



DOCTRINAL SUMMARIES

THE SCRIPTURES
THE GOSPEL
THE HOLY SPIRIT
THE NEW BIRTH
ATONEMENT
JUSTIFICATION
ETERNAL LIFE
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DOCTRINAL SUMMARIES

— OR —

**Brief Expositions of Important
Scriptural Truths and Doctrines.**

**DESIGNED ESPECIALLY FOR DEVOUT READERS
OF THE BIBLE.**

WALTER SCOTT,

Author of "At Hand," "Exposition of the Revelation," "Our Bible Notebook,"
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DOCTRINAL SUMMARIES.

THE GOSPEL AND EVANGELISTS.

THE Gospel is the disclosure of God's love, and of God's work on behalf of a ruined world. The fine old Saxon word, Gospel, meaning *glad tidings*, is used in various connections in the Scriptures (see Heb. 4. 2; Mark 1. 14; Gal. 3. 8; 1 Cor. 15. 1; 1 Tim. 1. 11; Rev. 14. 6). In the Irish language "Gospel" signifies "The Story of Peace." It would prove an interesting and profitable study to examine the use of the word Gospel throughout the Scriptures; but in our present remarks we refer to the evangelical sense of the word, which is one, thank God, which every saved person knows the truth of in his own soul.

God's love to the world was not made known to patriarchs of old. Israel was made acquainted with Jehovah's tenderness and care, but not with His heart's deep love, measured by the gift of His Son. The prophets grandly told of the future, of the Messiah's power and glory, but "God so loved the world" never trembled on their lips. The eye of the seer might rest on coming glories, and his heart be entranced, as piercing through the gloom of ages scenes of surpassing delight met his enraptured gaze. But glory is not love, and God's love was hidden from his sight. Christ alone could bear witness to what was ever in the heart of God. In the Divine bosom was heaped up a love which none could disclose, save He Who ever is in the bosom of the Father (John 1. 18). He alone knew it, and so none but He could unfold it. God's love was a deep and hidden secret, too grand for human mind to fathom or human lips to express. God's Son, come down from Heaven, alone knew and alone could interpret the great heart of God.

The theme "God so loved the world" (John 3. 16) is one so vast, so bold, so mighty, full, and overwhelming in its conception, that to the Son only could the glory be reserved of publishing it in word—Himself the expression of it in His life and on the Cross.

God's love conquers, and has conquered. John 3. 16 numbers its trophies and victories by millions, "numberless as the sands on the sea shore;" nor will the tide of conquest be checked till the weary world is wrapped round in the folds and plies of God's mighty love, and each inhabitant of the redeemed and eternal earth echo from the depths of his ransomed soul the glad refrain, "God is love."

Oh, that the mantle of the Master might fall on all evangelists! That they might preach God's love as did the Lord, a love which embraced the sinner while it rebuked sin, a full, free, yet holy and righteous love! It is not true love which compounds with the guilty, which abates an iota of the throne's most righteous claim. God's love has become our soul's refuge; for, while it exposes sin, it has won the poor heart and made it a right willing captive for ever. Preach this love. Yes, preach it fully and preach it boldly, and without the slightest reservation in the soul.

God has not only loved the world, but He has wrought for it. The Gospel is termed the Gospel of God (Rom. 1. 1) because He is its blessed source; it is also spoken of as the Gospel of His Son (Rom. 1. 9), as the Peerless One of God is the all-glorious object which it unfolds. God is its *source*, Christ is its *object*, and every creature on earth its *subject* (Mark 16. 15).

Righteousness is the sure basis on which God's mighty work of sovereign grace reposes. This must be so. Grace at the expense of righteousness would be a dire calamity. *Grace* reigns through righteousness. *Law* reigned in the past. *Righteousness* will sway the sceptre in the coming age. The salvation of all who believe on Christ is a righteous salvation. It cannot be called in question, for God is "just and the Justifier of him which believeth on Jesus" (Rom. 3. 26). Satan's accusations none need fear, for he is a beaten (Heb. 2. 14), rebuked, and silenced

foe (Zech. 3. 2), and will be trodden under our feet shortly (Rom. 16. 20). There is none other, then, but God Himself Who may question our salvation, and this He cannot do. "He cannot deny Himself." *He* has saved us and justified us. Believers *are* eternally saved. "I know," said the preacher, "that whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever" (Eccles. 3. 14).

Ours is a present salvation, fixed and final as the throne of the Eternal. God's nature and our salvation are bound together, so inseparably linked that they stand or fall as one. God's righteousness is at stake, we may say, in the present and ultimate salvation of every soul who has clung to His Word. In this, therefore, consists its strength and glory. It is *God's* salvation, and in it we triumph, as did the redeemed host of Israel on the eastern banks of the Red Sea. "He hath triumphed gloriously. . . . The Lord is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation" (Exod. 15. 1, 2). Singing of or about ourselves, or of *our* joys, will never minister strength to the heart; nor are our experiences, however rich, full, and varied, worth singing about. "Sing unto *Him*, sing psalms unto *Him*, talk ye of all *His* wondrous works" (1 Chron. 16. 9). Rehearse in story and song God's mighty work of delivering grace, what He is, and what He has done, how He has loved and saved, and at once you are taken out of your littleness and made strong in the greatness of God and happy in the joy of God. How full, then, will be the experience of that soul who thus loses himself in God!

Christ in death "for our sins," and raised "according to the Scriptures," constitute, in brief, God's work in love and righteousness for sinners (1 Cor. 15. 3, 4; Rom. 4. 25). God was at the Cross and Tomb, not as a spectator, but as an actor. Christ judged sin, and in that very judgment triumphed over it. God, to whom the sacrifice was offered, showed His acceptance of it by rending the veil from the top to the bottom (Matt. 27. 51), and in that significant act opened the door for the vilest wretch on earth—purged, cleansed, and saved—into His own immediate presence. The veil is rent, and through it by faith we enter into the Holy presence of

God; rent sufficiently to let *out* the rays of the Divine glory, and to let *in* any sinner who will but come (Mark 15. 38; Heb. 10. 19).

We would earnestly press upon every evangelist to urge upon his hearers the facts of the Gospel, and never to dissociate these facts—death and resurrection—from the causeless love of which they are the fruit. It is a light and frivolous age, and sensationalism is characteristic of the day. The Christian taste is vitiated. The triumphs of the Cross in apostolic times were won by the preaching of the Gospel in words clothed in the power of the Holy Ghost, and in a preaching of which facts were the prominent feature; the resurrection of the Lord being the pivot on which all was made to turn (see Acts 2, 3, 5, 7, 10, 17). In the desire to produce “startling results” modes and methods of work are resorted to which were utterly unknown to the early heralds of salvation, and which in their nature practically ignore the necessity of the new birth and the utter ruin of man. The Gospel of Paul, of John, of Peter “is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth” (Rom. 1. 16). Evangelists, aim high and labour to produce in the power of the Holy Ghost solid and enduring results. What is the value of gathering a quantity of chaff? You are only thereby collecting fuel for the coming fire. Let *quality* rather than quantity be the object of your high ambition.

We desire to tender a few words of loving advice and earnest remonstrance. Many a promising work has been spoiled, the growth of converts checked, and servants morally ruined through the neglect of strict self-judgment. “Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the LORD” (Isa. 52. 11). God will not tolerate unholiness in any of His people, much less in those who ostensibly occupy a place in the forefront of the battle. Paul’s doctrine must not be separated from his manner of life (2 Tim. 3. 10). A certain amount of intellectual ability (Matt. 25. 15) is required in every public servant—the vessel is naturally fitted for the gift bestowed—but besides natural capacity, moral fitness for the position assumed is equally needful.

We do not consider it according to the genius of Christianity to have young people of either sex in the front—"not a novice," says Scripture. Young men even of recognised zeal and gift, but brought up amidst circumstances of impurity and lax principles, are not, in our judgment, as a rule fitted to occupy places of *public* service for the Lord. It is, of course, one of the possibilities of faith so to walk in the power of the Spirit that early habits, thoughts, and actions of an unholy character may not appear in the life; but the fact is that deeply-rooted habits, and a morally low home-training, do reassert their power at times; we need not deny it, however unpleasant the admission. A narrow sphere would best suit such persons.

An evangelist is a man for the world. To be a leader, either as teacher, pastor, or evangelist demands a character and moral fitness in keeping with the ministry. To mix publicly amongst *all* classes, and minister Christ in the truth and courteousness of Christianity, necessitates a certain amount of culture and education. The manner of life before conversion is an important factor in this connection. A very illiterate person, and one whose early home surroundings have been anything but holy *may* be used in public service, but it is attended with danger. Here, however, we tread on delicate ground.

To teach or preach for money is an awful snare. To take it up as a profession is to repeat the sin of Balaam (Jude 11). Every public servant of the Lord, whether possessed of private means, or moneyless, should drink into the spirit of the apostle who preached the Gospel as a necessity laid upon him. Means withheld, and hunger and need, for a time was the sad lot of the brave apostle to the Gentiles, but preach the Gospel he would. "Yea, woe is me if I preach not the Gospel" (1 Cor. 9). The apostle pleads earnestly for the temporal support of the divinely-called labourer; and it is the responsibility, nay, it ought to be the happy privilege of the saints of God to lovingly care for the dependent servant, whether evangelist (1 Cor. 9), teacher (Gal. 6. 6), or elder (1 Tim. 5. 17, 18). On the other hand, let every servant remember that *his* dependence for temporal supplies must be

exclusively on the Lord. Here many break down. They look to the rich and wealthy, and are, of course, disappointed. The eye of the servant must be directed to the Master *alone*, and thus responsibility *to* minister in temporal things and independence in serving *in* spiritual things are fully secured.

