** of all trees.

My next study was of the context. The question our Lord had been asking of the people was, What is

John in your estimation? and He winds up His discourse by giving him a very high position indeed, but indicating that one who was held in lesser estimation was in reality the greater man.

The key to the right understanding of this passage I found in John v. 18, where the statement is made that our Lord "**had broken the sabbath.**" Could this have been the case when we know He fulfilled the law in every particular? Yes, **in the estimation of the Jews**—not in the sight of God. Now in the estimation of the Jews (though some might spitefully say He had a demon as they noticed his abstemious habits) the testimony of Scripture is, "all men counted John that he was a prophet indeed" (Mark xi. 32). Though he did no miracle, yet he lived and preached in recognized prophetic style; whereas our Lord, notwithstanding the signs and wonders he wrought, by eating and drinking with publicans and sinners discredited Himself in public opinion, and was the **lesser man** according to the conventional standard of holiness.

Continuing my investigations on this subject, I asked myself whether the city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God, which Abraham looked forward to dwelling in (Heb. xi. 10) was not identical with that described in Rev. xxi.? whether the statement in the closing verse of Heb. xi., "that they without us should not be made perfect," implied our superiority or our equality? And when the Apostle James describes believers in his day as a "kind of first-fruits of His creatures" (chap. i. 18), could the believers already sleeping with their fathers be anything else? In short when I sternly set my face to separate the STATEMENTS of Scripture from human INFERENCES concerning them, I found this INTERMEDIATE appearing dissolve and

"Like the baseless fabric of a vision
Leave not a wreck behind."

That our Lord will descend from heaven in a visible form, as when He ascended, is a cardinal doctrine of our faith; that He will find the world unsuspecting and unprepared is equally true; that believers are exhorted to watch for their Lord's return is a repeated injunction, and these prophecies are necessary for the instruction of the saints who shall then be alive, as there is no new Bible forth-coming.

But if the Gospel must first be preached throughout the whole world for a witness, as the Master distinctly stated, how foolish is the spiritual attitude of those who stand gazing up as it were into heaven. The application to us of such passages as "Surely I come quickly"; "In such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh," is evident from others, as our Lord's message to Ephesus in Rev. ii. 5, "Repent—or I will come unto thee quickly;" or to the faithful one in Laodicea, "I will come in to him and will sup with him and he with me."

So infatuated, however, were "Brethren" in their belief of our Lord's immediate return in person, that I once heard in Glasgow an ex-clergyman (author of "The Javelin of Phineas") assure his audience of over a thousand persons that "Nothing is so uncertain as death"!! The most stupendous falsehood that I ever heard from any pulpit in my life.

* * * *

Among the articles in the Churchman's creed which continues, so far as I am aware, to pass unchallenged in any of the Denominations is this.

"I believe in the resurrection of the body." Seeing that in Isa. xxv. 19, it is written "My dead body shall arise," and that our Lord said in John v. 28, "The hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth"—there appears to be a warrant for the above statement. On the other hand nothing is more certain than the FACT that in the overwhelming majority of those who have

departed this life there exists no **body** to be raised. Returning to dust its component parts have been absorbed, generally speaking, by the vegetable kingdom, and it is lawful for us to seek further explanation of a prophecy which **contradicts** the evidence of our senses.

This may be found in reminding ourselves that our Lord addressed His hearers according to their ability to understand, and when He shocked them by a form of speech which could not be accepted literally, He was under the necessity of speaking what they would not forget, and they must needs wait till the Holy Spirit was given to have it explained.

It is hard for us to realize the effect of the text, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you," when first uttered in the synagogue of Capernaum, but we now understand it to mean that just as the food and drink we daily partake of maintains us in life without any conscious effort of our own, so only the heart occupied with Christ as He is revealed in the Word by the Spirit—truly lives in the sight of God.

There were "bodies of saints" raised to life while our Lord was expiring on the cross, and these may, like Lazarus, have been specially granted an extension of existence on earth to be witnesses of His resurrection, but, apart from this exceptional manifestation of divine power, there is no subsequent Scripture which speaks of **the resurrection of the body** that has turned to dust. This statement may startle some reader, but we are able to give chapter and verse for saying that the soul of the believer, that has been sleeping in Jesus till the morning of the Resurrection, will be joined to a body that has not a particle of earth in its composition.

1 Cor. xv. 50, "Now this I say brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." There is not an atom of the human body that is incorruptible, so the material must be entirely new.

2 Cor. v. 2, "We groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven." The habitation of the redeemed spirit is created for it in the dwelling place of God.

1 Thess. iv. 14, "Them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." Those who are caught up together to meet the Lord in the air will join the company that no man can number, who have descended from heaven with their Lord.

These heavenly mysteries could not be explained by our Lord to the Jews then. It was sufficient for them to know that the same individuals who had lived on earth once should again be made alive, in such language as they could understand. The resurrection bodies of such as are not to inherit eternal life, will be created suitably to their respective destinies—before the tribunal of the Great White Throne.

Thus it is perfectly easy to understand that whenever the martyr's resurrection, spoken of early in Rev. xx., takes place, they may commence their reign with Christ in some unrevealed sphere of His infinite dominions, without affecting the establishment of His rule over the earth that is being subjugated to His will.

I am quite prepared to hear these particulars concerning the resurrection hotly contested, but when the objectors separate the **statements** of Scripture from the **INFERENCES** they have held equally sacred, I have no fear for the result.

One more point in connection with things unseen, it is necessary to establish.

When God says of the spirit that has left the body that it **sleeps**, He means it.

Our Lord entering the death chamber of the ruler's daughter said she **sleepeth**. All laughed Him to scorn knowing she was **dead**. Concerning Lazarus our Lord first told His disciples that He **slept** and afterwards, plainly, that he was **dead**. What we have to do in this enquiry is to ascertain **what**

the Lord means by His words, and we discover that whether the condition He describes is one of **sleep** or **death** it conveys the idea of **ABSOLUTE UNCONSCIOUSNESS**.

It is commonly taught among Christians that when the spirit of the believer is absent from the body and present with the Lord its glory begins. It is now fifty years since my father died in his brother-in-law George Müller's house, after a life of devoted service and a painful dissolution. A friend sent the well known hymn of which I quote but the first verse, the morning after he breathed his last.

“I shine in the light of God,
His likeness stamps my brow ;
Through the valley of death my feet have trod
And I reign in glory now.”

His three sisters, who had nursed him during his last illness, were present at breakfast while I read the poem which none of us had heard before. It seemed like a voice from heaven to the bereaved family, whose tears flowed as they listened to its comforting assurances. There have been thousands of books since published in the same strain, and every church-yard and cemetery echo identical sentiments—but we look in vain for their confirmation in the Word of God. It is entirely built on **INFERENCES**, which we will now proceed to examine.

The words of our Lord to the dying thief on the cross, “Verily I say unto thee to-day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise,” seem conclusive where this doctrine has been accepted as the **TRUTH**. But if the enquirer reflects for a moment that the Man Christ Jesus, who gave this promise to His fellow-sufferer, stated three days later that He had not yet ascended unto His Father, he can see that the word **to-day** belongs to the first half of the sentence.

The malefactor's faith in the crucified One whom he had but just seen, surpassed that of any whom the Lord had yet dealt with. That he could possibly believe in there being a kingdom in store for one who had been brought so low and appeared so helpless, was through divine light imparted to him then and there, and the Saviour's response was especially given to strengthen that new-born faith. **To-day** when you see Me scorned alike by Jew and Gentile. **To-day** when the nails fix Me as securely as they do you. **To-day** when God has evidently forsaken Me—I can assure thee that thou shalt be with Me in Paradise.

• But did not the Apostle Paul say that to depart and be with Christ is very far better? Phil. i. 23, R.V. How could this be true if no consciousness of bliss existed? Because the Apostle was content to believe that the period of his soul's sleep was one wherein the lapse of time was **unknown**. If you will carefully go through the catalogue of his sufferings for Christ's sake, described in 2 Cor. ix. 23 to the end, you will understand why the prisoner in a Roman dungeon wrote as he did. He had no **desire** for what he describes in 2 Cor. v. 4 as the "unclothed" state—but as it was God's appointment, it must be the very best for him, and for those who came after him.

If there were the smallest prospective enjoyment in the unclothed state, how could he dare to say in 1 Cor. xv. 18, that if there is to be no resurrection "**They also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished?**" No language could more plainly describe the condition of the spirit of man, between death and resurrection, as inanimate; and what solid comfort can the living obtain who allow their faith to rest on human tradition, which assures them that the dead are employed in watching over those they have left on earth, or will be standing at heaven's gate to welcome them on arrival.

Meanwhile let us ever remember that it is to those servants of God who have thought earnestly, yet thought wrongly, that we are chiefly indebted for ability to arrive at a correct judgment. We owe a deeper debt of gratitude to the Apostlé Peter than to all his companions put together, because he had the courage of his opinions and said and did several naughty things.

Those who glide through life and never express an opinion on any point of TRUTH until they have ascertained how it is understood by the leaders of their own sect, which they instinctively echo, remind us of salt that has lost its savour.

One of the most frequent utterances of the Bristol school of "Brethren" is the absolute perfection of the written Word of God, from which they preach. So both George Müller and Robert Chapman taught, and they are safe to follow in their steps.

But the Word of God which it is our privilege to expound is not without spot, wrinkle or any such thing.

Example I.—In 2 Chron. xxi. 20, we are told that Jehoram was thirty-two years old when he began to reign; that he reigned eight years, and that his youngest son who immediately succeeded him was **forty-two!**

In this case we can rectify the error that is so manifest, by a reference to 2 Kings viii. 26, where we learn the age of Ahaziah on ascending the throne to have been **twenty-two.**

Example II.—In 2 Sam. xxi. 8, we read that five of the descendants of Saul who were delivered to the Gibeonites were sons of MICHAL the daughter of Saul, but on referring to 1 Sam. xviii. 19, we discover that it was Merab, her elder sister, that was their mother (the wife of Adriel); while 2 Sam. iii. 15, points out the fact that Saul had bestowed Michal

on Phaltiel, the son of Laish, when David fled from the country. 2 Sam. vi. 23, further informs us that Michal died childless.

Example III.—1 Sam. vi. 19, describes the destruction of the men of Bethshemesh.

I consulted a Hebrew scholar concerning this passage, where the number of those slain for looking into the ark is put down at fifty thousand, threescore and ten men, and was told that the construction of the sentence made it appear that seventy men out of a population of fifty thousand was the number of those that fell. I am not qualified to express a judgment on this matter, but consider it more than probable.

Now supposing of such mistakes there existed a score or even a hundred, does their existence affect the truth concerning God in His relation to us, or unsettle the detail of our obedience to Him? Not for a moment.

If our Lord and His apostles condescended to use the Septuagint Version of the Old Testament Scriptures, which is vastly inferior as a translation to our own old Authorized Version, can we go far wrong in accepting and declaring with His authority the book we find in our hands?

