

**The Meanings
of the Names of the
CITIES of REFUGE**



The substance of lectures given in Australia and elsewhere, then expanded and published in "Scripture Truth" Magazine.



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THE NAMES OF THE CITIES OF REFUGE.

No. I—INTRODUCTORY.

“And they appointed Kedesh in Galilee in mount Naphtali and Shechem in mount Ephraim and Kirjath-arba, (which is Hebron), in the mountain of Judah, and on the other side Jordan by Jericho eastward, they assigned Bezer in the Wilderness upon the plain out of the tribe of Reuben, and Ramoth in Gilead out of the tribe of Gad and Golan in Bashan out of the tribe of Manasseh.” (Josh. 20, 7-8).

Names in secular affairs are largely accidental and hence they are seldom descriptive of what they are intended to denote. But scriptural names are full of meaning relative to the subject of appellation.

Some time ago listening to an address on the “Cities of Refuge,” my effort was stimulated to ascertain the meaning of the names. I was astonished to find that they formed in their sequence, a marvellously accurate summary of the progress of a soul in the apprehension of the truth.

The following table sets forth the meanings given by various scholars :—

In the land of Canaan.

Kedesh = sanctuary.

Shechem = strength.

Hebron = fellowship.

Across Jordan in the Wilderness.

Golan = (1) discovery, (2) revolution,
(3) passage or exodus.

Ramoth = elevations and depressions
or ups and downs.

Bezer = (1) distress,
(2) fortification.

The wilderness in the Old Testament typology corresponds in New Testament thought to the realm of time

and sense, *i.e.*, relative to the body and secular affairs. The hymn writer could say :—

This world is a wilderness wide,
I have nothing to seek or to choose,
I have no thought in the waste to abide,
I have nought to regret nor to lose.

That was his personal assessment of the world, but it is expressive of normal Christianity. It is open to every Christian to have similar exercises of heart.

The vertical line separating the two columns represents the river Jordan, which is symbolical of the death of Christ in one of its many aspects.

Similarly the land of Canaan in Old Testament type does not represent “Heaven” in New Testament relation, as it is often caused to do in sentimental hymnology. “The Land” has a present bearing in New Testament doctrine with relation to spiritual apprehension of what we possess as being in Christ Jesus, having access to God the Father, and having boldness (*i.e.*, liberty or confidence), to enter the holiest and so on. “In Christ Jesus” has a technical meaning peculiar to the Pauline writings, and denotes the region of spiritual privilege and blessing.

At one time it was the fashion amongst certain Christians to reckon themselves as across Jordan and that the bulk of Christians with whom they came in contact were still in the wilderness. The idea sprang simply from ecclesiastical arrogance. If there is one form of pride more distasteful to the Lord than another we submit that it is the ecclesiastical form. The proud never get near to the Lord, whatever may be their pretension of intimacy. All Scripture is imbued with the thought: “the proud is known afar off.” (Ps. 138, 6), “God resisteth the proud” (Jas. 4, 6) and so on. But Scripture also adduces evidence that the proud are ignorant knowing nothing but doting about questions and strifes of words whereof cometh envy, etc. (1 Tim. 6, 4).

Hence the averment not only sprang from pride but also from ignorance of Scriptural teaching.

In this connection the apostolic doctrine very clearly bears out the dictum of a gifted poetess that :

“ Side by side, the gladness and the sorrow,
Deepest shadow and eternal sun,
Two lives live we, till the blessed morrow
When the life is one.”

We live lives of responsibility collaterally with lives of spiritual privilege, consequently the man who boasts about being over Jordan in “ the land ” may be an arrant grumbler in his life of responsibility just as his prototype the Israelite was in the wilderness. Only the Israelite could not both be in the wilderness and in “ the land ” at the same identical moment of time. But that physical impossibility is compassed now in the spirit.

No. 2—GOLAN.

As mentioned in the introductory section, the meanings of Golan have been severally rendered as :—(1) discovery, (2) revolution, (3) passage.

1. Discovery.

Many of our readers may be acquainted with the etching entitled “ The Soul’s Awakening,” where a young girl is seen with a book clasped to her breast evidently in an ecstasy. That she should be rapturously seized with extreme joy may be very good sentiment, but the artist failed to understand the truth with relation to God and eternal things. When a soul awakens to the fact that “ God is Light and in Him is no darkness at all,” and that every member of the human race has sinned and come short of the initial aspect of God’s glory, *viz.*, His righteousness, then in place of extreme joy the soul is plunged in great distress.

But it has been well said that man's extremity is God's opportunity! The ray that brings light from the sun also brings heat. Similarly in the very moment that a man or a woman has reached the bottom of his or her resources and cast himself or herself on the boundless resources of God, there comes the realisation that God is not only of spotless light but also of unconditional love as well.

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John 3, 16), still stands as an immutable memorial to the unchanging character of God's disposition.

In Acts 2, we read that the Apostle Peter preaching with power at Pentecost brought conviction to his hearers, and they exclaimed “What shall we do”? When they realised that by wicked hands they had crucified the One approved by God and that God had raised Him up from the dead and also the import of the prophetic scripture, “whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved.” They saw they were undone, and consequently called on One who was able to save. Peter's answer was “Repent”!

In Acts 16, another aspect is presented in the case of the Philippian jailor, awakened to a deeper sense than his being undone in the eyes of men, addressed the Apostle Paul and his associates in the exclamation, “Sirs, (lit. Lords), what must I do to be saved?” The erstwhile brutal ruffian, who had shamefully treated them, now approached them with an air of greatest respect. Their answer was simply, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house.”

2. Revolution.

The Thessalonian believers “turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God and to wait for His Son from heaven.” (1 Thess. 1, 9-10). Conversion or turning to God is a very real matter. There is a radical change

effected in the soul. The revolution which takes place displaces all preconceived notions. There is a turning up-side-down of the whole sphere of our thoughts. The zenith goes down out of sight and the exactly opposite nadir point comes up over the horizon of our thoughts and becomes our new zenith. We rejoice in prospect of the Glory of God! That will mean the displacement of man's day and his glory. What had been hitherto quite legitimate ambitions cease to occupy our attention.