In all cases, and under all circumstances of need, no servant of God should ever appeal to man. God is his portion, and He will see to the wants of His poor servant. The servants of the Lord should live in a sphere where mercenary motives are unknown, else they are sure to be entangled, and a complete breakdown ensue.

To all, we would say, serve Christ in quietness, yet in fervour of spirit, and let every servant of Christ so walk with an exercised conscience that the ministry be not blamed. The moral qualifications of servants of God are set forth in 2 Corinthians 6, a chapter replete with interest to every true-hearted labourer.

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

Every *word* in the original Scriptures, of which our English Bible is, on the whole, a faithful translation, is divinely inspired or God-breathed (1 Cor. 2. 13; 2 Tim. 3. 15, 16; 1 Peter 1. 10, 11; 2 Peter 3. 15, 16). Inspiration applies to what is written, whoever may have been the speaker, writer, or actor.

The Bible is either a Divine Book or it is a fraud. Penned through the slow progress of sixteen centuries, the combined work of nearly fifty writers drawn from all classes of society—from the king to the peasant, the scholarly and ignorant; written in the continents of Asia, Africa, and Europe, many of the writers utterly unknown to each other, yet the Book displaying *one* master mind, *one* great moral design, the revelation of *one* Person. Who but God could have provided the Bible?

The two Testaments are inseparably bound together. They are of equal authority. The Divine mind is reflected in both; one Divine object, even Christ the Son and Lamb of God, is the central figure in the two Revelations. The

books and subjects of the Testaments must stand or fall as a whole. The writings of Moses and the words of the Lord of Glory are of equal authority (John 5. 46, 47), and the testimony of Moses and Malachi of equal value to that of resurrection itself (Luke 16. 31). The facts of the former Revelation form the text and groundwork of teaching in the New (compare Lev. 16 with Heb. 9; Gen. 16. with Gal. 4. 22-24, &c., &c.). Certain books correspond, as Leviticus with Hebrews, Joshua with Ephesians, &c., &c. But the fact is that the Testaments together form THE COMPLETED REVELATION OF GOD. There are about 960 references, more or less direct, in the New to the Old. The Lord Himself quotes from the Old Testament upwards of 300 times, and from about twenty books. There are no references in the book of Genesis to other and prior documents. Genesis is a book of independent revelation. The whole Bible might be compared to a noble bridge of sixty-six arches, in which man's history is spanned from Creation to Eternity. Moses the first, and John the last of inspired writers, standing on either end of the bridge, clasp hands and unite in *one* common testimony to the glory of Christ (compare Gen. 1, 2, with Rev. 21, 22).

The verbal inspiration of the Bible is the basis of our faith, the rock of our souls, our standard of morals, and our authoritative guide all along the way to Heaven's bliss and glory. If the inspiration of the Bible as a whole, or in part, is denied or explained away; if we are at liberty to choose or reject such portions as we think fit, then all Divine authority is gone, and the door is opened into a wild scene, where the will of man is rampant, and disorder and wickedness reign supreme. The revelation of God's authority over man is revealed in the Holy Scriptures, but if their inspiration is untrue all certainty is gone. The Bible in all its books and parts is God's revelation to man; it is either *that*, or a fraud. "The *Infallible Word*" is scarcely a correct expression. God alone is infallible. "The *Inspired Word*" is the right term to use. Divine faith, not human reason, is *the* essential in the reading and study of the Bible.

THE HOLY SPIRIT.

That there are three persons in the Godhead, of the same nature and co-equal in all respects, is the decided testimony of Scripture. That this truth is infinitely beyond the comprehension of the creature is readily granted. The doctrine of the Trinity is a profound and vital subject, without which Christianity could have no existence. In the baptismal formula (Matt. 28. 19), in the apostolic benediction (2 Cor. 13. 14), and elsewhere (1 Cor. 12. 4-6; Rev. 1. 4, 5) the Holy Spirit is named in equal association with the Father and with the Son, and although mentioned *last* in order in the first two references, yet He is named *first* in the third reference, and second in the fourth passage. The order, therefore, in which the persons of the Godhead are named in no wise implies inferiority.

The formal title of the Holy Spirit is "the Spirit of God," first employed in Genesis 1. 2. He is also termed "the Spirit" in contrast to the term "the flesh," *i.e.*, the moral nature (Rom. 8). As to the eternity of His Being, He is spoken of as the "Eternal Spirit" (Heb. 9. 14). He is essentially a holy Being, hence is termed the "Holy Spirit" (Luke 11. 13), and the "Holy One" (1 John 2. 20).

Never speak of the Holy Spirit as an influence, as an abstract power, or in the neuter gender. Yet, of course, He does influence, but He is a Divine Person, and that great fact should ever be insisted upon. He is a Divine Person, and is termed God (Acts 5. 3, 4) and Lord (2 Thess. 3. 5; also margin of 2 Cor. 3. 18). The personality of the Holy Spirit is abundantly proved by the acts and services ascribed to Him—acts and attributes characteristic of a person. He abides, dwells, teaches (John 14), comes, goes, leads, is grieved. He controls the movements of God's servants (Acts 13. 2; 15. 28; 16. 6). He helps our infirmities and makes intercession in us and for us (Rom. 8. 26). From such a mass of evidence as Scripture furnishes we are led to the irresistible conclusion that the Holy Spirit is a Divine, Independent Person, yet acts in conjunction with the Father and the Son in the physically and morally ruined worlds.

In the first mention of the Spirit He is witnessed brooding over the ruined creation (Gen. 1. 2). He garnished the Heavens (Job 26. 13). He effects the new birth (John 3. 5). He is a witness *to* believers (Heb. 10. 15), also a witness *in* believers (Rom. 8. 15-19). He is the seal and earnest to Christians, but in them (Eph. 1. 13, 14), the former referring to what we *are*, *i.e.*, belonging to God, and the latter to what we are about to *have*, *i.e.*, the inheritance. His masterpiece on earth is the formation of the mystical body of Christ (1 Cor. 12. 13), which He livingly animates by His presence, and acts through its various members (1 Cor. 12). He indwells the body of each believer (1 Cor. 6. 19), and also permanently dwells in the Church (1 Cor. 3. 16; Eph. 2. 22). He is inseparably connected with the life, walk, service, worship, and comfort of believers (Rom. 8; Gal. 5). The Spirit was sent by the *Father* (John 14) as the power in leading into communion; and by the *Son* as the power for efficient testimony (15). The Holy Ghost came down when Christ was glorified (John 7. 39). He came at Pentecost, filled the house (Acts 2. 2), and filled each of the 120 waiting disciples (verse 4). The presence of Christ with His own is conditional upon being gathered to His Name (Matt. 18. 20); whereas the presence of the Holy Ghost in the Church is absolutely unfettered by conditions (John 14. 16; 1 Cor. 3). "He shall not speak *of* Himself" (John 16. 13) reads, "He shall not speak *from* Himself" (R.v.). He does speak of Himself (Rom. 8), thank God for it, but He comes and acts as sent *from* the Father and *from* the Son.

The Spirit's relation to individual believers is taught in Acts 2. 3; 4. 8; 7. 55; 8. 29-39; Romans 8. 2-9; Galatians 6. 8; Revelation 1. 10, which are only a sample of many. The Spirit's relation to disciples generally is unfolded in John 7. 39; 14. 16; Romans 8; Ephesians 1. 13, 14; Galatians 5, &c. The Spirit's relation to the Church is the subject of 1 Corinthians 3, 12, 14; Ephesians 2, 4. The Spirit's relation to the world is revealed in John 16. 8-11, and elsewhere.

"*Filled with the Holy Ghost*" (Acts 2. 4) is not synonymous with "*full of the Holy Ghost*" (Acts 6. 3).

The former was for special work and testimony as Bezaleel (Exod. 35. 31), the chief artificer of the tabernacle, the one hundred and twenty praying and waiting disciples (Acts 2. 4), Peter (Acts 4. 8), and Paul (Acts 13. 9), &c. The latter term, *i.e.*, "full of the Holy Ghost," is the normal state and condition of each saint as Stephen (Acts 7. 55), the seven deacons (Acts 6. 3), and Barnabas (Acts 11. 24), &c. Persons may be filled with the Spirit more than once (see Acts 2. 4; 4. 31).

Prayer *now* for the descent or outpouring of the Holy Ghost is certainly a contradiction of the fact that the Spirit came according to promise, and is *on* the earth, but *in* the Church. The feast of Pentecost has no significance whatever if the Holy Ghost has not come. That ancient and national Jewish feast (Lev. 23. 15-21; Deut. 16. 9-12) pointed on to the exact period of Acts 2. Scripture never supposes two Divine persons on the earth at the same time, hence, said the Lord, "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you" (John 16. 7).

The baptism of *all* believers in this Dispensation, from Pentecost (Acts 2) till the Rapture (1 Thess. 4), in the power of the Spirit has been effected once, *never to be repeated*. "A fresh baptism of the Spirit" is utterly unknown in Scripture history and teaching, and is a denial of the fact that *it* is an already accomplished thing. *Christ* exalted is the Baptiser (1 Cor. 12. 13, R.V.). *God* seals individuals (2 Cor. 1. 21, 22).