It has been according to the good pleasure of His Will, that the greatly improved condition of things in our days has been brought about by the lives and testimony of most imperfect believers. He has also ordered it that the knowledge of His truth should be similarly advanced by the efforts of the Revisers,—and there is no doubt that our children's children will have greater light on the original manuscripts than we possess, and a translation of the Scriptures incomparably more accurate and consistent than our own.

Meanwhile it becomes all who desire to be teachers of the children of God to ascertain, by actual and laborious investigation of the Englishman's Hebrew

and Greek Concordances, an answer to Pilate's question **What is truth?** The spiritual exercise of this employment will make them as mighty in the Scriptures as the study of heathen philosophy and mythology has enfeebled modern theologians.

Let us not yield to depression because the prospect of beholding the Redeemer face to face during the term of our life on earth has been taken away. In answer to our desire for it He might well say, "Ye know not what ye ask." If it gives Him far more pleasure to behold His children doing His will, in the full confidence that He is in their midst, than in seeing His commands carried out in response to a **visible** authority which none may presume to question, is it not our privilege to answer "Lord what pleases Thee is that which ever pleases me." The promise of beholding Him face to face, and being changed into His very image, is not withdrawn,—it is only deferred. A glimpse of His glory, as He is now seated at the right hand of His Father, was sufficient to make the beloved Apostle fall at His feet as dead. The body of His humiliation is never to be resumed, and it is a proof of the utmost kindness on His part that we are not to be ushered into that presence where there is fulness of joy,—till we have been reconstructed, so as to endure its radiance without injury to ourselves.

In conclusion, let us remember the words "Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me." John the Baptist was **offended** at the Lord's apparent neglect of His imprisoned witness; the people of Nazareth were **offended** at His poor relations; the Pharisees were **offended** at His peculiar doctrine, and all the disciples were **offended** that He delivered Himself up into the hands of His enemies, instead of delivering Himself out of them. We can never be **offended** with the Lord, unless we think He ought to do better for us than He is doing. The only way to earn this blessing is always to believe in the absolute perfection

of His knowledge, wisdom and love, and then, however puzzled we may be over some of His utterances, we shall decide with honest Peter "Lord to whom shall we go, thou hast the words of eternal life."

Nothing is easier than entirely to misrepresent a sentence, with a scarcely perceptible alteration in its words.

Our Lord said in John ii. 19, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up." The false witness at His trial before the High Priest represented Him as saying, "I will destroy this temple," etc. It appears as if our Lord was a false prophet in saying to His disciples, "Verily, I say unto you, This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled" (Matt. xxiv. 34), but we know Him too well to allow such a possibility, and by considering the verses that precede this statement we perceive that the words apply to the generation that shall witness the signs therein described.

Among the promises to "him that overcometh," in Revelation, is "Power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessel of a potter shall they be broken to shivers" (chap. ii. 26, 27).

At first sight it appears that such a prospect would be congenial only to a Rehoboham, who preferred scorpions to whips as an instrument of authority. How can we rightly understand it? By looking up the word Nations in Old and New Testaments, and collecting all God's thoughts about them. In Isa. xl. 15, we read "Behold the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance." Does that mean that God takes no more notice of nations than we do of a drop that is left in the bucket, or the dust that settles on the scales? THE REVERSE IS TRUE, but when it comes to a question of "nations" asserting their might or their right against His revealed will, the drop of water and the small atom of dust represent their insignificance.

That which shall be broken to shivers is not the humanity but the inhumanity that characterizes various forms of anti-christian rule, and the ruler will stand no nonsense on the plea of time-honoured custom, when the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.



CHAPTER XI.—WHAT SHALL WE DO?

THESE words fell from the lips of all classes of society who listened to John the Baptist on the banks of Jordan; again was the question repeated when the Apostle Peter had concluded his discourse on the day of Pentecost, and it comes most naturally from those who have heard and received the truths that have been expounded in the previous chapters.

If these things are so, God is about to make the knowledge of His Son universal, and possibly in the days of the rising generation. If such is His purpose, the desire of all His children will undoubtedly be that they may be used in some way towards the glorious fulfilment of His will.

Infinite wisdom has ordered that we shall not know what a day may bring forth. Whether when God shews His servants what He is about to do, they shall meet with violent and sustained opposition in acting as His ambassadors, or find the hearts of those to whom at length a pure gospel can be preached prepared to accept the glad tidings.

But whatever lies before them, the only way to become vessels meet for the Master's use is to get such a cleansing from constant washing in the water of the Word, that He shall find no GUILTY when they are wanted for service.

* * * *

I think nothing fills me with dismay, in reviewing various religious periodicals, so much as the utter lack

of conscience there is about speaking the TRUTH when its suppression is favourable to the cause they plead.

There is a journal which continued to be sent to me for a long time in spite of protest, so that it was regularly set aside for lighting the kitchen fire. I always made it a principle when in business that if anyone told me a falsehood, knowing that it was such, I would never trust him again,—and thus I deal with current literature. The periodical to which I refer is issued weekly, principally to advocate Sabbath observance instead of Lord's day. There is something to be said in its favour, and as there are a large number of industries which cannot be interrupted for twenty-four hours without serious loss, it would greatly facilitate matters were some of the workmen to rest on Saturday and others on Sunday,—if masters would only make it a matter of conscience before God to secure to their men one day of rest in seven. The New Testament distinctly gives liberty for such an arrangement (Rom. xiv. 5, 6; Col. ii. 16), and indeed the Galatians who were on the downgrade of that day, "observed days" in such a way as to make the Apostle afraid lest his labour for them had been in vain. (Gal. iv. 10, 11.)

The other speciality of this journal is **Vegetarianism**. This too is a subject which deserves far more attention than it gets. It is not only possible but probable that most of mankind would enjoy better health without meat or liquor. We are all indebted to the homœopathists of the past century for an enormous reduction in the **quantity** of medicine that is now prescribed by the faculty.

But this paper, which we need not name, poses in the Christian World as a teacher of the things of God, and thus incurs a great responsibility. How can the Editor expect to reach the conscience of an unconverted man as he expounds Scripture, when he asserts concerning one of the things of this life an **absolute untruth**?

I quote verbatim from one of its recent issues:—
“Beef tea not only contains absolutely no nourishment except the water in its composition, but it is a poison.”

The title assumed by this religious paper is one of which it is as unworthy as a London journal is of a similar designation. The maker of a famous soap, some years since, exhibited at most railway stations the picture of an Ethiopian boy washing himself white with a cake of it—and thought himself very witty in his comment on Jer. xiii. 23, but he too will find that God is not to be MOCKED.

* * * *

Little do those whose career has been hedged in by a kind Providence from the contamination of gross wickedness and infidelity, suspect that the world's ripeness for judgment in their esteem is largely the result of their own indifference to TRUTH. There never was a day when men and women all the world over and especially in our most highly favoured land were more deserving of compassion and forbearance than our own. They are so constantly being deceived, designedly and undesignedly, by those who assume to be their teachers, that they may well pause and consider before accepting any new doctrine.

One of the latest attempts to revive the miraculous gifts bestowed on the Church at Pentecost, and which has found many ardent supporters, is the doctrine of FAITH-HEALING. It is a fabric built upon a single passage in James v., and may now be considered.

Oil represents the use of means up to the limit of medical knowledge of that period, as we may see from the parable of the Good Samaritan. Recovery is promised to the **prayer of faith**, which in those early days may have been constantly bestowed. The whole question lies in a nutshell. If the believer has real faith, it will be seen by real healing; and if he or she does not possess it, earnest supplication will not supply

its lack. The doctrine that this method is divinely sanctioned—and sets aside our Lord's previous statement that the sick need a physician (Matt. ix. 12; Mark ii. 17; Luke v. 31)—is a dangerous one that has shortened many lives.

It is not God's way to ignore the gifts that He has bestowed upon man. Paul promised a safe landing to all that were on board with him on the doomed vessel in spite of the storm. She had a rascally crew, intent only on saving their own lives, but the Apostle knew that they alone of the whole ship's company could do what yet had to be done and he said to the centurion, "Except these abide in the ship ye cannot be saved." Faith does not dissolve partnership with common sense. If in the days when our Lord walked the earth, doctors knew comparatively nothing of the inside of their patients, and their remedies were fraught with quite as much danger as relief, He yet acknowledged them as physicians on the strength of what little they knew,—can we suppose for an instant that the intimate acquaintance of the modern surgeon with every part of the body, and the marvellous methods of prevention and cure of disease, as well as of relief from pain under operations with which he is endowed, would be treated with contempt? Mysteries there are and always will be in the body, so fearfully and wonderfully made, and complications of disorder that will baffle the most experienced practitioner, but SICKNESS is a recognized form of divine education, and the interference with it by an effort of faith on the part of the sufferer would in most cases make the discipline of none effect. The bestowal of healing without human aid is an evidence of a special gift of faith by divine pre-appointment.

The miracles of healing wrought both by our Lord and His Apostles were not unlimited in their extent. I mean by this that the objects of divine mercy were in every case predestined by divine favour for receiving it.

When it is stated of our Lord, on one occasion, that He could do no mighty works in a certain neighbourhood (Matt. xiii. 58), neither lack of disease nor lack of power was in evidence, but a spiritual condition that caused the Holy Spirit (who ever directed the Son of God in word and work) to forbid the gracious manifestation of divine healing.

Again though at one time special miracles were wrought by the Apostle Paul, so that handkerchiefs were taken from his person to unseen and unknown individuals who were immediately cured of disease (Acts xix. 12), he had no authority to send one to Epaphroditus, for whose recovery he was unfeignedly thankful (Phil. ii. 27), nor could he on another occasion heal Trophimus, but had to leave him sick at Miletum (2 Tim. iv. 20). Dearly as he loved Timothy he could not make him robust, and prescribed a little wine for his oft recurring physical infirmities.



This subject is one of such deep practical importance in connection with missionary enterprise that I must illustrate it by a narrative, the truthfulness of which I can vouch for in every particular.

An energetic and whole hearted missionary in China had his wife apparently sick unto death. She was one of the most devoted and capable workers in that far-off land, and they were stationed in the interior beyond reach of any medical aid. In answer to prayer she made a marvellous and complete recovery, and her husband in an enthusiasm of gratitude, resolved in future not to dishonour the Lord (as he thought,) by calling in the doctor, whatever ailment might befall any member of his family.

Years afterwards his youngest son, a boy between six and seven years of age had an affection of the eyes which was of a nature that yielded without difficulty to medical treatment, and one who was willing and well able to give it resided within a

day's journey. But no, father and mother fasted and prayed, fasted and prayed, while the little fellow rolled in anguish on his cot, and underwent weeks of suffering and, I believe, permanently injured vision on account of his parents resolve.

By and bye a day came when the father was stricken down with fever and became delirious. His wife's prayers did not lower his temperature, and it became necessary in order to prevent him doing himself or others injury, to secure him in a hammock and take him to the doctor's house.