The great Apostle could say in writing to the Philippian Christians, "what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, I count all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung." (Phil. 3, 7-8). Judging from secular circumstances one would have expected to hear that a man who had suffered such loss would have been in a very disconsolate frame of mind. But on the contrary he reckoned those worthy credentials in the eyes of men only suitable for the dustbin. It should be kept in mind that he was the premier man of his time. Yet everything of that order became of no account to him. His sole aim was to win an increasing apprehension of the preciousness of Christ to his soul. That is the normal character of the revolution effected in the Christian.

3. Passage or Exodus.

In the preceding section we have been dealing with the internal work of God in the soul. It is no mere philosophic change leading the convert to become a hermit in order to ruminate on new ideas. There is an external effect which proceeds collaterally with the internal change. As we grow in grace we shall be found showing that grace to those around. We shall serve the living and true or real God who is a great contrast to all the unreal Gods of our imagination, which we served in our unconverted days. But that service

has a definite issue, in waiting for the Son of God from heaven. His coming may happen at any moment and will be transacted in a moment or atom of time ("a twinkling of an eye.") In the interval that the Lord is pleased to leave us here we are to put ourselves in line with that moment.

Therefore at Pentecost in the initial proclamation of the Gospel, the Apostle Peter abjured his hearers in the words, "Save yourselves from this untoward generation." (Acts 2, 40). The outward symbol of that process would be that they would submit themselves to the rite of baptism in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. Hence the salvation symbolised by the act could not relate to heaven, since it was antecedent to the reception of the Holy Ghost. Of necessity it must have applied to earth.

Probably no other subject has provoked so much acrid discussion and unkind feelings among Christians as the subject of baptism has done, yet the idea is very simple. Christian baptism is "unto" the death of Christ (not "into" as the Authorised Version reads), *i.e.*, unto the significance of His death. In this connection the death of Christ implies that the world gave Christ a felon's death and grave. (That it was not a felon's grave in which he was buried was not the intention of the world). Now it is incumbent on those who are associated with His name that they should cheerfully accept the place which the world gave to their new Lord and Master. Baptism then implies dissociation from the world. We can no longer go on with the course of this world. The frivolities which formerly filled our day are not now of interest to us. We cannot enjoy the pleasures of sin, because of our estimation of the riches found in the reproach or special stigma of Christ's name, which we now bear. Baptism then signifies cutting off from the world with the object in view that we should walk in newness of life (*i.e.*, in association with Christ).

The Philippian's jailor's house witnessed a radical change. It was run under new management, *viz.*, that of the Lord.

That day, salvation had indeed come to his house. Henceforward they would be found saving themselves from the untoward generation around. In fact, they would be found proving true to the significance of their baptism.

All this is in view of our passage or exodus from the world. In the book of Exodus, we see that the Israelites were as safe inside the tent with bloodstained lintel as they were at any subsequent point in their history. But they could not serve God suitably in Egypt hence they were not only saved by blood but delivered by the power of God from the power and the land of Egypt (the enemy). Moses would have been esteemed an incompetent general by modern strategists in leading the people into a hopeless position on the banks of the Red Sea, when he could quite easily have led them round the end of the sea by the Isthmus of Suez. But Moses did not lead; the people followed the pillar of cloud by day which also as a pillar of fire lighted them by night. God led them so that they might test His resources and when they came to their extremity and cried out, the injunction of Moses was to stand still and see the salvation of the Lord. What was salvation to the people of God became death to their enemies. Similarly God cannot allow His people to remain in the world. He will have them in separation while there, so that they may serve Him and be in harmony with the imminence of the Lord's return.

No. 3—RAMOTH IN GILEAD.

The name Ramoth means "elevation and depressions" or "ups and downs." Very soon after the young christian starts his pathway as a stranger and pilgrim, he feels disappointed with himself. The happy day of which he had sung so lustily in the glow of the new affection seems to have become clouded over in the experience of his soul. In presenting this section of the subject there would seem to be three distinct phases of the matter.

(1) With reference to spiritual apprehension it is often a long time before we arrive at the conclusion expressed thus. "For I know that in me dwelleth no good thing . . . for the good that I would I do not : but the evil which I would not, that I do." (Rom. 7, 18-19). Until that is formed as a distinct conviction in the soul we are constantly being disappointed with ourselves. As every wave of expectancy lifts us up we find ourselves in the succeeding trough of disappointment. It is only when we come to the end of our looking in the wrong way in the exclamation "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?" (Rom. 7, 24). Then immediately our eyes are turned to behold the deliverer and there bursts from our enraptured lips, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." No one but He can help us. There is great advancement in the realisation of that fact!

(2) With reference to dignity and philosophic esteem, we see Saul of Tarsus, the choice man of his time, making an ignominious exit from Damascus as he was let down over the wall in a clothes basket, probably covered over with dirty clothes. (2 Cor. 11, 33). What a contrast that scene must have presented to those who had witnessed his approach to Damascus in the prime of cultured manhood, the object of admiration on every hand. A curious freak of fortune indeed had evidently intervened. But the man who was "let down" was the same man who was "caught up," according to the record immediately following, "I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago. . . . caught up to the third heaven." (2 Cor. 12, 2). Whether in the body or not was quite irrelevant to the question. Because "a man in Christ" signifies a condition outside that of responsibility. He heard unspeakable words. These were not unlawful words in the sense of being dreadful but in the sense of the inability of human language to express them. Obviously that unique experience must have tended to exalt the apostle. So to prevent his being exalted above

measure by the abundance of the revelations there was given to him an intelligible counterbalance, *i.e.*, a thorn in the flesh. It was evidently something which the Apostle thought he could do well without, because he besought the Lord thrice to have it removed. But the answer received was "My grace is sufficient for thee; for My strength is made perfect in weakness." So as the strange enigmatic scroll of the Lord's providential dealings with him became opened out and on his realising the great gain of the process he gladly acquiesced in the administration. Most gladly therefore he boasted in his infirmities rather than in his exaltation, so that the power of Christ might rest on him. (2 Cor. 12, 9).