RIGHTEOUSNESS: PRACTICAL AND DOCTRINAL.

There is not a subject *apparently* more difficult than that of righteousness. Books and treatises without number have been written on it, and theologians in all ages have crossed swords over this knotty question. What is the result of centuries of wrangle and strife? Persons are as muddled and confused about it as ever, and a subject which in itself is simple has been so tortured and twisted in polemical dispute that a clear exposition

of the doctrine of righteousness is an imperative need of the day. Righteousness is the necessary basis of God's dealings with saint and sinner; the ground, too, on which grace gloriously sways its sceptre (Rom. 5. 21), and the superstructure on which all Christian life, progress, and service repose. It underlies every position and relation of life. Righteousness is the keystone of the arch of Divine revelation. Hence a more important theme can scarcely be thought of, and it will be readily admitted that a mistake on this subject so vital to all may seriously affect the soul's relation to God, as also our responsibilities to others.

Righteousness is a relative term, that is, it involves dealings or relations with others. The simple idea in the word is what is *right*. This consideration will simplify a study of the subject, because whatever additional shades of meaning there may be, and however variously applied, the root-idea in every passage is that of a state of *rightness* in reference to God or to man. We might define it as *consistency in every given position and relation which a creature occupies in regard to others*.

1. **The Righteousness of God** (Rom. 3) signifies God's consistency with His nature, His character in freely and perfectly justifying a sinner believing on Jesus. Now this, it will be observed, cannot be imputed. It is *God's* righteousness, not *man's*. God cannot impute that which is essential to Himself in His dealings with men. The question of imputation does not occur in this chapter at all, nor in any passage where the term "the righteousness of God" occurs. In chapter three of the Romans, after the demonstration of the personal sin of Jew and Gentile (verses 1-19)—for human righteousness there was none (verse 10)—we have the revelation of the righteous ground on which God can, and does, freely justify a guilty sinner. God acts rightly; in perfect consistency with His nature in so doing. How very simple, therefore, yet withal profound, is this Pauline expression, "the righteousness of God," when divested of certain theological meanings usually ascribed to it. As used by St. Paul in chapter three of the Romans—for he alone of the sacred writers of the New Testament em-

plays the term—it is the sure repose of the soul. We may remark that the phrase, “the righteousness of Christ,” is not once to be met with in the Holy Scriptures. The substitution of this latter for the scriptural term, “the righteousness of God,” has done much to mystify the subject in the minds of many of God’s dear people. “The righteousness *which* is of God” (Phil. 3. 9) shows a verbal difference from that in Romans 1. 17 and 3. 21, 22. But the difference is not in words merely. In Philippians 3. 9 the apostle is contrasting two kinds of righteousness; that which is of, or *from*, the law, he would not have; whereas that which is of, or *from*, God, he desired to possess.

2. Righteousness Imputed (Rom. 4). In this chapter we have righteousness reckoned or counted to one who in himself is destitute of it. Of this Abraham is the great illustration (verses 3, 18-22), while David describes its blessedness (verses 6-8). It would be an immoral action for king or magistrate to declare a man right who was wrong. In point of fact a judge cannot justify, or declare judicially right, a *proved* offender; he may pardon, but he cannot justify. God *alone* can justify a guilty sinner. He alone can impute righteousness to one who has it not. It is not putting a quantity of righteousness *in* a man. It is simply holding, or regarding as righteous or just, one who is not so either in nature or practice. *How* God can do this chapter three has fully informed us. Righteousness imputed supposes that one (else why reckon it?) is destitute of it. There is not the slightest thought in the chapter of conferred *inward* righteousness. It is simply a man who in himself is wrong being counted right. Christ bearing the judgment of God, and God believed on Who raised *Him* from the dead, explains it all. The reader will observe that “righteousness” occurs eight times in the chapter, and, further, that the words “of God” are not added in a single instance. “The righteousness of God” is nowhere said to be reckoned or imputed; but “righteousness” simply is put to the account of a guilty person believing on God. God is as righteous in justifying as in punishing, as consistent with the claims of His nature in doing the

one as the other, hence the imputation of God's righteousness is a moral impossibility. It is God's righteousness, and ever will be; part of Himself we may so say, but displayed in relation to His creatures.

"Imputed righteousness" is not accurate thought or language. Righteousness in itself has not the character of imputation, as the foregoing expression would imply; but righteousness imputed or reckoned is another thing, and it is of this that chapter 4 of Romans treats. We may also observe that the righteousness of one cannot be put to another's account. If you could transfer one person's righteousness to another, then one is left destitute of it. If my being right in my relations to God or man, as the case may be, could by any possibility be put to another's account, then clearly I would be found *positively* wrong. What then of the common theological phrase, "The imputed righteousness of Christ?" Will it stand the test of Scripture? Incorrectness in this vital subject affects both the *person* and *sacrifice* of Christ. If "the righteousness of Christ" be put to our account, then it leaves Him without it, or unrighteous; on the other hand, if by the vicarious obedience of Christ to the law we are declared righteous, then clearly His death is in vain (Gal. 2. 21). If personal and vicarious righteousness by law-keeping or obedience in life is ours, then "justified by blood" is a nullity. Thus both the Person and Sacrifice of the Saviour (unconsciously, no doubt) are called in question by this unscriptural teaching. How important, therefore, to "hold fast the form of sound words." It is law-breakers, not law-keepers, who, believing on Jesus, are accounted righteous by God. Substitutionary *life-obedience* is not taught in Scripture, but substitutionary *death-obedience* is.

3. We Made or Constituted the Righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. 5. 21). Christ on the Cross was made sin for us; now on the *throne* He is the Righteousness of God, *i.e.*, the perfect expression of it. The grandest, fullest witness of right on the part of God is expressed in setting Christ at His own right hand—crowned and glorified. What a marvellous exhibition of the righteousness of God is witnessed *up yonder!* But that is not all,

for we, too, as "in Christ," are practical living witnesses of it. He for the moment was made sin for us, that we might *become* the righteousness of God in Him (see R.V., 2 Cor. 5. 21). We confess we are amazed at the greatness of the grace; too much for such as we to receive, but not too much for God to give. We cannot point to the exalted place of angels as an illustration of God's righteousness; we must look at the yet more exalted place of saints as "in Him." By and by the heavens will "declare His righteousness, and all the people (peoples) see His glory" (Psa. 97. 6). *When and how?* At the Second Advent of Christ into this world, accompanied by all His heavenly saints, and by their revelation in glory with Him. What a witness to God and to His ways towards His people!

4. Practical Righteousness in Everyday Life (Titus 2. 12). This is a large subject, and covers every relation and position in life. Do what is *right*. Doing the will of God is the Divine claim of righteousness for one and all. Faithfully and minutely fulfil every obligation of life, as a saint, servant, and worshipper of God; as a man, master, servant, and citizen in the world; as a husband, father, child, or wife in the circle of social relationship; and in the use of all that which God has entrusted us with, as health, time, talent, money, power, gift, &c. To be righteous is simply to *be* right and to *do* right towards God and towards man. But where are we to learn practical righteousness? Where do we learn the full extent of our obligations to God and to each other? How are we to be supplied with motive and power to act rightly in all things, at all times, and in all relations? For this we must turn to the Word of God. It is there only we find life's duties fully unfolded. Not only so, but we are also directed to Christ as the grand and constraining motive, and to the Holy Spirit as the power by which practical righteousness is effected. We would press upon one and all the necessity of being consistent in every relation of life. Action in keeping with each respective relation gives us the practical righteousness demanded from one and all. Where this is lacking the soul is exposed to the attacks of Satan, our deter-

mined, wily, and ever-watchful foe (Eph. 6. 14), and leaves one weak, powerless, and unfruitful in service. Practical righteousness is the **key-note** of the sermon on the mount (Matt. 5. 7.). It is the ground of appeal in prayer (Psa. 4). The paths of righteousness are trod by the blood-purchased flock (Psa. 23).

If we are to be filled with the fruits of righteousness (Phil. 1. 11), and wait through the Spirit for its hope, which is glory (Gal. 5. 5), we must be prepared to "follow righteousness" (2 Tim. 2. 22) in all things, in all relationships, and everywhere. Never sanction evil on any plea whatever. "Of two evils choose the least" is an utterly false principle. A holy path to tread, a clean place to dwell, a good conscience in exercise there *must* be, unless you belie the nature of God, and sacrifice at the shrine of expediency, of numbers, of supposed usefulness, of an ecclesiastical unity, the practical righteousness demanded from every saint and servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.

MAN AND UTTER RUIN.

Man is a complete moral wreck. "Thou turnest man (the *race*) to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men" (*individuals*) (Psa. 90. 3). From Adam to Moses abundant evidence is forthcoming that man was a *sinner*. From Moses to Christ, or during the age of law he was shown to be a *transgressor*. From Christ crucified to the judgment of the great white throne his history is one of determined *enmity* to God (Rom. 5. 12-20; Rev. 20. 11-15). Two great landmarks in human history are the Flood and the Cross. Before the Flood every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil continually (Gen. 6. 5); *after* the Flood it is declared that the imagination of man's heart is only evil from his youth (Gen. 8. 21). *Before* the Cross the Lord declared that out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, &c. (Matt. 15. 19); *after* the Cross the testimony of the Holy Ghost is equally full and explicit (Rom. 5. 6-10).