On my return a few years ago from the China Inland Mission Anniversary Meeting at Exeter Hall, I overheard my venerable friend holding forth to a group of young ladies who were preparing for China—on a verse in Psa. ciii. He assured them that as the sentence, "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities," is followed by "Who healeth all thy diseases," the latter blessing was obtainable on the same terms as the former—**simply for the asking!**

It is easier for some of us to give our bodies to be burned than to say "I have played the fool and erred exceedingly," but it is no merit to offer the one when **righteousness** demands the other.

It is a significant fact that BETHSHAN, the headquarters of this delusion, is under the superintendence of the leading prophet (???) of our times—whose credentials are "Clergyman of the Church of England."

Over forty years ago the Editor of the *Christian Herald* told an uncle of mine in Canada, that if Louis Napoleon did not prove to be the coming Anti-christ his whole faith in Scripture would be shaken! Since then he has issued one prophetic programme after another of judgment to come, which time has proved utterly false. Howbeit he was not at all ashamed, neither could he blush, but three years ago he again issued a fresh programme which he sent to his brother Editor of *The Christian*. The

latter journal, which is in the same touch with the religious world that *The Times* is with the secular, declined it as a contribution but accepted it as an advertisement !!

If leading Christian Organs act in a manner, which makes a hoax of Barnum's mere child's play, can we be surprised if any of our children turn infidels?

Some years ago the eldest son in a large family who, with several of his brothers and sisters, were among our Sunday School Teachers, renounced his faith in the Word of God. He went to London and became Editor of an Electrical Journal. I took the opportunity next time I went to town of looking up this lost sheep. I found that in his search after truth he had arrived at the point of discovery that Jesus of Nazareth was a myth, such a man having never really lived on earth at all! In fact he had distanced Voltaire altogether, and was now devoting his energies to the study of a science which did not demand belief in anything that could not be tried and proved. I too am a firm believer in the same power, but claim it as the property of Him of whom it is written "All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made."

Electricity in the first quarter of the past century was in its **babyhood**—a toy for the amusement of the public at the hands of the scientific lecturer. In the second quarter we see it in its **boyhood**—running with messages from town to town at comparatively short distances from each other. In the third quarter it grew, so to speak, into a **youth**—carrying words of man through the depth of ocean from continent to continent, and commencing to shed a pure and bright light upon his cities and within his dwellings. In the last quarter it has reached comparative **manhood**—and exhibits its **giant strength** by carrying us about in its arms.

Now how have these results been obtained? By constant study and experiment the laws of this hitherto unknown power have been brought to light.

It will travel on certain lines, it absolutely refuses to travel on others. It insists moreover on the unbroken continuity of these lines. If the distance between two telegraph posts was spanned by rope instead of wire, nothing would induce it to carry the message across.

Hundreds of thousands of pounds were spent on an Atlantic Cable, which parted in mid-ocean. The ends might have been only a few yards apart, but the thousands of miles of perfect wire became worthless for that one fault.

On the one hand it is inexorable in its demands, on the other it is absolutely reliable when these demands have been fulfilled. It is a perfect educator in its way.

The Bristol Tramway Company dared not scamp a yard of the thirty miles of line they are said to have laid down. Everything that could be tested in the way of material was tested, and everything that could not be tested was scrupulously watched during construction, and they have been rewarded by the result of a mighty power at their service day and night, which is under absolute control.

To quote Dr. A. T. Pierson, in the first chapter of his book "The Heart of the Gospel:" "Whenever you obey the law of the power, the power will obey you."

* * * *

Now what is the interpretation of this wonder that is being wrought in the land? It is nothing less than our gracious God condescending to explain to the men of this generation the manner in which His Holy Spirit is preparing the world for the reign of our Lord Jesus Christ. In the days of His ministry the only thing in nature that at all conveyed to human intelligence the way in which He works, was the Wind. This other and mightier power was unborn then, but when the mind of man had developed sufficiently to use it, it was bestowed upon him gradually as he was able to bear it. First as the obedient messenger; Second as the peerless light: Third as the mighty power.

In this last stage of its development, it is important to notice, that it is not according to the laws of the power to **centralize all authority** in a person or place.

The Power Station of the city of Bristol, which furnishes it with **light**, is but a stone's throw from the Power Station of the Tramways, but the one does not interfere with the other, nor does the Lighthouse in the centre of the English Channel (St. Catherine's, Isle of Wight) depend for its supply on what cannot be made on the premises.

Exactly on these lines is the Holy Spirit establishing the kingdom of heaven upon earth.

We may state broadly that just as the electric current stops when it meets with a non-conductor, be it brittle glass or pliant rubber, so when the Holy Spirit touches the **Self-worshipper**, He cannot convey to him the grace of God which bringeth salvation, nor in the believer do any work that will count to his honour at the judgment seat of Christ.

Again as to **continuity**. The word of the Lord is "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you do ye even so to them, for this is the law and the prophets" (Matt. vii. 12).

The Spirit further adds, "Putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour, for we are members one of another" (Eph. iv. 25). Acting contrary to these injunctions there is immediately a **break in the connection**, and the Power returns to its source, as the electric current to its mother earth in cases of leakage.

I had the privilege of going over the Power Station of the Electric Tramways and, as an old engineer, was filled with admiration, among other things, with the exact truth of the ponderous flywheels whose polished rims were about two feet wide, and also with the manner in which the weighty segments were fitted together. But while these and other marvels of American engineering skill were within my comprehension; I could no more have explained what the

engines were doing than an apple-woman on Bristol Bridge. However, I learned some further details of the **manner** of distribution of the invisible power, which delighted me beyond words.

We have all noticed the square pillar boxes at half-mile distances along the various lines! What end do they serve? The red post pillar receives our correspondence, and in London there are others into which the road scrapings are poured—but **these** have no mouths for anything!

From each of these, however, a distinct cable connects it with the Power Station underground, and with the force thereby obtained it **vitalizes** in a certain sense half a mile of overhead wire.

In the Power Station there is a raised gallery on which there are perhaps fifty dials, like the face of a clock, which indicate to the Electrician who paces up and down (like the Captain of an Ocean Steamer) how each particular section is getting on. If any are below par, forthwith from the treasure house of Power he supplies the need.

Thus between our Great High Priest at the right hand of God, and every man, woman and child who are His witnesses on earth, there is a distinct and independent connection.

He whom the Apostle John saw in a vision walking in the midst of the candlesticks, keeps count of the millions at this very moment who seek to do His will, and enables them to do it, provided there is no break in their communion.

There is another valuable lesson to be learned from the construction of the lines, to which I will now direct your attention.

Spite of all precautions a considerable proportion of Power is lost by **leakage**, which as yet there is no way to prevent, and the wires are also liable to have

it stolen from them by thieves who have no use for it when they get it. I will explain myself. Perhaps you have noticed at several places the overhead wires are protected at a distance of a yard by much slighter wires above them. Why in some places, only, and what kind of protection do they afford?

Up in the air you will notice a set of telegraph or telephone wires **crossing the road**, and if one of these were to break and fall on the wires that carry the power for locomotion, they would run off with it and possibly the trams would come to a standstill. These upper wires are laid wherever such an accident might happen in order to prevent the strange wire touching it.

Thus in the path of service **got ready beforehand** (Eph. ii. 10), for the obedient believer, the Master takes special precautions, lest the Prince of the power of the air should draw off the energy required for his work.

Joshua could not imagine what good it was for him to dwell on the mount nearly six weeks with nothing to do, but he was thus **protected**, unknown to himself, from any share of the sin in making and worshipping the golden calf.

And now that the poor citizen of Bristol can ride to and from his work; with a speed and comfort that royalty could not formerly obtain,—is he indebted alone to those who have bestowed on him this blessing? Verily not.

Scores of patient toilers who have passed away, contributed to this grand result, and so it is in respect of our present spiritual advantages, in this stage of the history of the Kingdom of God.

Hundreds of things need improvement, scores of abuses have to be swept away, but it would not be good for us to have them removed as by a magician's wand.

* * * *

I suppose that no king ever ascended the throne with a wider knowledge of Government, good, bad and indifferent, than has our present sovereign, Edward VII. If his desire to give his country all the benefit of his observations were granted, and this desire responded to by a Parliament in which there were no obstructives,—we could not expect that all wrongs in the legislature would be set aright.

It is the will of God that all solid and enduring benefits should be secured **only after a certain experience of failure**, which is a blessing in preventing our becoming wise in our own conceits. It is also the will of God that work begun by the father should be perfected by the son—so that He has in reserve for our children, if brought up in the fear of the Lord, triumphs of which we have as little idea as our forefathers had of our present achievements.

* * * *

Socialism, which I understand as a human ideal of happiness to be brought about by equalizing the condition of mankind, has no sanction either in the Word of God or in the World that He has created. It is for His glory and man's good that some should rule but that most should serve; that some should be rich but that most should be comparatively poor; that some should have high intellectual endowments and others only sense enough to imitate the actions of others. He is also pleased to raise some from obscurity into wealth and power, as well as to cast down others from a high position to one of servitude, shewing that He is no respecter of persons; and we should ever remember that it is for the happiness of humanity that these varied conditions continue.

I recollect some years ago visiting an aged ex-Quaker, who insisted on speaking of Mr. Müller as George Müller, on the authority of Matt. xxiii. 10: "Neither be ye called **masters**, for one is your **Master**

even Christ." In vain did I assure the old man that though "Mister" might be a form of "Master," yet that the text he quoted was by him entirely misunderstood. My knowledge of the Greek only irritated him, but once more I put the Englishman's Greek Concordance into the reader's hands, and ask him to turn up the word. He will find it on page 395, and also that this choice plant only grows in this particular chapter,—twice in the verse quoted, and once in verse 8. Instead of **Master** in the sense of owner, employer, or instructor, the word signifies **guide**, or leader, as a classical Lexicon informs us; and the prefix to its more common form, which characterizes this expression, brings before us **the guide who undertakes to bring you all through the journey**. To each believer the Lord here declares that this office belongs to Himself alone.

* * * *

To the earnest enquiry, "WHAT SHALL WE DO?" the reader may feel that no definite or satisfactory answer has been given. "If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?" If the **ANTICHRIST** foretold by the Apostle Paul, under the title "**The man of sin**," were in evidence Christians would immediately put on their armour and be prepared to lay down their lives for the **TRUTH**. Shall we turn to the passage in 2 Thess. ii., for further light? "**The Day of Christ**" brings before us **the period of His reign over the earth**; whereas "**The Day of the Lord**," which is elsewhere often referred to, presents Him as judge at the close of the gospel dispensation.

The saints are informed that this period should not commence till the "**Man of Sin be revealed**, by which we learn that he already existed. "**The mystery of iniquity doth already work**," and would continue to do so among men before it is brought to light. It is

clear therefore that the "**Man of Sin**" is not a human being who has a beginning of days and end of life, but a **PRINCIPLE OF EVIL**, which up to a certain point works in disguise.

The word for **oppose** means to **lie in wait against**, and thus in exalting himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, his hatred is seen to be **covert** and not published abroad to all the world.