So he began to take pleasure in the deficits of life, *viz.*, infirmities, reproaches, necessities, persecutions, distresses for Christ's sake. In secular affairs men do not like to have discounts taken from their substance. They all want to be on the premium line at compound interest. But that is the experimental direction which leads to what he unfolded earlier in the epistle as "we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us." (2 Cor. 4, 7). What was that treasure? The light of the knowledge of the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Subsequently to the passage was the apparent paradox of being troubled on every side, yet not distressed, perplexed but not in despair, persecuted but not forsaken, cast down but not destroyed, that is fully explained by the apprehension of its context.

(3) With reference to material supplies. In the Old Testament the man who was true to God as a general rule was blessed in a temporal way. His harvests were bountiful. His flocks and herds multiplied greatly. But when we come to the New Testament we find that rule by no means of universal application. Indeed the Philippian Epistle was written by the Apostle from a Roman dungeon. So that his loyalty to the Lord had not advanced his cir-

cumstances. A Roman prison was a wretched place, well calculated to break down the strongest will. Yet we do not find the writer of the epistle despondent or in a grumbling mood. He said, "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am to be content." . . . I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." (Phil. 4, 11-13). The expression "to be content" is used in the classics with reference to a country not requiring imports. That is a phantasy in secular affairs conjured up by political philosophers to the present detriment of the nations. Recent events have proved that no nation or individual can live to itself or himself. It is only in Christianity that all the supplies come from another region. It was no hallucination of a diseased imagination which led the apostle to be so confident about his resources.

Later on he wrote, "my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in Glory by (in) Christ Jesus." Now observe he does not say "our God" he says "my God." That is the one he had proved amply sufficient for himself. But he was not concerned about himself. He was concerned about the needs of the Philippians. In the old dispensation the man of God had at his hand the cattle on a thousand hills; because the earth was the Lord's and the fulness thereof. But the Apostle invoked help from a far more transcendent sphere than that of creation. He appealed to the wealth of God in Glory in Christ Jesus, *i.e.*, the sphere of blessing and privilege.

The Christian blessings are all spiritual and so cannot be counted. The evangelical hymn which invites the Christian to count his blessings, may be good sentiment, but is futile. Simply because blessings and statistical method are in different regions altogether.

No. 4—BEZER.

The name Bezer bears the somewhat contradictory meanings of (1) distress, (2) fortification. But it is in-

dicative of the "Pilgrims Progress." These apparently anomalous conditions go hand in hand. Turning to the Scriptures we read therein that subsequent to the Christian being justified by faith, having peace with God and rejoicing in hope or prospect of the Glory of God, that the Apostle continues, "and not only so . . ." Both anomalous conditions are well set forth in that passage in the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans.

The Christian pathway is not an easy going progress. It is beset with obstacles, which defy human ingenuity to overcome or circumvent. The trials are abundant and all the time we are here we are continually being presented with problems which appear to be insoluble. There can be no cessation from spiritual exercise, so that we may be overcomers.

It should be observed that the Apostle associates his readers with him in the process. "We glory in tribulations, etc.," that is the normal portion of the Christian to glory or boast in what the world seeks to avoid. The Latin word "tribula" meaning a harrow is the source of our English word "tribulation," and the Greek word so translated is derived from the idea of being "thrashed with a flail." People may seek to evade the contingency by classifying the expression as being merely a figure of speech, yet true observation will amply afford evidence that the expression is aptly descriptive of Christian experience under the administration of the Lord. He does not make any mistakes in His administration or discipline.

There is great gain if we answer to the advice of the Apostle Peter when he said :—"Wherein we greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations (or trials); that the trial of your faith being much more precious than gold that perishes though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." (1 Peter, 1, 6-7). The trial or tribulation is only for a

season and only comes to us if need be. But the necessity of the trial is not in our assessment, but in the Lord's judgement. He sees the need, and subjects us to the process if necessary, and He knows best.

On one occasion a preacher put the phases of discipline very succinctly with mnemonic help as:—(1) *punitive*; we may have incurred the discipline through our conduct: (2) *preventative*; if it had not been for the discipline we might have been following a self willed course to our lasting loss : (3) *promotive*; all discipline is with the object in view that we should be making progress in grace and being of greater service to the interests of the Lord.

Much discipline comes to us privately so that we may not require to be under discipline by our Christian associates in the external sphere. Now it is good that we should be in harmony with the Lord's mind as to the bearing of discipline in the external sphere.

“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye who are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted (or tried).” (Gal. 6, 1). If it were not for the abundant mercy of God we should be all overtaken in faults and thus we are not to adopt any superior attitude to the person under external discipline. Moreover, we are to realise that the Lord intends that restoration should be the result of discipline and we are not to raise insuperable barriers to the consummation of that end. Again observe that the one who essays to assist in the restoration is to be spiritual. That is not necessarily the one best versed in scriptural quotation or with the longest experience. Then the word “restore” is elsewhere used relative to the desirable end of the Corinthian Christians being “perfectly joined together” in the same mind. (1 Cor. 1, 10). In the prophetic scriptures “a body hast thou prepared Me.” (Heb. 10, 5). Again “the worlds were framed” by the Word of God. (Heb. 11, 7). These examples are indicative in an emphatic way of the

perfection in articulation of a joint without rheumatic affection, so that the restoration to fellowship of a Christian ought to be as complete as the welcome given by the Lord.