Nothing can change the flesh, which is in every human creature; it is irremediably bad. The presence of Christ in *grace* drew out the depths of human hatred (Matt. 27. 22); the presence of Christ in *glory* will only intensify the horrible nature of man's undying enmity to God (Rev. 20. 8, 9).

It is an absolute impossibility for man in the flesh, *i.e.*, viewed morally, to please God, or to subject his carnal mind to the authority of God (Rom. 8. 7, 8). Probably the most awful description of man's state is detailed in Ephesians 2: "Dead in trespasses and sins" (verse 1), as also the willing slave of Satan (verse 2), thus revealing a condition out of which there is no escape unless God works in sovereign grace. In Romans it is man's guilt that is in question, hence God *justifies*; in Ephesians it is a moral scene of death out of which God *quickens*. Man is also born *in sin* (Psa. 51. 5); but not born a *slave to sin*, this latter he becomes by voluntarily yielding himself to it (Rom. 6. 16). You are not responsible for being born in sin, but you are responsible *not* to become a slave to it. Man in root, fruit, and branch is incurably bad, hence the necessity of the new birth so imperatively insisted upon by the Lord for any who would enter into or even see the kingdom of God (John 3. 1-8).

The whole tree is bad, from the root to the topmost bough, and outward to every branch. You may as well look for a rose on a thorn bush, or a lily on a thistle, as expect the fruit of holiness from the corrupt nature of man. A fallen creature can no more change his nature, or live in consonance with a life which he does not possess, than can an Ethiopian change his skin or a leopard his spots.

Definitions.

SIN, *missing the mark, i.e.*, God's glory (Rom. 3. 23); *lawlessness* (1 John 3. 4, R.V.).

DARKNESS, *fundamental and final ignorance of God Who is light* (John 1. 5; 1 John 1. 5).

TRANSGRESSION, *breaking a known command; passing over a boundary* (Rom. 5. 14).

INIQUITY, *morally distorted or perverted—contrary to equity* (Psa. 32. 5).

DEFILEMENT, *moral or ceremonial uncleanness.*

UNRIGHTEOUSNESS, *state of inconsistency with one's relations to God or man.*

GUILT (a judicial term), *amenable to judicial punishment.*

GUILE, *fraud, deceit.*

THE NEW BIRTH.

“Born *again*” (John 3) is but a feeble statement of this fundamental truth of Scripture. “Born *anew*” (R.v.) intimates a new source, a fresh commencement of life altogether different in character and origin from birth of the flesh (verse 6). Both the birth and life imparted—Divine and Eternal—are absolutely independent of, and totally unlike the old. New birth is an act of Divine sovereign power, having its origin solely in the Divine will and purpose (John 1. 13); yet it is not dissociated from faith (verse 12). In the new birth eternal life is actually communicated to believers. The Holy Spirit is the agent (John 3. 8), and the Word of God, *i.e.*, the incorruptible seed (1 Peter 1. 23), is the instrumental means by which new birth is effected (James 1. 18). There can be no amalgamation of “flesh” and “spirit.” In character (Rom. 7. 25) and results (Gal. 5. 17-23) they are diametrically opposed—are contrary powers. Thus the man born of God has within him two totally distinct natures, the one wholly corrupt, the other absolutely impeccable. The natures are irreconcilable in character. While every act, thought, and word flows from the respective nature of which it is the source, it must ever be borne in mind that the man, *i.e.*, the person, is the responsible *I*. The man, not the nature, is born of God, and he, not *it*, is responsible for the activities of either nature. The “new man” is *created* after God, *i.e.*, after His likeness (Col. 3. 10), while the person is *born* of God (1 John 5. 1).

The new birth is not a process of improvement, nor is it

the sanctification of or even the subjugation of the corrupt nature—a sheer impossibility (Rom. 8. 7). It is an absolutely new work of God in which a life as *real* as Adamic-life becomes ours, of which Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is its pattern and display (Eph. 4. 21). New birth is a *subjective* condition, as “regeneration,” with which it is often confounded, is an *objective* one; of course the man who is the subject of so mighty a creative act ever retains his responsibility as a creature intact, *this* latter having its source in the speciality of his creation (Gen. 2. 7). We may further observe that it is not the life or nature communicated that is born of God, as some have strangely supposed, but it is a man, “*he* is born of God” (1 John 3. 9). In new birth one is made a child of God. It is an act done once, and cannot be repeated. It is an eternal fact. It is therefore a monstrous idea that a *child* of God can ever be finally lost.

The new birth is *not* the Gospel, although a necessity on the part of any who would enter into the kingdom of God. Believers in Old and New Testament times are equally born of God; in this there can be neither degree nor measure, although in the development of the truth about it there is. The later revelation is, of course, more full and precise in its teaching on this vital subject than will be found in the earlier oracles. Jerusalem was the place, and Nicodemus the person, where and to whom the Lord opened out in its fulness the truth of new birth (John 3), the lesson being that neither religion nor the highest culture can avail as a standing before God. The new birth lays the axe at the *root* of the tree. Not improvement, but a new nature, a new source of life must be imparted even to the most religious, moral, and learned ere fruit acceptable to God can be produced. It was not in Samaria, nor to the immoral woman of Sychar, nor on the Cross, and to the dying robber that the lesson of the new birth was so solemnly opened out by our Lord. This naturally unpalatable subject should be especially declared in cathedrals, churches, and chapels, for all need it. Religious rites and ordinances tend to obscure this great truth.

ETERNAL LIFE.

Eternal life is frequently confounded with eternal existence, and with immortality. *All* responsible creatures eternally exist, but all have not eternal life, this latter being God's gift to believers only (Rom. 6. 23; John 5. 24; 3. 36; 1 John 5). Unbelievers "shall not see life," yet they will exist, for it is added, "the wrath of God abideth on *him*." Thus life and existence are distinguished. Then in common parlance we speak of a man as merely existing, while of another we say he enjoys life. Nor must eternal life be confounded with immortality, *i.e.*, not subject to death. God alone has immortality as to its source and independent possession (1 Tim. 6. 16). Angels, too, are immortal (Luke 20. 36). Immortality when applied to believers refers alone to the body when raised or changed at the coming of the Lord (1 Cor. 15. 53, 54). Need we add that the soul of man is immortal, although the word is not applied to it. This is proved from Matthew 10. 28. Men can kill the *body*, hence it is mortal; they cannot kill the *soul*, hence it is immortal.

Eternal life, therefore, is necessarily distinct from either eternal existence or from immortality. Neither angels nor unbelievers are said to have eternal life. The former are immortal, the latter eternally exist. For the miserable state of the wicked after death and before resurrection, see Luke 16. 19-31; for their condition after resurrection and in eternity, see Revelation 21. 8. Life in its nature, *i.e.*, what it *is*, cannot be defined. The vital principle in man, in the dog, and in the plant is a problem which has baffled the keenest research of the scientist. Every possible test has been applied to discover what life is, but in vain. We know that life exists by its characteristics. Man in his manifold activity, the plant in its foliage and growth, the bird as it skims through the air in its lofty flight, and the denizen of sea and river in rapid movement, all declare the existence of life in their respective spheres. But the inward vital force which impels to action and which we term *life* can neither be seen, heard, touched, felt, or recognised by any of

the senses; in fact, our senses are simply characteristics of life; *these* direct to a governing principle, but what it *is* neither Scripture nor science informs us. There is spiritual life and natural life, we know of no other, and both are undefinable. It has been said that John 17. 3 supplies us with a definition of eternal life: "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee (the Father), the only true God, and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent." But eternal life was ever in the WORD as a Divine Person (John 1. 4), and ever with the FATHER (1 John 1. 2), hence to define spiritual life as knowing God and Jesus Christ is absurd. The very fact that it is ever *in* the Word, ever *with* the Father, coeval with the existence of each of the Divine Beings, makes eternal life an absolutely unknown thing in its nature. In its very nature it cannot be defined. The life is infinite and eternal. Its character and action towards us through grace we do know something about. We understand John 17. 3 to teach that eternal life is needed *ere* any one can know God and Jesus Christ; without it the knowledge of God is impossible. You must have a new nature in order that God may be rightly known and enjoyed.

All believers, irrespective of time and dispensation, have eternal or everlasting life, both *in* the Son and *in* themselves; in the Son as its source (John 1. 4; 1 John 5. 11), and in themselves as derived and dependent upon Him (John 5. 24; 6. 53). The positive gift of eternal life to believers has been denied. It has been contended that Old Testament believers were born of God, but had not eternal life. Can you conceive of birth without life? The expressions of delight in God, of obedience to Him, and of dependence upon Him, so common in the lives and experiences of saints of old, unmistakably point to the existence and activity of a spiritual life or nature in them. The roll-call of the illustrious dead in Hebrews 11 evidences without doubt that believers of old had, must have had, eternal life *in them*, for its issues are plainly enough declared in those acts and deeds of faith which have formed a stimulus to believers in all ages.

That eternal life is actually and positively *in* believers

the following Scriptures abundantly prove: John 3. 15, 16, 36; 4. 14; 5. 24; 6. 47, 53, 54; 10. 10, 28; 1 John 3. 15, &c. We have it *in* the Son, and we have it from Him *in* ourselves. "Life in you" (John 6. 53) and "hath eternal life" (verse 54) are reciprocal statements. Again, "Ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him" (1 John 3. 15). Then believers have it *abiding in them*.