Further we note that he sits in the **temple** of God, shewing himself that he is God, and here we find that our Lord's application of the word **TEMPLE** to the human body in John ii. 21, and the Holy Spirit's confirmation of the same in 1 Cor. vi. 19, points distinctly to the residence of the **Lawless One** (R.V.) The Revised Version tells us that "The Lord Jesus shall slay him with the breath of His mouth, and bring him to nought by the manifestation of His coming; in other words, this mysterious monster shall be vanquished by the very same words that our Lord spoke on earth, applied by the Holy Spirit to His redeemed ones; and the **COMING here** spoken of will be manifest to the world in fulfilment of the promise, "He that receiveth you receiveth **ME**, and he that receiveth me receiveth Him that sent me."

THE ANTICHRIST OF TO-DAY IS SELF-WORSHIP.

The child of God can therefore commence operations against the **FOE** without loss of time, or one waiting for another. Just in proportion to his success at home will he become an able minister of the New Testament abroad; and inasmuch as his body is described as a temple of the Holy Ghost, it behoves him to conduct the warfare without injury to the Redeemer's property.

The evidence of **SELF-WORSHIP** is **SELF-WILL**, by which is not to be understood the **standing by a purpose firm** because it is **RIGHT**, but standing by

a purpose firm because it is mine, whether right or wrong, and because however hastily made, I cannot without shame relinquish it.

The secret of success in the believer's warfare is in the constant remembrance of his being the property of another; and it may be helpful in enabling us to distinguish the will of Antichrist from that of our Lord, in our treatment of the body which He has purchased, to observe the conduct of a first-class groom towards his master's horse.

However he may admire and care for it, however attentive to its wants and vigilant in its training, the groom never forgets that the animal is the PROPERTY of him who has purchased it. He will allow it to scamper in the field, or roll upon the grass; he gladly supplies it with such dainties as he can bestow without injury to its health, or power for service, but he does not permit it to trample on the flower beds, to kick or bite its companions, or devour the portion that belongs to them, and thus furnishes us with an illustration of the Apostle Paul's treatment of himself, described in 1 Cor. ix. 27: "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a reprobate."—*(Thus is the word constantly rendered elsewhere, and in connection with what goes before describes the believer who is out of every prize-list at the judgment seat of Christ.)*

* * * *

The Apostle John made the tremendous statement: "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the Evil one" (1 John v. 19, R.V.). Were I addressing this sleeping multitude after rousing their attention, I could like the Apostle Paul on Mars Hill inform them that instead of one altar to the UNKNOWN GOD they had more than the myriads of heathen mythology, and could truthfully add concerning this false divinity, "Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you."

But where can I find words to describe his dominion and his revenues? When I was studying Hindustani, forty-five years ago, I had occasion to read a tale of three travellers who met in an Oriental inn, and were led to declare to the assembled company the greatness of their respective monarchs. The first enlarged upon the extent of his king's dominions and the strength of his armies; the second upon the jewels and the sumptuous magnificence of his master's palace. When the turn of the third came, language failed him to raise a pile of glory higher than had been already set up, so he tersely stated concerning his own king that it took a hundred camels daily to bring SALT to his kitchen! By compelling his audience to imagine the size of the dinner for which such an amount of condiment was necessary, and the number of guests needful to consume it, he bore away the palm as **story teller in chief!**

I can only draw attention to a single item of the daily worship of this UNKNOWN GOD but cannot attempt to estimate either the volume of the incense or its monetary cost. Perhaps the consumption of tobacco by the human race, above and beyond what is for their real benefit, bears the same proportion to all other expenditure that men "consume upon their lusts," as the salt in the foregoing anecdote does to the dinner!

Vast and universal as is the dominion of this potentate, its end is foretold and the divine agencies for its overthrow are already at work.

The colossal fraud which claimed to be the only true Church of Christ, thought to establish her position when asserting her **infallibility**, but she only pronounced her long deferred DOOM. The Institutional Church of this City, in declaring excommunication against both those who taught and those who were known to hold "Conditional Immortality," will likewise bring about her own disruption, but God who is rich in mercy is not executing judgment upon ignorant

millions, or misguided assemblies, who are not responsible for the errors they hold; but will cause the Sun of righteousness now arising with healing in His wings,

QUIETLY TO ROT

the false systems of religion, as they are levelled one after another by the Sword of the Spirit—even the Word of God. ●



APPENDIX.

A

RECORD OF
SOME RECENT EVENTS
IN
CHURCH HISTORY.

1900—1901—1902.

A PASTOR'S CONFESSION AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

THE CONFESSION OF MR. GROVES.

THERE are many teachers in the Church of God whose training has been undisturbed by any recollection of having been deceived. Consequently, in their maturer years they find their convictions strengthened by the reflection that they have always held and taught the same thing.

Mine has been a different experience. I know of none more easily deceived than myself by those whom I loved and esteemed ; but when the discovery of error was made, I neither concealed the fact nor lost an opportunity of exposing the deception. You will find in pages 121 and 159 of my book, published in 1885, entitled, "Bethesda Family Matters," the proof of this assertion.

The three reasons why Christians are told they ought to believe any doctrine apart from the plain teaching of the Word of God are :

First—Because it has been taught for ages.

Second—Because the best of men have believed it.

Third—Because it is held to-day as "the united judgment of brethren."

My own sad experience has led me to reject all of these reasons and cling to the one INTERPRETER

which God has been pleased to bestow upon us in these days of confusion—I allude to the ENGLISHMAN'S HEBREW and GREEK CONCORDANCES of the Old and New Testaments, which have been extant nearly sixty years. Everything that is established by the comparison of all the passages where the word under investigation occurs I accept unhesitatingly. What would not stand this test I reject as being no part of what I am bound to believe.

I have confined myself as a teacher to themes which I could handle with certainty. No one ever heard me give an address on PROPHECY, because my mind was perplexed between rival systems of interpretation; and it was at a Conference between these contending parties that our aged and well-beloved brother, Robert Chapman, reminded us that all who partake in the **first resurrection** have been **martyred** for Christ's sake. This simple fact set both programmes of future events aside as far as I was concerned, and led me in the light of Psalm cx. 1, to discover how God is working towards an end which we all may have a share in bringing about.

On page 125 of my book already referred to may be seen a diagram to illustrate from Scripture the future of the saved and lost, in order to justify action taken by this Church nearly thirty years ago in excluding from fellowship those who held the "**non-eternity of punishment.**"

Though I had thus nailed my colours to the mast, I have ever since felt that there was something in the message of God to man which His ambassadors could not rightly explain, and I never could warn the sinner to flee from the wrath to come in the language of the modern evangelist.

Having rather more than twelve months since received a copy of W. T. Chesterman's pamphlet on the **Immortality of the Soul**, I was arrested by the statement he made that God nowhere asserts this in His Word. ~~The~~ dogma had always been to me as

the belief that the sun revolves round the earth appeared to the world of the middle ages. From my earliest days I could remember the best of men warning sinners to save their "never-dying souls."

Here was just a case for research which my Concordances could definitely settle. It was, however, no light undertaking. Every word bearing on the subject of Life and Death, Time and Eternity, had to be examined with its context, some words occurring but twice, several upwards of three hundred times, and one as many as two thousand. But nothing was of greater importance to me than an answer to this question: Hath God said that the spirit of man, after being called into being, must ever exist—or has He not?

And now I say deliberately and in the fear of God, after months of investigation, that the testimony of our Brother Chesterman is TRUE.

How then did the belief arise? Simply by accepting the promise of Satan in the garden of Eden, "Ye shall not surely die," as if these were the words of God. (*We read in Gen. iii. 22 that God said "Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil," thus admitting that the latter half of Satan's promise had come to pass. What more natural than that man in his simplicity would expect the first part also would be fulfilled?*) From this germ of untruth, which flatters the pride of man, has grown a FEAR OF GOD THAT HATH TORMENT in every religion under the sun, and it has formed part of the creed of the best and holiest of men. It has become confirmed among Christians by the knowledge that all who have died since the fall of man have yet to come up for judgment in resurrection, and the use of the same words of duration in describing the future of the saved and lost in Scripture, caused belief in the IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL to rank among "FOUNDATION TRUTHS."

In plain language the modern orthodox teacher informs us that, while everything created by the

Word of God can be annihilated at His will, the spirits of mankind, after being called into existence, must endure as long as Himself.

If this be **FALSE**, the words **eternal**, **everlasting**, and for **ever and ever**, present no difficulty. Their duration depends upon the nature of that to which they are joined.

Example 1.—Gen. xxi. 33, “The **everlasting** God.” Here its duration is infinite.

Example 2.—Num. xxv. 13, “An **everlasting** priesthood.” It continued 1500 years.

Example 3.—1 Sam. i. 22, “There abide for **ever**.” Samuel lived about 100 years.

Example 4.—Job xli. 4, “Take him for a servant for **ever**.” The lifetime of leviathan.

The above represent the leading Hebrew word (*goh-lahm*) which occurs four hundred times.

One further fact of great importance must here be noticed. When we find this word in the **New Testament** linked with an **ACT**, it does not imply that the act is always being carried on, but that its **effects** are perpetual.

In order rightly to understand **EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT** in Matt. xxv. 46, let us turn to Heb. vi. 2. “**Eternal judgment**” does not mean that Christ will be always judging, but that His sentence will be irrevocable. In Jude 7 we read that “Sodom and Gomorrah are set for an **example**, suffering the vengeance of **eternal fire**.” This is a most important text by way of illustration. An **EXAMPLE** can only mean an event that **has taken place**. The fire and brimstone which fell on the guilty cities may have lasted but a single day, but the **effect** of that overwhelming calamity will be seen as long as the Dead Sea.

If the question be asked: What ground has the believer for expecting to be “**for ever with the Lord**,” if the words **eternal** and **everlasting** are applied in Scripture to limited periods of time? our reply is that

these words do not define the term of his future existence, which rests for its infinity on the Saviour's words, "BECAUSE I LIVE YE SHALL LIVE ALSO."

Now to come to the conclusion of the whole matter.

"Bethesda" holds and teaches that the spirit of man is immortal, and that an eternity of either happiness or misery awaits each of the children of men.

I hold and henceforth shall teach that the spirit of man is NOT immortal, but sustained in life by Him, "**who only hath immortality**" (1 Tim. vi. 16), and who called it into being. Further, that "**he who is able to destroy both soul and body in HELL**" will bring the existence of both these to an end when the punishment of the individual has come up to Divine sentence on his deserts.

Faithfully yours,

EDWARD K. GROVES.

11 Greenway Road, Bristol,
June, 1900.

Circular letter sent with copy of foregoing declaration by Mr. Groves to each member of the church, seeing his Confession was not read to the Church Meeting, nor was he permitted to speak.

Every one who is or has been connected with "Bethesda"—a church linked with Mr. Müller's honoured name for nearly seventy years—is entitled to a copy of the enclosed booklet. For a quarter of a century I have endeavoured to exercise pastoral oversight among its eleven hundred members, and was excluded from its fellowship at a Church Meeting held at Stokes Croft, on Tuesday, the third of July.