In Romans 5, the writer says, that we glory or boast in tribulation as the fundamental basis of spiritual advancement. What the world assesses as a discount the Christian is entitled to reckon as a premium. The logical sequel to "tribulation" is "patience," *i.e.*, the essential quality in the apprehension of the administration, because His rule is in connection with the scriptural term "the kingdom," which is associated with His patience. (Rev. 1, 9). The pilgrims path is no "sprint" race but a "marathon" or long distance race. It is as a rule of considerable duration and calls for patience which is developed by trial or discipline. Patience leads to "experience" which is literally the proof of the experience, because experience itself is all along the way, but the proof of the Lord's gracious and merciful dealings with us ultimately emerge and the result is "hope" or prospect. In human affairs hope is associated with uncertainty because necessarily there is nothing in the future here which is certain, as we have no control over our circumstances or our tenancy. So we rightly say, "if the Lord will," as to the future!

There is a development in the idea conveyed by the second mention of the term hope which makes us not ashamed, *i.e.*, not easily upset by untoward conditions. At first we were rejoicing in prospect of the Glory of God, *i.e.*, the objective presentation of the goal; but the second mention of the term conveys a subjective bearing. The process through which we have passed will confirm the settled conviction in our souls of the certainty of our goal or destiny.

We are not then merely repeating an answer to a catechism. But we are established in the sense of the perfection of the Lord's administration.

But running parallel with all the trials is the administration of the love of God which is shed abroad (literally,

“poured in a deluge”) into our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us. When we try to empty water out of a bottle with a narrow neck there is some difficulty because only when a bubble of air goes up the neck can an equal volume of water come down, but when we tilt up water in a tumbler with a wide mouth the whole contents of the vessel are precipitated downwards in an instant. The former process is descriptive of the working of human love. There is a good deal of condition implied and hindrance introduced to its outflow; but the latter process conveys the idea of the love of God in its unconditional outflow.

The pouring out of the love of God into our hearts is the fortification of which the name “Bezer” speaks; so the problem of the apparent conjunction of anomalous conditions is solved. Parallel with the distress of secular circumstances from which the Christian is not immune, he has the fortification of the love of God which lifts him above the trials of “the way” and occupies him with a prospect “bright unfailing.”

No. 5—HEBRON.

The name “Hebron” is invariably taken as conveying the idea of association or fellowship. This is illustrated beautifully in the service of the Tabernacle, so minutely described in the book of Leviticus. The priests had at all times access to the Holy Place, wherein they accomplished the service of God. They had happy association or fellowship in that service. Moreover, the furniture of the Holy Place comprised a table, on which were placed the loaves of shewbread. On these the eye of God rested with supreme satisfaction, whilst his priests were nourished by feeding on the bread. Once a week the bread was changed by the priests, who ate what was removed. The bread could not be taken outside the Tabernacle, the priests had to eat it in the Holy Place.

Again, in Leviticus iii., in describing the peace offering there is no thought of making peace with God. It conveys

the idea of a fellowship offering, marked by thanksgiving and praise. Hence it introduces the thought of spiritual prosperity. Indeed, J. N. D's. French translation renders the peace offering as the "sacrifice of prosperity!"

In the Old Testament there is evidence to show that the altar of wood and the table of the Lord were identical (vide Mal. 1, 7 and Ezek. 41, 22). "Behold Israel after the flesh! Are not they who eat of the sacrifices, partakers of the altar?" (1 Cor. 10, 18). This could quite well have been rendered "partakers of the table!"

The twelve loaves of shewbread were figurative of the twelve tribes of Israel maintained before God by Christ in resurrection and in all the unleavened perfection of Himself. The absence of leaven showed that He was absolutely apart from sin and evil. The New Testament analogy of this is seen in one loaf in this dispensation which represents all the people of God on earth at one time. They, too, are maintained before God in all the unleavened perfection of Christ and in the unity of the mystic body, just as the grains of wheat are held together in the loaf.

The Greek word (*koinonia*) and its cognate words occur 39 times in the New Testament and are translated variously as fellowship, communion, distribution, partner, partaker, companion. All the ideas conveyed in these English words are embodied in the original word. The main thought is "sharing in common," i.e., partnership.

In this connection we may refer to the scriptural precision in distinguishing between two phases of partnership. In Luke, Chapter 5, verse 7, a different word is translated "partners" which describes merely sharing the privilege of fishing in the lake, since the fishers were in different ships. But in verse 10 of the same chapter our word is used to describe partners in a more intimate relationship, as being associated in the ownership of one ship and its nets and hence they shared the fish actually caught. The word of

verse 7 is used in Hebrews 6, 4 and is translated "partakers of the Holy Ghost" as describing people who shared in the external privileges of Christianity and yet were not in the intimate circle described as "in Christ."

In European countries favoured at one time or other by the widespread proclamation of the Gospel, all are described in a general sense as Christian. Yet many so described have not acquired a living interest in Christ as a personal Saviour. However, it is not generally recognised that these countries owe a great debt to the Gospel. The grace of domestic life, the friendly relations between people and the measure of good government extant have not evolved from Pagan origin. They have arisen from the influence of the object lesson presented by the Christians in holding forth the Word of Life in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.

In the great epistles of local responsibility (*viz.*, the Corinthian) there are three occurrences of our word in three different connections.

(1) God is faithful, Who has called us to the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. (1 Cor. 1, 9). All Christians are called to that fellowship. We are partners sharing in common with all Christians, the blessings of being associated in a living way with the Son of God in resurrection.

(2) "The cup of blessing which we bless is it not the communion of the blood of Christ. The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ." (1 Cor. 10, 16). We bless (or literally) speak well of the cup of which God has spoken well. We are partners sharing in common with all Christians, the blessings flowing from the death of Christ.

(3) "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all." (2 Cor. 13-14). In the ritual of Christendom this has come to be recognised as the orthodox formula or benediction to wind up an oral service. It has a much

deeper meaning than that! We are partners sharing in common with all Christians the results of the Holy Ghost dwelling here and of his power to make good the truth of God in our souls.