The revelation of eternal life awaited the coming of the Son. He is THE WORD OF LIFE, the perfect expression of it in His person and ways (1 John 1. 1). The term "eternal life" occurs but twice in the Old Testament, and in millennial connection (Psa. 133. 3; Dan. 12. 2). But we would again repeat that while no formal statement affirms the existence of eternal life in Old Testament saints, yet they had it, for no one could be in vital relationship to God without it. It was always in the Son for them, as for us.

Eternal life is but rarely mentioned in the synoptical Gospels, and only then as a *future* thing (see Matt. 25. 46; Mark 10. 30; Luke 18. 30). In John's Gospel and first Epistle eternal life is generally spoken of as a blessing *presently* possessed and enjoyed by believers. But John also shows that the bodies of God's saints shall share in the blessing of eternal life (chap. 5. 29; 6. 39, 40). Both Paul and John present eternal life as a matter of promise, to Christ (Titus 1. 2), and to us (1 John 2. 25). Paul, while assuming that believers have eternal life *in them*, yet nowhere directly affirms it, but writes of it as future (Rom. 5. 17; 6. 22). Thus eternal life is spoken of as a thing *in* us now, and yet future, to be fully enjoyed in a scene in keeping with its character.

We may remark that, while life for the *soul* has been brought to light in the incarnation and ministry of our Lord (1 John 1. 1), the revelation of life and incorruption as applied to the *body* is through the Gospel, *i.e.*, the death and resurrection of the Lord. "Christ Jesus, Who abolished death, and brought life and incorruption to light through the Gospel" (2 Tim. 1. 10, R.V.).

To briefly sum up. The Psalmist and the Hebrew prophet Daniel tell us that Jewish saints on earth in the

millennial scene will have eternal life; while the Lord Himself informs us (Matt. 25) that Gentile millennial saints on earth shall also share the same blessing. John teaches, in repeated statements of priceless value, that believers now have eternal life, in the Son and in themselves. Paul treats of it as a future blessing—the sphere of its enjoyment.

It only remains to add that life—that is, spiritual life—and eternal life are, of course, the same. “Eternal” is applied to life because, in itself, you cannot predicate of spiritual life either beginning or end; it is eternal. “Eternal life” and “everlasting life” are used interchangeably (John 3. 15, 16). The same Greek word expresses both, but the latter term is the more fitting one in its application to believers, because in us it has a beginning, but shall never end, hence *everlasting*. In itself it is, of course, *eternal*, having neither beginning nor end.

Eternal life is needful for the soul’s enjoyment of Christ and delight in all that is holy, and good, and heavenly. When a soul is quickened of God, born of Him, *then* he only and truly begins to live, and *that* is termed ETERNAL LIFE.

CHILDREN AND SONS.

All believers in every age are children of God. They are constituted such by being born of God (John 1. 13) and of His Spirit (3. 6). It is an exceedingly blessed relationship, and one more near and intimate than that of sons. *Child* intimates a filial relationship to God. We have the feelings and nature proper to such a near and blessed relation because founded on the birth-tie. *Son* refers to our position before God, which is one of great dignity and privilege. The apostle John in his Gospel and Epistles never terms us sons, but always children, save in Revelation 21. 7, an important, if exceptional passage, as showing that sonship intimates a relationship subsisting in eternity. For “sons” in John 1. 12 and 1 Epistle 3. 1, 2, read “children.”

The relationship, then, of child is founded on the precious fact that one has become the subject of God's mighty work of grace and power in the new birth. Angels are spoken of as "sons," but are not termed "children." Every creature owes its being to God, and thus all are His offspring (Acts 17. 29). But the new, or spiritual birth, in virtue of which we become His children, and are privileged to call Him "Father," is predicated alone of those saved out of the human family.

All creatures are "the offspring of God" (Acts 17. 29). There is "one God and Father of all" (Eph. 4. 6). God is the Creator and Source or Author (Father) of all creation, animate and inanimate. In God all live and have their being, but *filial relationship* only exists in relation to believers.

John treats more fully of our relationship as children than any other of the sacred writers. He traces it to its source, the sovereign will of God, and unfolds in interesting detail the moral characteristics of the nature which we have as God's children (see first Epistle).

On the other hand, Paul in accordance with those broader aspects of truth, of which he was a faithful steward, connects the coming and glorious inheritance with our place as *children* (Rom. 8. 17), and with our position as *sons* (Gal. 4. 1-5); as Christians are both children and sons our magnificent future is thus doubly assured. We *are* children, sons, and heirs. The first refers to *nearness* to God; the second to our *position* before God; and the third to our future *inheritance*.

Sonship, however, is a New Testament blessing. Old Testament saints were, of course, children, but they had not the dignity of sons conferred on them. This latter is a privilege peculiar to believers of *this* dispensation—one of an eternal character as well (Rev. 21. 7). This is evident from the reasoning in Galatians 4. 3-5, "When we were children we were in bondage under the elements of the world (the former position as under the law), but when the fulness of the time was come God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that *were* under the law, that *we* might receive the adoption of sons."

That sonship is a blessing peculiar to this dispensation is further proved from the way we become sons. "Ye are all the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3. 26, R.V.). No saint prior to the ascension of Christ could be a son of God, as faith in *Christ* Jesus was impossible till the death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord had taken place. Thus sonship was dependent on Christ going on high. Believers in this dispensation are both children and sons. Believers in previous dispensations were children, but not sons. Israel is termed God's son, but that was national, and did not involve a vital connection with God (Exod. 4. 22, 23).

New birth constitutes one a *child*, while faith in Christ Jesus on *our* part and adoption on *God's* side (Eph. 1. 5, R.V.; Gal. 4. 5) give the position of *son*. We, as Gentiles, are never spoken of as children of Abraham, for that would imply natural descent from Israel's great progenitor, but we are regarded as *sons* of Abraham (Gal. 3. 7, R.V.). Thus we are sons of God and sons of Abraham. One may become an adopted *son*, but not an adopted *child*. Natural descent is demanded by the latter term.

Child of God is the expression of our filial relationship to God as Father. *Son* of God is used to denote our public dignity and possession of full Christian privilege. We become the former as born of God; we become the latter by faith in Christ Jesus. These relationships and distinctions are interesting and helpful.

REGENERATION.

This word, which signifies a *new beginning*, occurs but twice in the New Testament Scriptures (Matt. 19. 28 and Titus 3. 5). In current phraseology, and in most confessions and creeds of doctrine, the truth of new birth is confounded with that of regeneration. Scripture, on the other hand, carefully distinguishes them. They are not the same.

1. Regeneration in Matthew 19. 28 refers to that *new* and outward change of things on earth, spoken of by

Peter as the "restitution of all things" (Acts 3. 21), *i.e.*, the millennium.

2. In Titus 3. 5, the only other occurrence of the word, it is used to set forth the believer's *new* and outward place on earth, into which baptism introduces one, and of which it is the expression, hence "the washing of regeneration." Regeneration is an *objective* state or condition, while the new birth is the expression of an inward or *subjective* one. "The washing of regeneration" can be discerned by the eye of man, as it is an outward change. "The renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus 3. 5) can only be witnessed by God, as it indicates an internal condition. We may here remark that the "renewing of the Holy Ghost" is not the same as new birth by the Holy Ghost. The former is a process, a "renewing," the latter is an act effected once, finally, and in its nature incapable of repetition. When theologians speak of a "regenerated person," as in the writings of the Puritans, they mean the person is born of God, but, as already observed, the terms "new birth" and "regeneration" are not interchangeable, while both are true of the same individual.

REPENTANCE.

Repentance is not conversion (Acts 3. 19), nor faith (Acts 20. 21), nor godly sorrow (2 Cor. 7. 10), neither is it simply a *change of mind*—its etymological signification. Repentance is a deep, thorough soul-searching process. It is the wakening up of the conscience to the truth of one's moral state before God, so as to produce a godly judgment of oneself and ways, and a turning from them. The repentance of a *sinner* is shown in Luke 15. 17, 18; that of an erring *saint* in Luke 22. 61, 62; and of a failed and failing *assembly* in 2 Corinthians 7. 8-11.

It is the goodness of God which leads to repentance (Rom. 2. 4), preceded also by godly sorrow (2 Cor. 7. 10). It is God's sovereign gift, and is unto life (Acts 11. 18). It is God's command to all men and everywhere

(Acts 17. 30), and is accompanied by the "remission of sins" (Luke 24. 47). Repentance is toward God, while faith is toward our Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 20. 21). Both repentance and faith are necessary to the soul's salvation, and both are simultaneous acts, at least practically so in the case of a sinner. Repentance and faith are inseparable.

The truth of repentance when preached and insisted upon ever produces solid results; the converts saved under such preaching, as a rule, *stand*. Faith in Christ is *the* great characteristic in evangelical preaching, and in this we unfeignedly rejoice, but repentance toward God needs to be more strongly pressed. We should look for depth of work in the conscience; but where sin is slurred over and repentance scarcely referred to you cannot have either depth or stability. The more thoroughly the conscience is dealt with on account of sins, the more solid and enduring are the results. What is needed is not so much *quantity*, but *quality* of work.

Repentance in the Old Testament, when spoken of in reference to God, as in Genesis 6. 6 and elsewhere, signifies a change of action or dealing; but in the New Testament there are only two instances in which repentance is directly spoken of in regard to God, and in both the *unchangeableness* of His action is declared (Rom. 11. 29; Heb. 7. 21). What a stay to the heart!

SANCTIFICATION.