The occasion of this will be found on the perusal of its contents. Two members of the oversight meeting called upon me the morning after it had been received, and I was urged to withdraw from fellowship. This I distinctly refused to do. As a member of the Church I was entitled to be present at the approaching meeting, but I promised to keep silence during the whole of the proceedings.

It is of more importance, therefore, that you read the enclosed, in order to see that it was from patient, long continued search, comparing Scripture with Scripture, that I became enlightened on the FACT to which Mr. Chesterman's tract first drew my attention; viz., that **God nowhere in His Word tells man that he has a never-dying soul.**

Nothing could exceed the harmony of condemnation expressed, not only by members of the oversight meeting, but by others who preach the Gospel, and no whisper of dissent from their judgment could be heard among the company of about 120 who were present.

No Scripture was read or quoted, but the action of the Church in former years was constantly referred to, Yet have I sufficient reason for doubting if the speakers themselves believed in the eternity of the suffering of the lost which they so emphatically expressed.

Let me put this to the test. There is a certain sister in one of our gatherings who is beloved and esteemed as a successful worker among the young. Her father, who died some years ago, was a confirmed rejecter of Christ, and, notwithstanding the example and countless prayers of his daughter, manifested his hatred of the truth to the very end. Of course, no word to sustain the stricken heart of the bereaved concerning this lost soul can be found by any of our brethren; but as they were assured of his awful doom, why did they not improve the opportunity for the timely rescue of others on the following Sunday evening?

Why did they not assure their hearers that the righteous Judge on the great white throne would condemn this sinner for his seventy years of wilful rejection of Christ to seventy thousand years of torment along with the devil and his angels? After all, this is only a fraction in point of time of what they profess to believe, but it has the advantage of being more within the capacity of the hearer to understand.

The answer is obvious. Either they did not believe what in all faithfulness they were bound to preach, or they feared that by telling the whole truth they would get no sinners to preach to next Sunday evening.

The reason I have never been an Evangelist is that in every case (and of this I have large experience) where the orthodox doctrine is fully believed the mind becomes deranged, and often seeks to drown in drink its unspeakable horror. As I could never preach ALL that I was bound to believe, I left that duty to others who could, and confined my services to Christians.

As I said before, no dissentient voice was raised to stay proceedings. One brother did suggest this, but was truly told by Mr. Bergin that when Mr. Groves withdrew from any position he had held he never returned to it, and the belief he formerly held, as set forth in his book, had been abandoned by the writer for more than twelve months. The young people looked somewhat surprised that a doctrine of such vital importance had never been expounded to them in plain language, and some learned for the first time that just what "separation from Bethesda" is to the Exclusive, so separation from the denial of eternal torment is to Bethesda—its speciality in the way of discipline. The culprit sat speechless to the end of his trial, and Mr. Bergin, at length warming with a sense of triumph, grasped the sides of the desk, and emphatically declared that not only had this Church

put away in the past all who taught this heretical doctrine, but she was prepared in the future to separate from her fellowship all who were known to hold it.

There was an aged widow sitting directly in front of him who had been a light in a very dark part of Bristol for half a century. It was her lot to be the wife of a drunkard, who for the same period blighted her life, and finally died in his sins. It was a terrible thing for her to hear that she might never even hope that his woes should come to an end, but she bowed her head in silence.

Mr. Wright was not present, but there is no doubt that the result of the meeting gave him heartfelt satisfaction. There is nothing he dreads more in this church than what he calls "**the thin end of the wedge.**" The man who dared to say that there will be a limit to the torments of the lost may be expected presently to say how long or how much men should suffer. Mr. Groves, for instance, might call upon our aged sister and endeavour to comfort her concerning her reprobate husband, with the assurance that something under a **hundred years** in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone would meet his deserts, when we know a **million** would not suffice!

It is sad to think that the assemblies in Bath and Bristol, while unable to shed a ray of divine comfort on such overwhelmed hearts as these, should deliberately shut it out when discovered.

At the mouth of two witnesses who have separately and exhaustively searched the Word (which we profess to take as our sole authority in matters of doctrine) they have heard that the father of the doctrine of the "**Immortality of the Soul**" is none other than the father of lies—and forthwith these witnesses were cast out of their respective assemblies. This, however, is a small matter.

What deeply concerns me is the fate of any of the missionaries whose names fill an entire page of the last number of *Echoes of Service* who shall accept the

glad tidings set forth in the accompanying little book. The Directors of the Scriptural Knowledge Institution and the Editors of the *Echoes of Service* receive annually many thousands of pounds for distribution among these labourers in the Gospel, and as a **matter of principle** they will be sure to starve as far as they can all who do not hold with them in the never-ending torment of the lost soul.

It has been remarked that while the Apostle Peter's one sermon on the day of Pentecost converted three thousand souls, it takes three thousand sermons now-a-days to convert one—and the reason is not far to find. The amount of poison that passes undetected in the supply of Gospel literature (so called) would, if exposed to the search-light of Scripture, amaze the distributors—as the microscope horrified the Brahman in revealing to him the amount of animal life in the water he was accustomed to drink.

But there are brighter days in store for our children than any that our eyes have seen. One after another the grave clothes that bound Christianity hand and foot during the Dark Ages have been removed. It seems to me that the error I am combating is like the last cloth binding the feet together, and when that is gone my heart leaps for joy in anticipating the result! So that the remembrance of the church meeting that I have been describing is an occasion rather for amusement than regret.

Yours in service,

EDWARD K. GROVES.

11 Greenway Road, Bristol,
July, 1900.

Twelve months passed from this date during which time Mr. Groves continued to attend "Bethesda" on Sunday mornings taking a back seat. Seeing that no attempt was made to investigate the truth of his CONFESSION—he cyclostyled 40 copies of a SEQUEL briefly explaining the LIFE TRUTH which has been fully dealt with in the present volume. These he circulated among the more intelligent church members but got no response. "My Confession and Its Sequel" was then published in Malvern, and three months later he made the following APPEAL to all other assemblies of "Brethren."

AN APPEAL
 TO ALL THE
 ASSEMBLIES OF 'BRETHREN.'
 OUTSIDE OF BRISTOL BOTH AT
 HOME AND ABROAD.

BY EDWARD KENNAWAY GROVES.

"Is it not so, that any error may have some colour from Scripture, but none will abide the test of ALL SCRIPTURE."—
 ROBERT CHAPMAN.

(I quote the above sentence not by way of compromising its venerable Author, but because it exactly defines my position.)

THIS singular title may excite your surprise. Its explanation will be fully apparent to the readers of the pamphlet

MY CONFESSION AND ITS SEQUEL.

The Directors of the Scriptural Knowledge Institution have responded to the author's challenge in the way of the man who came to the marriage feast without the wedding garment. Here, however, the similarity ends, for instead of being "Hell-deserving sinners" fit only to be bound hand and foot and cast into outer darkness—they are **well-deserving Saints**, whose praise is in all the churches.

Their inability to shew the authority of Scripture for stating that man is born with a **never-dying** soul and consequently that if that soul be "lost" it must endure never-ending torment—does not lie in their lack of intelligence or of the means for verifying

their position ready to hand. They are precluded from giving the controversy a moment's consideration by **circumstances over which they have no control.**

Inasmuch as the doctrine above stated is held by nearly all assemblies that have "broken bread," as we term it, during the last seventy years, I am earnestly desirous of meeting a teacher willing to undertake its defence before all men and who stands unfettered by any obligation to hold his peace.

It is not known to all, that the Directors of the Scriptural Knowledge Institution carry on the Orphan Work on Ashley Down, founded by the late Mr. George Müller, and also the extensive Missionary operations and distribution of Gospel literature which he established.

In addition to these responsibilities these two worthy men represent all authority in a Church of nearly twelve hundred members, who assemble in the four localities mentioned in my Sequel.

You will be interested in knowing what these circumstances are which seal the lips of the overseers of the Church, and I will explain them in due course.

ORTHODOXY which is generally understood to mean the religion of the many, was a relentless power between three and four hundred years ago. Had I lived in those days and published "**My Confession,**" it would no doubt have cost me my head, and I might possibly have been included among the martyrs of Rev. xx. who are to have an extra thousand years of reigning with Christ. Under Puritan rule I should have suffered fine and imprisonment for such "pestilential doctrine," but inasmuch as the diffusion of the Word of God during the nineteenth century has, in His tender mercy to this our land, deprived **orthodoxy** even of these weapons of conversion, she is reduced to giving expression to her displeasure by an Irish discipline commonly known as **Boycotting.** When **Orthodoxy** requires the hand to **open,** the response may be partial and

slow—but when she orders it to **close**, the result in the way of prompt obedience can only be compared to the effect on an Electrically lighted building when the current is switched off.

From the day that I was cast out of the church to this hour, no consideration of past service or present need has drawn a sixpence on my behalf from any member's pocket. I **was** on one occasion invited to supper, and trust that the hospitality has left no sting on the conscience of my host.

It must be borne in mind that those who carry on the great work on Ashley Down hold, as it were, hundreds of lives in their hands, and would not of course act in any way that might affect their well-being. If, for example, they were to become persuaded of the truth of **Conditional Immortality** scores who send contributions to the Orphan Work—"instead of insuring their property"—would cease to regard it as a safe investment. Hundreds would feel that having in their estimation "departed from the faith" the Directors have no moral claim for their continued support; while hungry, charitable Institutions would by their Agents button-hole known contributors to the work in order to divert to their several treasuries money that would otherwise flow towards an Institution (in such a case), so evidently on the **Down Grade**. The natural result of these adverse influences would be **starving orphans**, and countless critics would remark that it was only a just retribution for turning aside from the fundamental truth held by the departed Founder.

How can the Spiritual Guides of the Church known as "Bethesda" allow a word to be spoken against a doctrine whose disturbance would ruin the Institution?

Those who take oversight of the Assembly at BATH are in a similar position. Thirty years ago my brother, the late Mr. Henry Groves of Kendal, together with Dr. Maclean commenced an effort on behalf of labourers in other lands, and were glad

to receive two hundred pounds during the first year of their little "**Missionary Echo.**" God's blessing has rested upon this work. Three Editors have been found necessary to carry on the publication of "**Echoes of Service,**" and at the same time receive and disburse donations which are fast approaching a yearly total of **twenty thousand pounds.** If it were known to "**Brethren**" all over the United Kingdom that one or all of them entertained a doubt as to the eternity of suffering in store for the lost—**down** would go the income, and as honourable men they are precluded from injuring the missionary enterprise of which they are the trustees by even allowing themselves to re-examine the doctrine.

The **orthodoxy** which controls them is moreover used by them to control others in their respective spheres of influence.