Perhaps there are few other subjects which have provoked so much controversy as that of fellowship. These phases of the matter are foreign to what we are considering. Fellowship is essentially enjoyed in the spiritual sphere (typified in the Old Testament as "in the land"), the region of all Christian blessings. The objectionable phases to which we have alluded relate to contact with wilderness conditions.

At the end of the nineteenth century a wellknown teacher caused much stir by saying that there would not be any fellowship in heaven. He said that the word implied a special bond in a scene of contrariety and there will be no need for such a bond in heaven, because the opposing elements will be absent. Such a startling statement is true if we restrict the idea of fellowship to the above definition. Our English word "fellowship" has come to us through the Anglo-Saxon channel of language and puts emphasis on the fact of being drawn together. Our cognate word "communion" has come to us through the Latin channel of language and puts emphasis on the purpose of being drawn together. We submit that the foregoing definition only sets forth the first idea. We prefer to adopt the language and idea of the hymn writer.

Close to thy trusted side,
In fellowship divine;
No cloud, no distance, ere shall hide
Glories that then shall shine.

Although it is quite true that we shall not require any bond of fellowship in that blissful scene, it is certain that the burnings of heart stirred up within us as He has talked to us by the way will go on through eternity while we shall hear His voice without interruption.

Christian fellowship is essentially the fellowship of the

death of Christ. That distinguishes it from all material considerations. The one who participates therein recognises that he can have no peace or soul prosperity apart from the death of Christ as a basis. That fellowship is not defiled by the idolatrous associations of the world. That fellowship is also invested with the character of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. The apprehension of the excellencies of Christ on the part of one becomes the property of all. Hence prosperity of soul is shared by all in the fellowship. The fellowship of the Church of God is worldwide. It comprises all Christians. There are people who restrict the thought of fellowship to a local company of Christians. There are undoubtedly phases of the matter which relate to local responsibility. But the essential aspect is relative to the whole church of God.

If a business partnership is formed, the members are bound by the Articles of Partnership. It is realised that what one member does will compromise every other member in the partnership. As time has gone on men have had less confidence in their own judgement and in the acts of others. So legislation has been introduced to limit the liabilities of partners and unlimited liability partnerships have become less numerous in human affairs. But Christianity knows nothing of such arrangements. Christianity is an unlimited liability partnership, and hence the action of the individual tends to compromise the whole fellowship.

If a Christian partook of food in a temple of idolatry he necessarily compromised those with whom he was associated. Those who partook of the sacrifices were in communion with the altar. If we are in the fellowship of Christ's death we must be separate from idolatry. His death, the basis of fellowship, marked by what we enjoy together in separation from a world marked by idolatry. If a Christian is occupied with the enjoyment of the world and its frivolities he relinquishes the normal happiness which is his as a partner in the Christian fellowship. It is impossible to enjoy both

properly. Then we are contributors to the joy of others who are associated with us in the fellowship. We are always throughout the week partners in the fellowship.

The Lord's Supper on the first day of the week is the external expression of fellowship. In its celebration we are identified before God in all the value of the death of Christ. The fellowship is essentially spiritual. But its expression in the breaking of bread is in the responsible sphere. We break bread in the Lord's absence. It is a physical impossibility for all Christians in every part of the world to come together to break bread. So the breaking of bread or celebration of the Lord's Supper is a local matter. But we shall not partake of the loaf correctly, if our minds are occupied with a local congregation. We shall only celebrate the Lord's death rightly as we take account of all Christians. The statement, "We are all partakers," means that all Christians are entitled to partake. This is not a question of doctrine or duty, but it requires love to be in exercise. The longer time we have the privilege of participating in the breaking of bread and the drinking of the cup the more these acts become invested with the characters of reality and beauty to our souls. Then the privilege has a limit. It is "till He come!"

No. 6. SHECHEM.

All linguistic authorities seem to agree in attaching to the name "Shechem" the meaning of shoulder or strength. All through Scripture the idea is very intimately connected with the thought of fellowship, presented in Hebron. In the history of Abraham we see that he pitched his tent in Hebron subsequent to his being at Shechem. Both names also obtain significant mention in the history of his descendants.

But the most prominent typical allusion to the ideas is conveyed in the Law of the Peace Offering in Leviticus, Chapter 7, 30-33. "The offerer's own hands shall bring

the offerings of the Lord made by fire; the fat with the breast . . . for a wave offering before the Lord." This passage speaks typically of the presentation of the excellencies of Christ to God the Father. That is a process which cannot be done in a second-hand way. It calls for personal exercise of heart, typified by the stress laid on the offerer's own hands.

The breast speaks of the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge or comprehension. Yet the trend of the Apostle's second prayer for the Ephesians was that they might know that love, *i.e.*, in the way of quality what cannot be comprehended in the way of quantity.

Christ was daily ever the delight of the heart of God (Prov. 8). The contemplation of His qualities always occupied the eye of God. We, too, become absorbed in this as we enter into the love of Christ. Thus we are stimulated in our exercises as to what contribution we are making to give joy to God and to increase the sense of fellowship.

First, the breast was waved before God and then the priests ate thereof, so that the people of God assimilate the love of Christ, in relation to the joy that God has found therein. The breast was the common portion of Aaron and his sons. When eaten it formed the one who ate. So to-day the love of Christ is the common portion of all the saints in conjunction with Christ. When assimilated the individual is formed or nourished on the love of Christ spiritually. We shall love in the way that Christ loved. His commandment is that we love one another as He has loved us (John 15, 12).

But the right shoulder became the portion of the priest that offered the blood of the peace offering (Lev. 7, 33). So that the offerer was reinforced in his strength for walk by eating. There is thus a singular reflex action between our assimilation of Christ and our strength for right conduct in the responsible sphere of our lives.