The root idea of this word is *setting apart* from what is common and unclean, and all persons and things thus separated are termed "holy." In the Old Testament sanctification is more frequently spoken of in regard to *things*, while in the New it is, with but few exceptions, treated of in connection with *persons*. Man in his morally fallen state is *guilty* and *unclean*; these are the two main characteristics of his condition as responsible to God. How is this twofold condition met? God justifies the guilty and sanctifies the unclean.

Sanctification in its source is traced to the will of God,

as indeed is every Christian blessing (1 Thess. 4. 3; Heb. 10. 10); it is accomplished through the "one offering"—its *ground* (Heb. 10. 14; 10. 10); by the Spirit of God—the *agent* (1 Cor. 6. 11; 1 Peter 1. 2; 2 Thess. 2. 13); the Word—the instrumental *means* (John 17. 17); then Christ on high—the *object* presented to the soul (2 Cor. 3. 18).

It is Absolute, Progressive, and Positional.

Absolute. The instant a person utters the new-born cry "Abba, Father," one can say *he* is set apart, or sanctified in Christ Jesus (1 Cor. 1. 2), perfectly and for ever, to God; to Christ also, and to His obedience on earth and moral likeness in glory. In this first blessed aspect of sanctification there can be no improvement or progress. It is an accomplished act by the Spirit of God, and is not repeated. "Ye *are* sanctified" (1 Cor. 6. 11; Acts 26. 18; Heb. 10. 14).

Progressive. Thus not only *are* we sanctified, but we are *being* sanctified; this latter is the carrying out in daily life what we are as true before God. The former is true position, the latter real practice. Progressive sanctification, with which most Christians are familiar, is taught in John 17. 17; 1 Thessalonians 5. 23; the measure of this is Christ on high (John 17. 19), and is effected, *not* by dwelling on personal experience, but by the application of the truth, *i.e.*, that contained in both Testaments, and by the unfolding of Christ to the soul.

Positional sanctification is taught in Hebrews 10. 29 and 13. 12; that is, all who take the ground of Christianity are set apart by the blood of Christ from the rest of the world. It is an outward, external position in this world. Christendom is on *that* ground and responsibility before God, in contrast to Judaism and Paganism. It is no question whatever of the state of the soul before God, or of a purged conscience, or of eternal life. It is simply Christian profession, which may or may not be real that is regarded in these verses. In this outward or external thought of sanctification *persons* (1 Cor. 7. 14) and *things* (1 Tim. 4. 4, 5) are embraced. Whoever or whatever is separated from the mass to God, brought into external privilege, is sanctified. It is not internal, but an external position in this world towards God.

It is interesting to note that both sanctification and cleansing are ascribed to the Word (Eph. 5. 26). The former is setting apart to Christ on high, the latter is the removal of defilement. Sanctification and justification when treated of in systematic theology ever reverse the scriptural order, making justification precede sanctification. In 1 Corinthians 6. 11 and 1 Peter 1. 2 sanctification precedes justification.

JUSTIFICATION

Is a judicial term, and as such connects itself with the throne, or government, of God. Do not be afraid of the word "throne," for it would be an awful calamity were God not governing the universe according to the truth of His nature. Heaven, earth, and hell are subject to the sway of Him Who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will. God ever sits upon the throne (Dan. 4. 34, 35). Of course no one having right thoughts of the majesty of the Lord of hosts would in such a connection entertain the idea of *literality*. The yea or nay as to a literal throne in Heaven, and on which God sits to judge, is a trifling matter to argue about, but we do contend, and most strenuously, for the truth of that which the throne symbolises, *i.e.*, God judging and ruling according to the truth of His Being.

Justification is the gracious act of God in taking up a sinful, guilty creature, rightly subject to Divine judgment, clearing him from every charge because of the sacrifice of Christ, and setting him holily and righteously before His throne. "Justified in Christ" is neither correct in thought nor expression. If a man is *in Christ* he does not need justification. A guilty sinner is justified by God on the ground of the blood having been shed. "In Christ" conveys a different order of truth. Justification does not apply to infants nor to irresponsible persons, neither does it refer to the sinful nature in each one of us. The *nature* is condemned (Rom. 8. 3); the person is justified (Rom. 4. 5) and born of God (1 John 3. 9). Justification applies to our *acts*, not to the root

of those acts; to what men have *done*, not to what men *are*. The wrath of God will not be endured by impenitent sinners *because* they inherited a sinful nature from the head of the fallen race. The works of men—their deeds—form the *alone* ground of condemnation (Eph. 5. 5, 6; Rev. 20. 12). We are not responsible for our birth in sin (Psa. 51. 5), but we are responsible for the fruits of our nature, and to this latter justification applies.

It is the early part of the Romans (1.-5. 11) which specially treats of man's guilt and of God's justification of sinners. Turn to it, therefore, and you will not find Adam—head of the race—named even once, nor are infants at all in question; but men and women—each one responsible to God—sinning, too, in full light of Divine testimonies and witnesses to God; such alone form the subjects of God's justification. The *guilty* are justified, the *lost* are saved, the *dead* are quickened, the *unclean* are washed, the *alienated* are reconciled, the *sinful* are forgiven, the *unholy* are sanctified. These and other characteristics of our once sinful condition are, of course, true of all the justified, but the correspondencies are important to bear in mind.

The persons, then, whom God justifies are "the ungodly" (Rom. 4. 5); the righteous ground of it "His blood" (v. 9). We share in it by "faith" (v. 1); while its source is the "grace" of God (3. 24). Justification, as placing one according to God's righteousness before His throne, constitutes a standing magnificent beyond all thought. *There*, in the full blaze of the uncreated glory of God! *There*, before the blood-sprinkled throne! *There*, in presence of cherubim and seraphim—judgment and holiness! Oh, it is a marvellous position! What a solid and Divine standing! The blood of the typical bullock of old was sprinkled *once* upon the mercy-seat and *seven* times before it (Lev. 16. 14). In the full value of this double sprinkling Israel stood before God for one year. What the high priestly action with the blood on the annual day of atonement prefigured is now gloriously accomplished, and we stand, yea, and we will, for ever, before God's throne, a righteously justified

people (Rom. 5. 2). A higher position there could not be for any creature. The righteousness and glory of that throne are *now* for us; without the blood the throne would be against us.

THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST AND OF BELIEVERS.

The priesthood of the blessed Lord is an integral part of Christianity, as the Aaronic priesthood was of the Levitical system. The Lord's present priestly service is founded on God's acceptance of the sacrifice, and is exercised alone on behalf of those who are saved. The *SPHERE* of His priesthood is Heaven. He could not be a priest on earth (Heb. 8. 4), says the apostle. The earthly sanctuary could only be entered by the sons of Levi, while Christ as to earthly descent came from the royal tribe, Judah, "of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood," and "of which no man gave attendance at the altar" (Heb. 7. 11-14). Connect *royalty* with Judah, and *priesthood* with Levi. There are three aspects of the Lord's priesthood. First, sacrificial (Heb. 2. 17), which is *past*. Second, intercessory (Heb. 4. 14, 15; 7. 24-26), which is *present*. Third, royalty and grace combined (Heb. 7; Zech. 6. 13), yet *future*.

The *ORDER* of the Lord's priesthood is after that of Melchisedec (Heb. 5. 6), type of the Lord in the glory and dignity of His Person (7. 1-3). Thus there is secured for us an "unchangeable priesthood." What strength this imparts to tried and suffering saints (verse 25). The Melchisedec character of priesthood is millennial, and will be exercised by the Lord when "He shall be a priest upon His throne" (Zech. 6. 13)—a combination of royal authority and priestly grace.

The *PATTERN* of the Lord's priesthood is after that of Aaron's priestly service. It is threefold in character: *First*, making propitiation by blood in the holiest as did Aaron (Lev. 16. 14; Heb. 2. 17; 9. 11, 12). The blood was *shed* at the altar outside, it was then carried in by the high priest and *sprinkled* on and before the throne

inside. This latter is termed *propitiation*. It has been done once, and in its nature is incapable of repetition. *Second*, succouring the tempted, sympathising with infirmity, and supplying mercy and grace in time of need (Heb. 2. 18; 4. 14-16). *Third*, in practically maintaining us all along the way—ever living to intercede for us—saving even to the “uttermost” of human need, taking account of our sorrows, difficulties, trials, exercises, and tears (7. 25). His compassion and tenderness are boundless. He leads our worship, and in all things, and at all times represents us before God in the heavenly sanctuary. His own special place there is on “the right hand of the throne of the Majesty.” There He sits as our “*Great High Priest*,” a title of dignity peculiar to our Lord. The priesthood of Christ is not to procure righteousness, but to help, bless, comfort, and sustain a people made righteous through grace. The priesthood is only exercised on behalf of believers.

Next, as to the priesthood of believers. All true Christians are priests to God (Rev. 1. 5, 6), all having an equal title to draw near (Heb. 10. 22). The *Jewish* priest and the *Christian* priest have each their sacrifice, sanctuary, and guide-book as to worship. Leviticus was the guide-book of the Jewish worshipper, while 1 Corinthians 11-14 and Hebrews form the guide and directory to the Christian worshipper. Our sacrifices as priests are praise to *God*, the fruit of lips touched by the live coal of judgment, and of practical benevolence to *man* (Heb. 13. 15, 16). The former is referred to by Peter when he styles us a “*holy* priesthood,” and the latter when he regards us as a “*royal* priesthood” (1 Peter 2. 5-9). It is interesting to observe that when the priesthood of all believers is directly referred to the high priesthood of our Lord is not mentioned at all, as in 1 Peter and the Revelation. Judaism sent the worshipper of old to the priest; Christianity reveals direct approach to God by the ever-living Priest. The priests of old stood outside the holiest. The veil was unrent and the conscience unpurged. The priests of Christian times stand and worship inside the holiest, the veil is rent and the conscience purged. The Jewish priests could never enter the holiest.