When first the **TRUTH** dawned upon my soul that the **highest** aspiration of the Buddhist priest in a life of austerity was to earn **Extinction of being** at some distant date, and that according to the revealed will of God this destiny awaits the **worst** of human sinners—I think, like Moses in Exodus xxxiv. 8, I made haste and bowed my head to the earth and **worshipped!** But woe to the "**Bethesda,**" shoemaker whose joy at such a finding expressed itself in words. Reported to **Ashley Down** he would make no more shoes for the Orphans; and woe to the missionary in India, China or elsewhere who let out in correspondence that he had accepted the same glad tidings. **BATH** would no longer echo his service, and if a letter came from the worthy trio,—it would contain no welcome cheque.

In the absence of spiritual power to-day it is only to be expected that the rule in all assemblies of "**Brethren**" should be yielded to those who have a superior social standing. The "**Brother**" who could draw a cheque for a thousand pounds may be both positive in doctrine and peremptory in matters of

discipline. If one of these owns or rents the Hall of Meeting and can turn the key on its frequenters when his views are called in question,—he secures, as a matter of course, the respectful attention of his audience as he discourses on the Judgment to come.

Filled with zeal for the “honour of the Lord,” he maintains that the infinite value of the Person of Christ and the blood of His Atonement makes it a divine necessity that those who neglect this great salvation should never be able hereafter to expiate their offence. Consequently when our Lord—who “for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross despising the shame”—shall be surrounded by the redeemed in glory, He will find that they have cost Him not only the humiliation, agony and death which He endured on earth,—but the everlasting consciousness that for each one of the ransomed there exist a thousand of the lost forever blaspheming His Holy Name!

At this point, I distinctly state that the Church in whose name I was excluded from fellowship is altogether free from blame in the matter. For more than sixty years these believers in Bristol have enjoyed the blessing of the example of perhaps the mightiest Christian of the nineteenth century, a man whose power with God was the reward of his obedience to all His known will. No individual would have ventured to question Mr. Müller’s judgment on a matter of doctrine, any more than I should venture to steer a vessel from our city out into the Severn Channel. He had not only pronounced authoritatively on this subject, but had excluded from communion nearest relatives who held a contrary opinion.

There was not a man or woman present at the church meeting who had thoroughly examined Scripture, as I had done, so as to be able to say whether the authority for the doctrine of Human Immortality proceeded from God or from Satan.

How could any one run the risk of being **boycotted** for opposing the Directors in following the precedent of former years.

On the other hand, as the saints of old "took joyfully the spoiling of their goods," I could not but esteem the reproach of excommunication as **RICHES**, because the clearing of my Master's character from all suspicion of **unrighteousness** was a thousand times better to me than the good-will of my brethren.

And now the five esteemed servants of Christ, to whom reference has been made, are held by the doctrine of Eternal Torment for the unsaved as in the grip of an **Octopus**. Happily the pressure does not inconvenience them, because the love of God shed abroad in their hearts and constantly shining forth from their faces, is of so intoxicating a quality that they can think of the destiny of the lost with absolute indifference.

And now let me point out how it is that, in order "to separate the precious from the vile" in what is presented to us as the **TRUTH**, we need to do more than simply read and search the Word of God in the usual way.

The Infinite mind of God can take in all the wants of His creatures at one and the same time. On the other hand the mightiest intellect of man cannot even attend to two subjects brought before him at the same moment. When **distraction** occurs **confusion** is sure to follow, and so it comes to pass that when we read up a subject in Scripture our attention is constantly being diverted to kindred topics, which however important in themselves hinder us in obtaining a **certain** result.

When by means of a Concordance which fixes our attention on one word of the original at a time, we can inform ourselves of the whole counsel of God concerning it,—we are then in a position to detect error in any given creed, as certainly as a qualified chemist by means of his re-agents, as he calls them,

is able to inform us whether food has been poisoned by copper or lead.

It can surprise none of us, that having suffered such grievous wrong as he did at the hands of Mr. Darby, Mr. Müller would admit none of the hymns into our collection that were written by J. N. D. And, for the same cause, he left Mr. Wigram's Concordances severely alone. He served his generation by the will of God without finding out for himself, or being able to teach others, that God had provided us in this self-conceited age of Higher Criticism with especial facilities for "**Proving all things**" in order to "**hold fast that which is good.**" There is not a doctrine of our most holy faith that is not absolutely confirmed by the Scriptures to which these Concordances direct our attention. Nor need there be any difficulty in carrying out every detail of our obedience, if we take the necessary pains to inform ourselves of all our Master's will.

It is a great satisfaction to be able to read the Word of God in the language in which it was written—and I have read the Greek Testament since I was ten years old—but I would **resign all knowledge of it**, sooner than part with my Concordance which only requires me to learn its Alphabet; and I will give you my reason by a very practical illustration.

I know nothing of Hebrew. My brother of Kendal, who was considerably my senior, and well acquainted with the language of the Old Testament, paid us a visit in Bristol some twenty-two years ago.

There was a good deal of stir about that time as to the authority of Moses, and I convened a large company to a Bible-reading in order that he might expound the first two chapters of Genesis. He stated that the **Breath of God (Neshamah)** breathed into Adam's nostrils gave him continuity of existence—and this remark made a deep impression upon me.

When, lately, I resolved to examine Scripture exhaustively on the subject of **human immortality**,

I began with the word "Neshamah." It occurs twenty-five times, and among these I discovered in Job xxxvii: 10, "By the breath of God frost is given." "Thank God," I exclaimed, "that it is not always freezing!"

I never knew a teacher who feared less the face of man in uttering his convictions than my eldest brother, —but having received the Immortality of the soul as a **foundation truth**, he unconsciously exalted an **inference** into the authority of a **statement**.

It was only when I availed myself of my Hebrew Concordance that I came in touch with

THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD

as contained in the Scriptures of the Old Testament.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

When God was training the Redeemer of men for His work, what knowledge or interest had man in Him who for thirty years had lived on earth? **None whatever.** We see that it is possible for God to prepare for the most momentous results without attracting the attention of either saint or sinner.

We have **already entered** upon a new Epoch of this world's history, and the majority of Christians are profoundly ignorant that it is so. God has during the past century exposed the most gigantic and successful fraud that Satan ever imposed upon mankind,—the doctrine that has done more than all other causes put together to hinder the spread of the Gospel. Those to whom we owe its discovery have now finished their course, and sleep in Jesus. To us belongs the privilege of making the fact widely known. We have practically a **NEW TESTIMONY** to uphold, and require a **NEW STANDARD** of right and wrong to enable us to do it.

Next in importance to the knowledge of Christ is the knowledge of Satan, and we learn from the testimony of **all Scripture** that the Father of lies does not gain

his case by absolute falsehood when dealing with the children of God, but by

GUILE.

Guile is a mixture of truth and falsehood, which is presented to the mind of man as **Pure Truth**. Man judges it to be a lesser evil than falsehood, because of the truth it contains. God hates it twice as much, and for perfectly intelligible reasons.

If I put a **pound** of arsenic into a bottle labelled **SODA**, it would be nothing less than a crime, but if I sprinkle an **ounce** of the poison on the contents of the kneading trough, it would be a far more heinous crime. The one might be detected, the other would be sure to kill.

This principle was established by Divine authority at the very commencement of the Gospel dispensation. The cause of **Ananias and Sapphira** would be triumphantly carried through any English Court of law to-day. I can hear the counsel pleading on their behalf that the money laid at the Apostles' feet was realized by the sale of their property, and therefore the accused should be dismissed without a stain resting upon their character.

I dare say Peter was as much astonished as the bystanders when God's verdict on the transaction became apparent,—though the Apostle was prepared for a similar judgment when Sapphira came in with a similar tale.

The guilt of **guile** in keeping back part of the truth, in order to mislead the listener, is thought nothing of now-a-days; in fact it is highly esteemed in most business circles. Nevertheless, it is an abomination in the sight of God.

Here is the point at which the Reformation of the Church of Christ in the twentieth century must commence. Our attention is drawn to the differing order of worship and Church government among Christians as evidences of Apostacy; whereas the

differences in temperament and intelligence that exist among men can quite account for it. As we know that the God of all **Grace** is at the same time the God of all **Nature**, we have abundant evidence of His delight in **variety**. The **essential unity**, however, of all the Lord's children will be manifest to the world when we esteem **guile** in conversation, **guile** in correspondence, and **guile** in advertisement with the same indignation that is now bestowed on the forged cheque.

There is not an evil in walk or doctrine among any of the denominations reckoned as Churches of Christ that cannot and will not be purged out by themselves when the **NEW STANDARD** of morality prevails, or, in other words, when they agree with God as to the guilt of **GUILE**.

When powerful intellects, versed in mythology and fully convinced of their own immortality, venture to think out the orthodox doctrine of judgment to come—their minds become **deranged**.

John Henry Newman fled for refuge to lay hold of the Virgin and Saints, and was rewarded with a Cardinal's hat! And his brother **Francis William**, the Professor, came to the conclusion that the Word made flesh could not be God after all, and constructed a righteousness of his own—**Unitarian** in creed like the Moslem he went to Baghdad to convert, and **Vegetarian** in practice, so that Brahmin and Buddhist alike do him honour.

There is no reason to be dismayed in our conflict with the powers of darkness because Satan appears to be, as far as this world is concerned, both omniscient and omnipresent; nor to succumb because of his possessing an intelligence far greater than our own and an experience in luring man to destruction extending over a period of six thousand years. We have the promise, "**Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you.**" We have only to set our faces against **GUILE**, in any shape or form, and all the power of our Lord Jesus Christ shall be on our side, and the

adversary shall turn "right about face." We have at last a pure gospel to preach and a Saviour to lift up who bears inspection from every point of view. There never was a happier epoch in the world's history than that upon which we have entered, and we owe it, under God, largely to the lives and testimony of those who have departed to be with Christ.

If we bring up our children according to the new standard of righteousness, which has been ignored since the days of Pentecost, and they profit by our failures as we have profited from the history of the failures of those who have gone before us, what a fair world it will be that our Lord looks down upon at the close of the present century, compared with what His eye rests on now. Will He not have a foretaste of that day, however distant, yet sure to come, when "He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied"?

*11, Greenway Road,
Redland, Bristol,
December, 1901.*

1901.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE IN INDIA.

A LETTER TO A MISSIONARY IN INDIA.

BY ELDER E. K. GROVES.

11 Greenway Road, Bristol,

December 20, 1901.

MY BELOVED brother Macrae, I have heard some account of a quarterly meeting held at your house in Amalapoor which was largely attended by European missionaries—and what the outcome of that meeting was. I am very glad that it is with yourself I have to deal in respect of it, because since I met you at Leominster in 1876, when you earnestly desired prayer, feeling “no sufficiency,” as you expressed it, for the work, until my late experience of you as an interpreter when I came among you, I can truly say I never met a man with so tender a conscience.