Since the shoulder is connected with the leg therefore the walk is affected. John the Baptist looking upon Jesus as he walked exclaimed, "Behold, the Lamb of God," and his two disciples hearing him speak followed Jesus. One would infer from the incident that John's contemplation of the Lord's walk called forth the expression as a reflex action. At once John's disciples left their Master and followed a new Master, seeking to walk even as He walked (1 John, 2, 6). We can only walk as Christ walked by being fed on what is set forth in the shoulder of the peace offering.

So as we survey the pathway of the Lord as clearly depicted in the Gospels, in measure we are helped to do things as He did them, loving as He loved, and in general, conducting ourselves as those who had been with Him. The process will cause us to be very sympathetic (not harsh) with the erring and the wayward. All the reinforcement of soul is with the object in view that fellowship may be rightly maintained.

There is a further thought in being strengthened than that we may be able to overcome our natural sluggishness, which prevents us from appropriating what is ours in Christ. There is a real enemy in opposition, seeking to neutralise in our own souls the effect of the revelation of God. So there is a war with the Devil, the enemy of our souls. Many excellent people of God seem to think that the war with the enemy is external. Thus they expend much time, effort and material substance in seeking to find a remedy for the unequal prevalent social conditions.

Men say if the slums could be eradicated then the devil would be defeated and people would turn to God. To look around the suburbs of our great cities is sufficient to afford evidence to explode that theory. The vast housing estates and the slum clearance settlements do not exhibit much evidence of desire for God. Gross secularism is usually dominant. People use the Lord's Day as convenient for gardening, playing games, and doing all sorts of trivial things.

However, the real war with the enemy is in the Christians' own heart. Therefore the Apostle Paul in concluding the Ephesian Epistle (Eph. 6, 10-18), exhorted them to be strong in the Lord and the power of His might and to put on the whole armour of God that they might be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. The subtlety of the enemy is such that we need the whole armour of God, nothing less will do. We wrestle not against flesh and blood (the struggle is not a test of muscle and physical strength) but against principalities and authorities (angelic agents in the spiritual realm analogous to the real agents in the spiritistic seance) against the rulers of this world's darkness, against spiritual wickedness in high places. (This should really read "heavenlies" because high places would tempt us to think that the Apostle was inveighing against the bad conduct of officials in high political administration).

There is nothing of that order implied. The statement refers intrinsically to something far more subtle than evil doers in the visible sphere.

"Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth" (*i.e.*, the Truth, we need to be established in that with which all Scripture resounds, *viz.*, the revelation of God in Christ).

"Having the breast-plate of righteousness" (we require to have our hearts protected by and established in the righteousness of God) and our feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace. The only peace for this harried world is not coming through the operation of the League of Nations, but through One of whom the Gospels speak. There is no peace for mankind except that which is the fruit of accepting the Gospel. The Christian's walk should be a fitting preparation for the Gospel.

"Above all taking the shield of faith with which we shall be able to quench the fiery darts of the wicked one." If the devil does not succeed in seducing from the path of

loyalty to the Lord by subtle means we can be certain that he will try direct attack and we shall need the ample protection which faith only will give.

“And take the helmet of salvation.” People look on salvation too much in the aspect of the deliverance which is to come to us at the end, but salvation in Scripture more often refers to the present phase, *viz.*, preservation. That is well described as a helmet or protection for the head. As we go on in the Christian pathway being overcomers through the rich mercy and goodness of God, we are apt to get inflated notions about ourselves and thus to be rendered useless for God’s service. Hence we need protection for the head.

“And the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God, praying always with all prayer and supplication (the more intense aspect of prayer) in the Spirit and watching with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.” We shall need to be vigilant. It is not a business demanding the regulation eight hours a day attention, but one which will absorb our whole interest.

No. 7. KEDESH.

We have already seen that the name “Kedesh” bears the interpretation “Sanctuary.” That sets forth the climax of all progress in the history of the soul, *viz.*, reaching where God is adored. From the outset God has worked with the end in view that he might have a people at home in His presence, and thus constituted worshippers.

In the history of God’s chosen people in the Old Testament the thought of the sanctuary did not appear until after redemption was typically completed. (Exod. 14). In the song of victory immediately following, Moses and the children of Israel, delivered from Egypt, spoke of preparing a habitation for God, and later in the fifteenth chapter they spoke of the place the Lord had made to dwell in, *viz.*, the sanctuary.

In Ex. 25, 8, the further thought is conveyed in the words :—"let them make Me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them." Then a minute description is given of the golden vessels to be placed therein. The constitution of the tabernacle is described in Exodus 26, 1-6, as being formed of a curtain of various significant colours. There are various other curtains and structures, but these are all subsidiary to the first mentioned curtain. The Tabernacle contained the Sanctuary, thus the former term was more comprehensive than the latter which was descriptive of the inmost shrine, where God's presence and majesty were displayed. That distinction was confirmed in the New Testament in Hebrews 9, 2-3. Obviously the sanctuary was where God could derive pleasure from having His people dwelling with Himself, consistent with the display of His own attributes. He could not satisfy the desire apart from being consistent with His eternal characters of righteousness and holiness.

There are two great lines of manifestation, *viz.*:—(1) God reveals Himself in coming out to man. (2) Man has the privilege of going in to meet God. Of course that is a direct consequence of God's revelation of Himself. So throughout the Mosaic books the expression, "tabernacle of the congregation" (lit. "the tent of meeting") is ever recurrent.

Then in the vessels of the Holy Place, God in Christ is revealed in the Ark and the Mercy Seat, which although together they form one piece of furniture are distinct as to allusion and significance. Then Man in Christ is set forth in the Table and in the Candlestick.

These pairs of articles of furniture were separated by the Veil in the Tabernacle. The second pair were placed in the "Holy Place," while the first pair were in the "Holiest of all." The two compartments were together described as "the Holy Places." (Heb. 9). In Exodus 25 there was no Veil mentioned in the description. Apparently God's

original thought was that Man in Moses at least should have unrestricted access to the inmost shrine of God's presence. "There will I meet with thee and I will commune with thee from above the Mercy-Seat." (Ex. 25, 22).