The Christian priesthood enters the holiest and worships there, the blood their righteous and holy title. Priestly functions are not confined to a favoured class. *All* believers are priests, irrespective of age, maturity in Divine life, or attainments in either the intellectual or spiritual domains. In ministry there are distinctions (1 Cor. 12. 28-30). In worship there are none (Heb. 10. 22).

Priesthood and ministry are totally distinct truths. The former is towards *God*, the latter towards *man*. All Christians worship as priests, and all serve as ministers.

ATONEMENT.

The word "atonement," the very embodiment of fundamental truth, does not occur in the original New Testament Scriptures. It is found once in the Authorised English Version of Romans 5. 11, the margin of which, however, rightly reads "reconciliation." But although the word does not occur in the New Testament, yet the precious truth, as a whole, and in all its parts, is unfolded therein. We may here remark that the result of Jewish sacrifice was to *cover* sin from God's sight (Psa. 32. 1); the result of the sacrifice of Christ is to put it away completely and eternally (Heb. 9. 26). We must turn to the pages of the Old Testament, where alone the word is used, for a scriptural answer to the oft-repeated question, "What is atonement?"

A reference to a good concordance will show that "atonement" occurs about thirty times in the book of Leviticus—half of its verbal Biblical references. Why is this? Because atonement not only necessitates a sacrifice, but a sanctuary, and also a high priest to deal with the sacrificial blood. Now these—*i.e.*, a sacrifice, a sanctuary, and priest—are prominent features of the third book of Scripture, especially of chapter 16, where the verb to make *atonement*, *i.e.*, to *cover* (the noun is not met with in the chapter), occurs no less than fifteen times—a chapter which unfolds in type the whole work of atonement, both in its essential elements, as also in its varied and interesting details. Both redemption and atonement for us are by

blood, but unlike the former, the latter requires the service of the high priest to deal with the blood in the holiest. Redemption is not dependent on the ministry of the priest, nor on the value of the sanctuary. Atonement is first met with in Genesis 6. 14, *pitched* or *covered*. The ark was made judgment-proof without and within.

The ritual observed on the annual day of atonement was both impressive and suggestive (Lev. 16). It was the only day of the year when the duties of the ordinary priests were suspended in the sanctuary (verse 17), for both they, as all the people, needed atonement to be made for all their sins (verses 33, 34). It was also a day of entire cessation from all work—this was imperative upon all Israel and strangers amongst them (verses 29-31)—the only occasion, moreover, when the high priest laid aside his pontifical attire “for glory and for beauty,” and arrayed himself in linen garments. Both sets of garments are termed “holy garments” (Exod. 28. 2; Lev. 16. 4).

There are several main elements in the scriptural teaching of atonement. It might be well to compare current theological teaching with God’s answer to the question: What is atonement? *First*, we have God’s judgment upon, and death of the sacrificial animals (Lev. 16. 24, 6, 9). *Second*, sprinkling of the blood by the high priest in the sanctuary, once upon the mercy-seat and seven times before it. This important action could only be performed by the high priest of the nation (verse 14). *Third*, the confession of the sins of the people. Putting all the confessed sins upon the head of the scape-goat, or “goat of departure,” and its dismissal into a land of separation (verses 21, 22). This, too, could only be done by Aaron as representing the nation before God. Azazel, or “goat of departure,” occurs but four times in the Word, and only in this chapter. These and other features combined constitute atonement.

These various elements of atonement are separately treated of in the New Testament, although the word which expresses the whole is not there used. Many expressions in common use really narrow the scope of the comprehensive and fundamental truth of atonement.

PROPTIATION.

Atonement is a word found only in the earlier Revelation—the Old Testament. Propitiation verbally occurs alone in the later volume of Inspiration—the New Testament. On the tenth day of the seventh month the high priest, clad in garments of white, annually entered the sanctuary, not without blood—the solemn witness of death (Lev. 16). Atonement, typically as a whole, and, of course, in all its parts, had to be effected on that one day of twenty-four hours. No part of it could be left over till the following day. What was said of Boaz of old might have been said of Aaron, Israel's first high priest on the atonement-day, and surely more so of Christ in view of effecting atonement once and for ever: "The man will not be in rest until he hath finished the thing this day."

Now *propitiation* and *substitution* were essential parts of atonement. The former was solely the work of the high priest, as he alone could enter the innermost part of the sanctuary to sprinkle the atoning blood on the mercy-seat and before it; the latter, too, was the work of the high priest, but as the nation's representative before God. He alone could make propitiation, and this he did by blood, sprinkling the blood once upon the mercy-seat, Jehovah's throne in the midst of a sinful and guilty people; also seven times before the mercy-seat or propitiatory (5. 14). Propitiation is thus towards God, as substitution is towards believers. The blood on the mercy-seat made *propitiation*. Our sins borne by Christ is *substitution*. Now propitiation, it will be observed, was effected by blood-*sprinkling*, that is, the presentation of the blood God-ward, not simply by blood-*shedding*. *Shed* at the altar; *sprinkled* on and before the mercy-seat. The latter was the work of the priest, the former generally that of the offerer beside the altar. Christ as High Priest, and in the upper sanctuary, has made propitiation by His own blood (compare Lev. 16. 14-17, the type, with Heb. 9. 11, 12, the antitype). This He alone could do in His character and office as a merciful and faithful High Priest (Heb. 2. 17, where "reconciliation" should read "propitiation"). But He has not only made

it by His blood, but He *is* the propitiation, or blood-sprinkled mercy-seat (1 John 2. 2; 4. 10; Rom. 3. 25). It will be observed that propitiation is always for sins and uncleanness of every description and character (Lev. 16. 16). "He is the propitiation for *our* sins" (1 John 2. 2), *i.e.*, for those of believers only, and for, or on behalf of, the whole world.

Propitiation is the satisfying of God's claims in respect to His nature. The blood of the Substitute could alone accomplish this, and Christ as High Priest was alone competent to do it, and only in the heavenly Sanctuary, *i.e.*, the immediate presence of God. He shed His blood as a Victim; by it He entered into the holiest as High Priest (Heb. 9. 12). Carefully distinguish between the blood *shed* and *sprinkled*. This latter effects propitiation.

SUBSTITUTION.

"We died *in* the person of our Substitute" is an unscriptural expression. The Word does not say "we died in Christ," else we must have shared in God's judgment on Christ on the Cross. Because we are *in Christ*, in contrast to our being *in Adam*, we consequently share in the blessed consequences flowing from such a connection. The condition of the Head of the race determines that of each member of it. Hence it is equally true of us, as of Him, that we are:

Dead with Him to sin, to the law, &c. (Rom. 6. 7).

Quickened with Him (Eph. 2. 5).

Risen with Him (Col. 3. 1).

Seated in Him in heavenly places (Eph. 2. 6).

We never get "*in Him*" till the Ascension is viewed. It will be of great advantage to Bible students to present the truth in its order and exactness. "Accepted in the sacrifice" is not the truth of Leviticus 1. There we read, "It (the sacrifice) shall be accepted for him" (verse 4); not we accepted *in* it, but just the reverse, "*it for him.*" The phrase "accepted in the beloved," as in our ordinary version is a misleading thought. Ephesians 1. 6, R.V., conveys a totally different line of idea from acceptance in Christ.

This term, "substitution," nowhere occurs in Scripture, but the truth of which the word is the expression is taught in both Testaments. Dying for our sins (1 Cor. 15. 3) and bearing our sins (1 Peter 2. 24) are exclusively believers' truths, and substitutionary in character. Universal bearing of sins involves the unscriptural thought of universal salvation. Both are utterly false.

Substitution is *one instead of another*, not "one in another." It is the actual bearing of the sins of all who believe—only of such (1 Peter 2. 24; Isa. 53. 6). We may remark that we are neither directed to "look on the blood" nor to "lay our sins on Jesus." We could do neither. Jehovah has done both. "When I see the blood I will pass over you" (Exod. 12. 13), and "Jehovah hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53. 6). Our souls rest on God's mighty delivering work, our confidence is in what He has done and said as to *that*. Evangelists and teachers should be extremely careful and guarded in their statements on this vital truth. Loose and careless remarks on this subject have wrought an incalculable amount of mischief to souls. It is not said in the Scriptures that Christ bore the sins of the world. He tasted death for all (Heb. 2. 9), but bore only the sins of His own. This latter, we repeat, was substitutionary. "The *sin* of the world" (John 1. 29) and "Christ was once offered to bear the *sins* of many" (Heb. 9. 28)—*i.e.*, of believers—are accurately distinguished in Scripture. The confession of Israel's sins over the scapegoat and its dismissal never to re-appear finely illustrate the truth of substitution (Lev. 16. 21, 22).

Preach propitiation to sinners—the blood on the mercy-seat, and God in righteousness and grace freely receiving all who will but come. *Teach* substitution to believers—their sins confessed and borne by Christ, and never to be remembered.

PURCHASE AND REDEMPTION.