Our brother, Ebenezer Lynn, was in England during my visit to India. Supposing (just for the sake of illustration) you heard him say that I never visited the Godavery during my tour, would you not feel bound to correct him? If he insisted upon his statement, would you not feel grieved and indeed *insulted*? It is a question of FACT, to which his own sisters bore witness. Now I, as one of the Elder

Brethren, against whom no charge of deceit has ever been brought, informed the believers with whom I am in visible fellowship, that having been astonished to hear that it was a *fact* that God nowhere in His Word tells man that he has a never-dying soul—have thoroughly examined Scripture and found it to be TRUE. They cannot gainsay my evidence but treat me all the same as if I were a LIAR. What have I done to deserve the *insult* of the imputation? I have the instruments and the leisure for making the requisite search, and the habit for forty years of thus putting human utterances to the test. I submit, then, that I have been condemned by those who were unqualified to judge the matter, as in the presence of the Lord.

If, like our brother Honywill, you moved from Asia to Europe, and in some Italian town were asked by the priest why you did not pray to the Virgin, you would have no hesitation in replying that you had no authority for doing so from the Word of God. If you then asked him his reason for addressing the Virgin in prayer, he could not but reply that his Church had always instructed him to do so.

Apply the conversation to ourselves. You ask me why I do not believe that man has a never-dying soul. I reply because the Word of God, which claims Immortality as only belonging to Him, never in any place asserts the same of the sons of men. If I then inquired of you why you held such a doctrine, you could only answer, Because the Church has always so instructed me.

No person who has any acquaintance with the original, has dared to call in question the *definitions* contained in my "Confession." They roused, however, the wrath of an evangelist in North London, who wrote telling me I was ignorant of the gospel, and that this booklet was the result of my being FED ON MUD during my connexion with Bethesda!!

(Considering that the Church had condemned the Confession with a promptness and unanimity worthy of Mr. Darby himself in seeking to separate from evil, *this was hard lines!*)

I am not going now into the theological question, which is sufficiently plain in the pamphlets that go to you by this mail. I must reveal to you the RESULTS of orthodox teaching, as it has come under my notice, and pray that your eyes may be thereby opened.

Some months after the circulation of my Confession among the members of this church, the oversight meeting was much exercised about bringing forward some sound teacher who could supply an antidote to its pernicious doctrine. Accordingly they engaged the services of an evangelist and, in deference to Clifton intellect, their choice fell upon a B.A., and this fact was displayed on a banner in front of Alma Road Chapel.

I attended his first Sunday evening service. After its opening exercises, he invited all who desired salvation to come in front and be prayed for, because he added, some of you may be in HELL before the sermon begins. This startling announcement failed in its desired effect. Raising his voice as if the congregation were seated on the other side of a river, he brought further pressure to bear on the unpardoned sinners' conscience during his discourse. He stated, that on a voyage to Australia, he had on one occasion lowered a thimble into the sea by a thread and brought it up full of water. Comparing the quantity raised with that which remained in the ocean, he said it represented the difference between time and eternity, to which we are all hastening.

In God's tender mercy this kind of talk does not penetrate the healthy mind, but when such a man is listened to by one who regards him as the messenger of God, many a poor sinner in striving to realize his doom simply goes MAD.

You do not know what this means as I do, but I will recall an incident that occurred to me in 1880, which will make it clear. Walking in the airing court of Bethlehem Hospital, I was accosted by a very dangerous lunatic who seemed struck by my cheerfulness. "What are you?" said he. "A pastor," I simply replied. "Do you expect to go to heaven?" he rejoined. I stated that I had that happy prospect. "Will you ask God," said he, "when you get there, whether after I have been burning in HELL as many years as I have lived on earth, He will not finish and burn me up?"

I was fairly taken aback by this strange request, to which I could not accede because the man possessed a "*never-dying soul*"!

There is no difference of opinion among Christian teachers as to our duty in speaking the truth one to another, but there are many, and Mr. James Wright is among the number, who hold that this duty is relaxed in the case of one who is or has been a *certified lunatic*. Putting it tersely: If anyone has by medical authority been pronounced of "unsound mind," you may make a fool of him by promising that which you cannot perform. But I have not so learned Christ.

After the lapse of more than 20 years, I cannot recall the sunken, bloodshot eye, the parched lips, the restless hands of this madman who was under Rabshakeh's curse, and died shortly afterwards in raving despair, without suffering a thrill of agony too deep for words or tears! Thousands of our fellow creatures thus drop out of sight, the victims of a *poisoned gospel* such as I have described, and Christians marvel to-day that the world takes so long getting converted. One of my sorest puzzles used to be that so many Unitarians are, in point of integrity and general benevolence, far in advance of many of our brethren, but it perplexes me no longer, for I can see that they prefer the Jehovah of Mount Sinai with all

His terribly summary judgments, to the Emmanuel of the New Testament whose grace and kindness in TIME are to be succeeded (if they rightly understand His messengers) by an exercise of cruelty before which the career of a Torquemada is but a grain of sand to an Egyptian pyramid!

In the days when I dwelt at Coonoor, there was an old lady who lived with a middle-aged daughter in a cottage not far from my house. The younger woman's hair was nearly snow-white, and her condition that of an *imbecile*. She had been as a little girl full of intelligence and self-will. Her parents once left her at home in charge of an Ayah, who found herself unable to cope with the young lady, and hit upon the expedient of overawing her by appearing at the side of her cot at night in a hideous mask with eyes and mouth of fire! She was perfectly successful, but when the child was roused in the morning it was found that her mind was a BLANK; and so it remained to the day of her death. The Ayah had probably no thought of such a result, but suppose she gloried in it and attempted to deal thus with another child, ought not the wretch to be strangled? And I say, in due fear of God, to any evangelist who hears my testimony and continues to exercise his gift in the style of the Alma Road missionary—*you deserve a like fate!*

When a company of scientists meet to discuss a new discovery, it does not offend one of their number to find that his *theories* have been exploded by another's actual experiments, because they are all seekers after TRUTH.

But it is not so, as you know, among religious teachers. To admit that what they had strenuously insisted on was after all a fallacy, is felt to be like a bank suspending payment. The Leominster Conferences, under the guidance of such men as Henry Heath, Henry Groves, and Henry Dyer, began proceedings by a day of fasting and humiliation. The company that assembled for supper after a morning and afternoon when one brother vied with

another in long-windedness, felt complacent because their knees ached so badly, but no one had any idea of giving up anything they had taught for all they might hear.

God, however, is really going to humble us this time. "The History of the Plymouth Brethren," just written by W. Blair Neatby, will, in its unsparing truth, expose us to just ridicule. There is nothing for it but to *amputate* the opposite ends of our testimony. The flight into the air for ourselves and eternal torment for most of those who are left behind. In place of this it will be our privilege to lead the van in removing the mountains of obloquy that Satan has heaped upon our Master, in His character of *The Righteous Judge*, and thus become a power for good beyond our most sanguine expectations.

Nothing is more cruel than PANIC, whether among men or cattle. You have all been startled to hear what you have hitherto considered a Foundation truth, held up as Satan's masterpiece of falsehood; and unable to gainsay our sister McBride's joy in the Lord have practically threatened her with boycott from yourself and the same from Bath if she does not hereafter hold her peace. Panic, however veiled under decorous proceedings, is nevertheless both cowardly and cruel, and wholly unworthy of such devoted servants of Christ as the Godavery Workers are. She has not complained of your proceedings, but the Master has noted them all, and will deal with you accordingly.

I am cyclostyling this letter, both to safeguard myself against being misrepresented in time to come, and that I may hereafter use it for the spread of the TRUTH.

Meanwhile, I would ask you to pass on the duplicate copy to Brethren Heelis, Beer, Bowden, Rawson, and as many others of the Godavery Workers as would wish to read it.

Yours in unchanging affection,

EDWARD K. GROVES.

1902.

 THE CLIMAX OF UNRIGHTEOUSNESS.

 VERDICT

ON

 AN ARITHMETICAL LUNACY.

ONE of the new efforts of "BETHESDA" in the way of evangelization may be seen in Chelsea Road Gospel Hall, Easton, Bristol. A tract, bearing this address as its authority, has fallen into my hands, containing on the last page the following sentence:—

"There are few who would deny that they commit one sin per day, and one sin per day means 2555 in seven years—6205 in 17 years—25,550 in 70 years.

"Oh, how they accumulate—Yet

"One sin deserves a hell,
A death that never dies."

That He who gives life has a perfect right to take it away when He pleases is **reasonable**. That the human soul on leaving the body "sleeps" till the day of resurrection is **Scriptural**. That man should then be judged for deeds done in the body formerly

occupied is according to **righteousness**—but that a single sin out of 25,000 committed during the ordinary term of life **DESERVES** eternal torment is an overwhelmingly awful statement, for which I have a right to demand the authority of the Word of God. Mercifully not one in a thousand can contemplate such a destiny, and those who accept it as gospel lose their reason and die in despair.

If **SATAN** be immortal and omnipotent this is exactly how he would treat the human race, and the only explanation I can give for such a doctrine being taught by an evangelist is, that he who “sowed tares while men slept” must have substituted one of his own proclamations for the gospel of which Paul said he was not ashamed. Can we wonder that not five per cent. of the working classes enter a place of worship, when the only alternative of the misery of eternal torment is the misery of eternal life in the service of such a God?

One who believes that—

“The wages of sin is **DEATH**, but that the gift of God is eternal life through **Jesus Christ our Lord.**”

July, 1902.

*The above statement was sent by the writer to every household in the “**BETHESDA**” fellowship. Only one reply was received by him—The leaflet returned with the words “**What madness for a Christian to write in this way,**”—written across it. I accept it as the **VERDICT** of “**Brethren.**”*

The method of this madness will presently be explained.

NO sadder or more unexpected news was ever wired from abroad than the death of thirteen boys in the China Inland Mission Boys' School, Chefoo, after partaking of an excellent Sunday dinner.

If my son-in-law, the late Dr. Douthwaite, had been in medical attendance, it might have turned his hair grey in a single night.

In the dark ages the cook would have had a short shrift and a long rope, for the wrath of bereaved parents could never have been appeased without taking vengeance on the maker of that chicken pie.

In these days no such summary proceeding need be feared. Indeed, the author of the mischief is deeply to be pitied, for his deed will never be forgotten. Medical experts tell us that **Ptomaine** is a poison that results from putrefaction, but we remain greatly mystified, for having sat at a table where the game was "*high*," we have found that our noses warned our mouths not to partake of the same. Yet those who appreciated the meat in this condition were none the worse for eating it! We are so accustomed in these days to find our lifelong conclusions upset by new discoveries, that we have learned not to deny a statement because we fail to understand it, and earnestly hope that men of science who have discovered this poison may provide us with a way of escape from its subtle and deadly power, so as to prevent the recurrence of a similar catastrophe.

This painful event will illustrate my reason for using the word **Lunacy** rather than **Heresy**. It implies that those who avow this belief are not to be regarded as **responsible beings** for so doing; nevertheless the results to themselves and those whom they teach are none the less disastrous. No one watches the effect of this poisonous doctrine on the minds of those who seriously accept it, and so it continues to be published without the least compunction.

While this Church has for more than fifty years been fed to repletion with the truth that God hears and answers prayer, she has been starved in doctrine that enforced practical righteousness.