The restriction arose through the presumption of Nadab and Abihu (sons of Aaron) offering strange fire before the Lord, contrary to His express command and summary judgment fell upon them. (Lev. 10, 1-2). Afterwards access to the Holiest was limited to the annual entrance of the High Priest who sprinkled blood on the Mercy-Seat as indicative of the perfect work of Christ, who would make propitiation for the sinner, *i.e.*, the man who failed in responsibility to God. (Lev. 16, 1-2). When the greatest man could not survive essaying to enter the presence of God, then it was positive proof that man after the flesh could not approach God. The Tabernacle and its arrangements testified to God's desire to dwell in the midst of a people on the ground of redemption. But at the same time they indicated very definitely that God could only be approached with due reverence to His character of holiness. The process was repeated year by year. But the repetition showed unmistakably that the question was only provisionally settled. In bringing the matter annually to remembrance, there was also the indication that the problem would be settled perfectly in God's own time and way.

From the beginning of Hebrews 9 we see that each of the two compartments of the Tabernacle was typical of a different order of worship. The first or outer was typical of the worship appropriate to Israel according to the Old Covenant. While the second or inner part was peculiar to the Christian order of worship, according to the New Covenant. The former was marked by distance. The priests could not go further than the outer part of the sanctuary. (Heb. 9, 9). The service was a ritual wherein neither the meaning of the place nor of the articles of furniture was understood by those performing the service.

They never knew God. The way into the Holy Places was not then made manifest.

The meaning of the second compartment and its contents are realised in faith on the ground of the New Covenant. The new things are marked by life and nearness to God, not by mere formality. The Christian has the blessed privilege of understanding the meaning of everything in the place where God displays Himself in accordance with His glory and majesty.

Christ is the minister of the sanctuary. (Heb. 8, 2). The term "minister" in this connection signifies "public administrator," who has a double ministry, *i.e.*, (1) He ministers to the Christians what God has revealed Himself in. (2) He takes up the worship of his people and presents it to God, who lives in an atmosphere of everlasting praise and joy.

Even as the veil is not mentioned in Exodus 25, so in Hebrews there is no statement of the veil being rent. Indeed the veil is only twice mentioned in that Epistle, *viz.* (1) relative to those who fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope which entered within the veil. (Heb. 6, 18-19). (2) "Having therefore, Brethren, boldness (liberty or confidence) to enter into the Holiest (Lit. the Holy Places), by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way . . . through the veil, that is, His flesh." (Heb. 10, 19-20).

As previously stated, at first Moses had access into the presence of God without a veil. Even after the veil was erected it would appear that Moses still had access within the veil. (Numbers 7, 89). Moreover, until the sin and death of Aaron's sons the priests could go within the veil without restriction. But afterwards the High Priest alone was allowed to enter once a year but not apart from the blood.

Now the blood of Jesus forms the New and living way through the veil into the Holiest. The blood is the means by which we shall be in the Holiest for ever. By faith we

avail ourselves of the privilege now. Thus the privileges of Christian worship are permanent and superior to those of the Jewish system. The blood of Christ has brought us back to the original idea revealed in Exodus 25. God's presence fills the Holy Places and man is there without a veil in the sanctuary.

We are not yet in Heaven. But as to our connection with God the veil has been rent from the top to the bottom * and we have liberty to enter into the Holy Places by the blood of Jesus. Our veil or body is not rent, and that prevents our seeing with our eyes the revelation of God in heaven. But the body of Christ is rent and that constitutes our title to go in. Yet we need faith to enter. (Heb. 10, 22).

In the Holiest, the articles connected with the display of God in Christ, were :—(1) the Ark setting forth the manhood of our Lord Jesus Christ, in which life and incorruptibility were brought to light. The acacia wood of which it was made was completely covered with gold indicating the righteousness of God. The golden crown above the Ark spoke of Glory. Christ glorified God in every word and action. The first Covenant which man neither knew nor kept was put in the Ark typifying that Christ alone fulfilled the covenant of man with God.

(2) The Mercy-Seat forming the lid of the Ark was of pure gold. It is typical of Christ in resurrection. Where there is a demonstration of the righteousness of God in His forbearance in remitting the sins of the past dispensation and moreover demonstrating the consistency of God in justifying the believer in Jesus. (Rom. 3, 25-26). Every attribute of God is in perfect accord with mercy. Thus His throne can openly declare the character of a Mercy-Seat and God is glorified in doing so. The panorama spread

* The types in Hebrews are relative to the Tabernacle, the veil of which was not rent. It was the veil of the Temple which was rent. In which the whole Jewish system was superseded.

out before the eye of faith claims the adoration of every heart with that endowment. Thus the cherubim did not look outward to contemplate man's ruined condition, but their whole attention was concentrated downward on the pure gold plate bearing the blood sprinkled there.

In the outer compartment of the Tabernacle, the Table with the shewbread thereon displayed in type the twelve tribes of Israel maintained before God by Christ in resurrection in all His unalloyed perfection. The food and delight which God derived from them became figuratively the food of the priests. In the New Testament time, the one loaf represents all God's people on earth maintained before Him in a similar way. The other article of display in the outer chamber was the Candlestick which represented the ascended Christ as the object and supporter of all ministry in the sanctuary. The oil represented the Holy Ghost, who bears testimony to the glory of Christ. The candle shed its light on the beauty of the candlestick and illuminated the table as well. So that there is a complete display of the glories and beauties of Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. Those who receive the testimony are brought into conformity to His image and fruit-bearing for God.

Man's failure will never render invalid the testimony of the Holy Spirit. He will raise up others to take the place of those who have failed. We see from Scripture that there is a direct testimony of the Holy Ghost and also an indirect testimony through men acting in the power of the Holy Ghost. "When the spirit of truth is come. He shall bear witness concerning Me and ye also shall bear witness." (John 15, 26-27).

As minister of the sanctuary, He presents gifts to God. "For every High Priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices. Wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer." (Heb. 8, 4). From hearts filled with the preciousness of Christ, He takes the elements which are the fruit of His own ministry and presents as

gifts to God. We receive the credit of these gifts to which is added the fragrance of His precious name. The reflex action on us is that we are led into more intensive worship.

The ministry of Christ as the Ark of the Covenant brings every heart into the presence of God. At the same time the process sets us free from all considerations of arrogance and ecclesiastical superiority over others, who may not have been favoured with such clear oral ministry of the things concerning Himself. We worship where all other Christians worship, *viz.*, in the church of all saints, *i.e.*, the Holiest. God is a Spirit and they who essay to worship Him can only do so in spirit and in accordance with the truth, *i.e.*, the light of Holy Scripture. Every other process, no matter how pretentious and apparently well founded, is futile. The Holiest where God is worshipped is now a spiritual sphere!

“LET NOT YOUR HEART BE TROUBLED.”

That injunction is the preface to the marvellous series of communications from the Lord to His disciples in the 14th chapter of John's Gospel. In the three preceding chapters, reference is made to His being troubled:—

(1) In sympathy with the sisters at the grave of Lazarus' "He groaned in the spirit and was troubled." (John 11, 33).

(2) Consequent on the Greeks desiring to see Him and in view of His death, which was the necessary condition for the fulfilment of their desire, He said, "Now is My soul troubled." (John 12, 27).

(3) Contingent on the thought that one of that little company of His choice associates should betray Him, it is recorded that "He was troubled in spirit." (John 13, 21).

With all these thoughts pressing on Him and in spite of the evidences of lack of sympathy, faithlessness and treachery, He drew His own more closely to Himself and assured them in these words: "Let not your heart be troubled." From the preceding chapter, the prediction of Peter's denial followed on the indication of Judas as the traitor, and upon the announcement of the Lord's departure. These thoughts were well calculated to produce troubled hearts. The dark shadow of the cross had cast a gloom on Himself. But He calmed the anxious thought that He read in the disciples' hearts.

Up to that moment they had never had occasion to trouble about the future, because their Master had been at hand, and He had been their unfailing resource at every juncture. He was going where they could not follow. They were to be left alone and consequently they were filled with gloomy forebodings. It was that sense of desolation which the Lord sought to dispel. That was to be effected by the realization that thenceforward He was to be an object for faith, even as God was. Every true Israelite believed in God. That belief lay at the very foundation of their theocracy. But like all axioms in creeds, it was accepted as a matter of course, and often had little or no real power in the lives of those who professed such belief.

"In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." (John 14, 2). The Jews were accustomed to the idea that heaven was the dwelling-place of God, and the disciples had been taught to pray thither. In modern English, the word "mansions" implies the qualities of size and ornate display. But in the English of 1611 A.D., the word meant no more than the meaning that the original language would convey, *viz.*, "resting-places," "abodes" or "dwellings." The only other usage of the word in the New Testament occurs in the 23rd verse of the same chapter and is there

translated "abode." "Many" should not be understood as indicating diversity of condition, but rather abundance of accommodation. There would be room not only for the Lord, but room for all them also. There would be no risk of that house being overcrowded as the inn at Bethlehem had been at His first advent.

The Lord was not going away merely to escape from trouble, as they might quite reasonably have concluded. He appealed to His record of perfect candour in previous dealings with them. If matters had not been right, He would not have concealed the facts from them, they would know well! If there had been any limitations, He would have certainly indicated such. Their place was with Him. But it was necessary that He should prepare that place for them.

"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." (John 14, 3). "If" does not imply uncertainty, but condition of argument. It expresses the fact although in the future; it is perfectly clear and certain to Him. His setting out had a definite object, and they could depend that He would not leave it incompleting. Where He was going, they could not follow because the path lay through death. They had not the power then to pass through death. But the preparation of the place was a necessary antecedent to His coming again for the precious purpose of receiving them unto Himself. He would not accomplish the purpose by sending an angel, but He would come personally for them. Heaven, not earth, was to be the goal. The future of His own is to be where He is, *i.e.*, a portion totally eclipsing any position they could possibly have had due to His remaining on earth. Even His establishment as Messiah with all the concomitant glory on earth could not have placed them in such favour.

On this subject there has been much written which has tended to weaken the force of the straightforward meaning

of the words. Some have sought to impress that the reception was at the death of the individual disciples. That impression needs little more than its statement to carry its own refutation. Others have inculcated the idea that the passage refers to the spiritual presence of the Lord amongst His own and that the Father's house has a present significance in Christian experience. It is unfortunate that expositors who often in the main line are well-instructed should indulge in such far-fetched argument. That the verb is in the continuous present tense (*erchomai*) literally, "I am coming" and not "I will come" in verse 3 as in verse 18 is no warrant for doing despite to the obvious meaning of the passage. Attention should be paid to the context of the expression in question.

By the statements in the preceding paragraph, it is not intended to weaken the present bearing of the Lord's future coming. The Lord's object is to take us out of the world in a moment at the earliest juncture. With such an issue to our calling on high of God in Christ Jesus, there should be a very definite answer in our spiritual outlook and practical conduct. The result will be our gradual withdrawal from the world in soul experience. The power that will raise or change and snatch up the people of God in the moment of complete triumph at the rapture, is the same power that is operating now to effect a spiritual severance from the world. That spiritual process will have a consequent effect in our daily lives. We shall be obviously in the enjoyment of the hope of our calling. In spite of all the turmoil without as often within the Christian company, as well as connected with the individual Christian's heart, the same words, "Let not your heart be troubled" come from the same source in their unparalleled sweetness and assurance. Let us seek to have the experience of their value in an ever-increasing way!

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