The Personality of our Lord Jesus Christ has indeed been prominently preached, but the personality of **SATAN** has been almost forgotten, and his "*wiles*" have never been studied. Consequently the most earnest workers in the assembly are being constantly deceived, and unconsciously lead their disciples astray.

To be more explicit, let me say that while the open Bible neutralizes Romish teaching and visible idolatry, Satan is not baffled thereby, for he knows that by mixing the various ingredients of truth out of their **true proportion**, he can frame error as deadly as any that proceeds from infidel literature.

Nothing noxious was put into the chicken pie at Chefoo, but wholesome ingredients underwent some mysterious chemical change that caused what was intended to nourish, really to destroy.

It pleased God to allow professing Christendom to drift into thick darkness of error just as it pleased Him to leave Israel in the promised land with His holy law, and allow for a considerable period every man to do what was right in his own eyes. The light of truth which we enjoy to-day was not the result of the labour of any one man or company of men, but of a host of God's witnesses, who with all their imperfections grasped and witnessed for some portion or other of God's long-forgotten Word. It was thus that seventy years ago some believers rescued from oblivion three important principles :

- 1st—No priest or minister required to administer the Lord's Supper.
- 2nd—No consecration by man can make any building sacred.
- 3rd—No authority concerning the things of God valid if not in His Word.

When their united testimony on these points was nearly wrecked by the personal ambition of J. N. Darby, it pleased God to select two of those whom this Diotrephes "cast out of the Church" to be His witnesses for the special truths which believers in their distracted condition stood most in need of. To each of these men He granted a long life wherein they held fast the confession of their faith without wavering, and both have now finished their course and sleep in Jesus. **George Müller's speciality was Faith in the Living God; Robert Chapman's was Love to all Saints.** Different as these men of God were in character and manner of life, they resembled one another in this, that while ever increasing in understanding of their own lines of truth, we have no evidence that they learned **anything new** during the last fifty years of their Christian course. This in no way to their reproach. A man can receive (literally take unto himself) nothing except it be given him from heaven (John iii. 27). They would have been unfitted for their special service if they had added to the truths "Brethren" everywhere held **in theory** and came short of **in practice**. None would have supported the orphans or visited the home of love in Barnstaple if either G. M. or R. C. C. held any **questionable doctrine**.

But during all this time God was educating another of His servants to the recovery of a further portion of forgotten truth. **Edward White** was in point of learning and holiness of life not one whit behind any of the "Brethren," and he discovered that whereas the existence of the sinner's soul after death was evident from our Lord's speaking of Sodom and Gomorrah having yet to come up for judgment, the conclusion of theologians that their souls were consequently **immortal** was just a case of SATAN poisoning sound doctrine by prolonging the existence of the creature to that of his Creator. The **PROPORTION** being altered converted **TRUTH** into **FALSEHOOD**.

Humanity felt so flattered by the attribute of Divinity that it perceived no absurdity in believing that the Power that brought myriads of worlds into existence with a word was unable to extinguish the souls of the atoms inhabiting this spot in the universe when the purpose of their creation had been fulfilled.

The first discourse preached by the Apostle Paul to the Athenian philosophers stated concerning God that in Him we live and move and have our being, so that instead of regarding LIFE as the inherent property of man, the earliest evangelist among the Gentiles declared it to be absolutely dependent on the will and power of God.

Now comes the question, Can we be certain of the meaning of the words in Scripture? To this I can give without hesitation the answer YES. Whether I am believed or not, I declare that there exists at this moment the means for ascertaining the TRUTH concerning every point of doctrine which it concerns us to know as that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. For forty years I have been acquainted with it, and while I have seen one theological fabric after another in which I was instructed in early youth collapse and disappear, no CONCLUSION to which I arrived by this process of enquiry has ever had to be given up, and some of these have stood the storms of thirty years.

Mr. White's statement that God nowhere declares man to be born with a never-dying soul, I first learned from Mr. Chesterman's pamphlet. For months I made diligent search throughout all the words that bear upon the subject of life and death, time and eternity in the original tongues, and I am now as satisfied of its truth as I am of the existence of God Himself.

I have never felt it my duty to point out what is **wrong** unless I could declare a course which was **right**. If like Mr. Müller you read twenty chapters of the Bible a day, you will not thereby obtain his

FAITH, or if like Mr. Chapman you consider a concordance is of no more value to a believer than a spelling book to one who can read, you will not resemble him in LOVE. These men of God took first rank as teachers in the school of God during the past century, but they knew no more how to instruct their disciples to **become teachers** than to talk in Hindustani. The crying need of the children of God in this twentieth century is to know how to study His Word so as to be as certain of His meaning as the arithmetician who proves his sum by different methods of working knows that each is right in every detail.

The reign of the ecclesiastical bully has nearly come to an end, but the rank and file of the soldiers of Christ will always need officers whose intelligent and laborious study of the Word will fit them to become teachers of the truth of God.

* * * *

In the Dark Ages the clergy greatly resented the death by his own hand of one who could no longer endure his misery. They felt defrauded of their fees which were generally earned by a dying bed, and not only declared the soul LOST, but driving a stake through the corpse, they had it buried where roads crossed, without any funeral ceremony. Both theological and public sentiment have greatly softened towards the suicide in modern times, yet it is held that self-murder is only one degree less sinful than the murder of another, and every precaution is taken against its occurrence.

The fiendish barbarity of punishment inflicted upon men, and the universal torture endured by women in China, made them regard a painless exit from this world of sorrow the greatest earthly boon. The readiness of England to supply the nation with the drug has been described by the venerable Mr. Broomhall as the greatest crime of the nineteenth century. Perhaps it will not be so judged at the last day !

However, when any man or woman has taken to heart the doom of the damned so that eating, drinking and sleeping are no longer possible, it frequently happens that an attempt is made at suicide. The alarmed relations thereupon consign the sufferer to an Asylum, where the doctors at once resort to "Compulsory Alimentation." The patient is strapped into a chair, the mouth forced open, and liquid food pumped into the unwilling stomach. Protest is vain, physical suffering is reckoned a delusion, and the attendants practically say, "We care not how much or how long you suffer, but die you shall not if we can help it." SATAN has the satisfaction of allowing Protestants who believe in no purgatory hereafter sometimes to experience it in the life that now is!

Suppose the tract from which I have quoted a sentence came into the patient's hands, and his attention is withdrawn from his miserable self to contemplate the remarkable air-ship whose ascent forms the attraction on its first page, he discovers that the unfortunate aeronaut who constructed it fell to the earth a distance of a thousand feet in consequence of its explosion, leaving a wife and seven children to mourn his loss. Pages two and three contain certain gruesome moral lessons, but the sting of the scorpion is on the last page. If he could break silence to ask me if a righteous judge was not bound to give a criminal the sentence he deserved, should I not have to say, Yes? If one sin **deserves** eternal torment, how much suffering may I expect for 25,000? What answer could the writer give? Or is he the madman who casteth firebrands, arrows, and death, and saith, Am I not in sport? The Apostle Paul himself could not succeed in reconciling this sinner unto God when he has reached this stage, and he dies with every fibre of his being crying out against the Creator who brought him into the world subject to such

conditions. Our Lord said that we were to test those who professed to be His messengers by their "*fruits*," and I could obtain the testimony of a thousand men and women that when God is presented to the drunkard, the gambler, and the harlot in these terms, each of them presently becomes transformed into a **fiend**.

Luther and Calvin, Whitfield and Wesley may have taught similar doctrine, having a very limited vista of Eternity. Spurgeon and Moody, George Müller and Robert Chapman would never have made such statements themselves, but **allowed them to pass unchallenged**, because as believers in human immortality their orthodoxy would have been instantly called in question, and they would have been gravely told that they had no adequate idea of the exceeding sinfulness of sin.

We know that in warfare besiegers often make a great demonstration of attack on one side of a city to divert attention from their mining operations in another direction. English Christians are shocked by the blasphemies of a Bradlaugh, and are little aware that ten times as many men and women die at enmity with God in consequence of reading the literature published by Messrs. Pickering & Inglis, of Glasgow, who are good enough to offer 1000 copies of this pernicious tract with "*own title*" post free for 8s.

We are told that "history repeats itself," and every day we find that this is true in new combinations. When we consider what Rehoboam's upbringing must have been, we are not surprised that he favoured a policy of oppression, and when we reflect that the highest aspiration of the Director of the Scriptural Knowledge Institution has ever been that he might walk in all the commandments and ordinances of his sainted predecessor—blameless—we cannot wonder that in carrying out the discipline already established the Church should practically be

told that his little finger should be thicker than his father's loins. His official representative declared in reply to my Confession which was clear, concise, courteous, and absolutely scriptural, that the Church had not only put away in the past those who taught the doctrine therein contained, but would in the future exclude all who were **known to hold it**. Two years later we find the same Church unconsciously circulating the foulest calumny against the Judge of all the earth that the world has heard since the days of Tetzal. Our comfort concerning all these deluded ones is the all-prevailing plea, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," but the Institutional Church that stood so high in reputation on account of its former pastor, has hereby pronounced its own death warrant. In place thereof we may hope to see four assemblies who will be able to serve the Lord with gladness—free from the thralldom of a pope of irreproachable personal character at home, and the "united judgment" of ignorant brethren abroad.

In conclusion I must make a final effort to bring home to my reader's conscience the grief which they bring upon the Lord who connive at the misrepresentation of His character.

Why did He weep over Jerusalem? Because the city refused to believe in His goodwill, spite of all the pains He had taken to reveal His love towards them.

Why did He weep at the grave of Lazarus? Was it out of sympathy for the sorrow He saw around Him, as we put on mourning for a deceased relative? Perish the thought! His face would rather have been radiant with the glad surprise He was about to bestow. Look at the word "*groaning*" under the microscope, and you will see that what cut Him to the heart was to find that Mary, who sat at His feet and heard His word, who had a truer faith in the object for which He had become a man than any of the twelve Apostles,—yes, that even Mary used precisely the same words as her less enlightened

sister Martha, implying that had His love not waxen cold toward them He would have hastened His coming.

What, then, must He think of those who claim to be His ambassadors, ignoring the entire testimony of Scripture as to the proportion between offence and punishment that illustrates the divine ideal of **RIGHTEOUSNESS**? Who represent the Judge on the great White Throne, to whom all power is given in heaven and earth, using His omnipotence to undo the lessons He has taught the children of men from the days of Creation, by acting in a manner that would send a thrill of horror through the least instructed believer's heart of to-day!

There are no two men whom I hold in such loving regard as Grattan Guinness and Hudson Taylor. They are constantly entreating the Lord of the harvest that He would send labourers forth into the harvest field. It is not in multiplying Keswick Conventions that the answer to their petitions will be obtained. He will give them all the men and women they need and all the money necessary for their maintenance when they have persuaded their brethren and sisters at home to

**LEAVE OFF SLANDERING HIS WELL-
BELOVED SON!**



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