Purchase implies a change of masters. Redemption signifies a change of state or condition. The two terms are constantly confounded in current theology. The

world—of things and persons—is bought or purchased (Matt. 13. 44); the field is the *world* (verse 38); (Heb. 2. 9; 2 Peter 2. 1). Believers only are redeemed, and that by the precious blood of Christ (1 Peter 1. 18; Eph. 1. 7; Rev. 5. 9); their bodies await redemption by power at the coming of the Lord (Rom. 8. 23; Phil. 3. 20, 21). Scripture intimates the *purchase* of mankind, but never the *redemption* of the race. The purchased things (*not* persons) of Heaven and earth await redemption (Eph. 1. 14). The redemption of persons, of believers, is a present truth; the redemption of things is yet future.

To sum up. All persons and things are purchased, and as such belong to Christ, but believers only now share and enjoy redemption by *blood*, as their bodies will by and by from the effects of sin by *power*, and at Christ's coming. The wicked are purchased, but are never said to be redeemed by blood. The heavens and the earth are purchased, but await redemption by power. Israel was redeemed by power at the Red Sea (Exod. 14), and will yet share in Christ's redemption by blood in the blessed future awaiting them.

RECONCILIATION.

Scripture nowhere intimates that the death of Christ reconciled God to sinners. The mighty work of the Cross was not the procuring cause of God's great love, but the fruit rather of love already and eternally in the heart of God. "A reconciled God in Christ" is a faulty expression. *He* was never alienated from His sinful, guilty creatures, but they were and are from Him, and hence *they* need to be reconciled. Persons and things have departed from God; the former willingly, the latter involuntarily (Rom. 8. 20); hence the need of reconciliation. Reconciliation changes the attitude of things and persons to God, not God to them. The ground of reconciliation is death (Col. 1. 22); but whose? The death of God's Son is the Divine answer (Rom. 5. 10). Justification is by *blood* (verse 9). Reconciliation of persons by *death*. This is one of the niceties of Scripture

thought and language, and which lie scattered as gold dust throughout the truly matchless volume of inspiration. Believers are *now* reconciled (2 Cor. 5. 18). The reconciliation of things is limited to Heaven and earth, and is *future*, and by the *blood* of the Cross (Col. 1. 20); that of persons is *present*, and in the body of His flesh through *death* (verse 22). Christ's blood for things; Christ's death for persons. The long-continued alienation of the celestial and terrestrial spheres from each other will cease (Hosea 2. 21, 22), and all estrangement from God in these regions—in these only—be for ever set aside. For the reconciliation of things we wait the second return of our Lord in power; for that of persons we have reconciliation as a present fact, immediately dependent upon the death of God's Son; of course, only available for those who believe. God is *not* reconciled to sinners, for He never was estranged from them. Not He, but *we*, needed the reconciliation.

ADVOCACY.

“If any man (*i.e.*, *Christian*) sin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous. And He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the whole world” (1 John 2. 1, 2).

Our relationship to God as His children is a fixed and eternal one; it cannot cease. No power of evil can nullify or break it. But the enjoyment of the relationship and our communion with God are interrupted by the *allowance* of the flesh in us. The fact of the inward existence of the flesh, *i.e.*, the carnal mind, does not of itself soil the conscience nor hinder in the slightest a holy and happy walk with God; but if we allow it to act, it does. Hence God's gracious provision in the advocacy of Christ. This most needful part of the blessed Lord's intercessory work and service of love on behalf of His own is founded on the, *to us*, precious fact that propitiation has been made once and for ever; yea, He is *it* abidingly in the presence of God. He is also, and ever, in His own Person, “The Righteous One.” What a

firm basis! What strength for our faith! Propitiation and righteousness are the pillars on which the advocacy of Christ securely repose. The intercession of Christ on the Cross was for sinners (Luke 23. 34), whereas His intercession at the right hand of God is for believers (Rom. 8. 34). Now this latter, *i. e.*, intercession, branches out into at least two main channels, namely, priesthood, as in the epistle to the Hebrews, and advocacy, as in John's first epistle; the former is to maintain the believer spite of infirmity and temptation, to which priesthood directly refers; while the latter is to effect his restoration if he sins.

Priesthood is to *sustain* the saint, and is fully treated of by Paul. Advocacy is to *restore* him, which is as fully treated of by John. Priesthood is with God; advocacy with the *Father*. The former regards the Christian in his place and standing as a saint, the latter views him as a failed and erring child. Sin, as treated of in the Hebrews, has a twofold character. First, as atoned for, and then ultimately put away by Christ; second, when committed by a *professing* believer it takes the character of apostasy, for which there is no remedy (Heb. 6 and 10). Hence the everyday failure of the believer is not treated of in the Hebrews, for sin *there* is in view of the final giving up of Christianity, which no true child of God can or ever will do. For backsliding there is a remedy; for apostasy there is none. John treats of the former, Paul of the latter.

It will be observed that the advocacy of Christ begins, *not* when a Christian confesses sin, but when he *sins*. "If any man sin we have an Advocate." In answer to the gracious intercession of Christ the Holy Spirit uses the Word in dealing with the soiled conscience, recalling the backslider to the love he has sinned against, leading the erring one to true and thorough confession, and thus communion with God is restored and the soul is again happy. We do not go to the Advocate, nor does He come to us when we sin, but He goes to the Father about us, and that is just the service we need at such a moment, and on such an occasion.

It is interesting to observe that the word "Advocate"

applied to Christ as the One who looks fully after our interests on *high*, and when we sin—a time when we might naturally think our interests were imperilled—is also applied to the Holy Ghost, who undertakes all for us as fully down *here* (John 14. 16-26, &c.). “Comforter” is the same in the original as “Advocate.”

HEADSHIPS OF CHRIST AND OF ADAM.

Christ ascended is both Head of the body and Head of the race. He *entered* the heavenly sanctuary as High Priest, He *ascended* into Heaven as man. We are united to Him—the body. We are *in* Him—the race. Ere the truths of dead to sin (Rom. 6) and dead to the law (7) are entered upon, the respective headships of Adam and Christ are unfolded in chapter 5. 12-19. “In Christ,” as distinguished from “in Adam,” is the key to the truths of chapters 6 and 7. It is because we are in Christ, and that by the Holy Ghost (8. 9), that we share in His condition, “dead with Christ,” and consequently dead to all that He is dead to, as sin, law, and the world. Those in Christ are a new creation (2 Cor. 5. 17; Eph. 2. 5-10; Gal. 3. 28, 29), in which no national, social, nor sex distinctions are recognised. It is a new and spiritual race. Distinctions in the Church there are; in Christ there are none. We are not *brought* into a new creation, but as in Christ we are *that*.

IN THE FLESH AND THE FLESH IN US.

“In the flesh” and the flesh in us are terms of very dissimilar import. The former is a *weak* condition, expressive of the state of Old Testament saints, and of the experience detailed in chapter 7 of Romans. It is a condition not of sin, but of weakness, one in which the holy desires of the new nature cannot be carried out for want of power, the power being the Holy Ghost. The rehearsal of a *past* experience, under law, but quickened or spiritually alive, by one in the full enjoyment of

deliverance is the sad story told in Romans 7; the *present* state of one fully delivered, and in whom the Holy Ghost acts in power, is the lovely picture unfolded in chapter 8. "Lazarus come forth"—there was life in the voice of Christ. "He that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes; and his face was bound about with a napkin." There you have life, but not liberty. "Loose him, and let him go." These three successive stages illustrate the spiritual history of many: (1) Life given (Rom. 6). (2) Bound and powerless (7). (3) Liberty (8).

But the flesh *in* us is not a weak condition, but a sinful one. The flesh in us is sin, and must not be allowed to reign (Rom. 6. 12). Being in Christ we are dead to sin (Rom. 6. 2) now *reckon* it to be so (verse 11). The believer is also regarded as dead to sins (1 Peter 2. 24). Dominion over the sin in us is our *present* victory. Freed from the presence of sin in us is our *future* triumph (Rom. 8. 11). Dead to sin and alive to God (Rom. 6); dead to sins and alive unto righteousness (1 Peter 2); dead to the law in order to bring forth fruit unto God (Rom. 7). These are weighty, solemn, and practical correspondencies.

CERTAIN SCRIPTURAL TERMS EXPLAINED.

God's *sovereign* and *eternal* choice of persons (Eph. 1. 4) infallibly secures all embraced in God's election, and which believers *now* know (1 Thess. 1. 4). They cannot perish, for they were chosen in Christ before sin entered or the course of human responsibility commenced, hence neither the state of the creature nor his doings can frustrate God's eternal purpose. Believers are "vessels of mercy which He had afore prepared unto glory" (Rom. 9. 23). Sovereign election, where all are guilty, is our only ground of hope. Who dare arraign the purpose of God in choosing some? His right to do so is unquestionable.

Predestination refers to that special character of blessing to which we are set apart. Thus *predestinated* to adoption (Eph. 1. 5); to have part in Christ's glorious

inheritance (verse 11); and to be perfectly conformed to God's Son (Rom. 8. 29, 30). Election secures the *person*, predestination secures the *blessing*. Predestination is applied to the special privileges of believers, not to those special to the Church as such; whereas purpose is used of the Church (Eph. 1.; 3. 11) and of believers as well (Rom. 8. 28).

Purpose and counsel (Eph. 1. 11). The former refers to the blessed fact that God in Himself, in the exercise of His Divine and sovereign will, devised a system of government and glory to be displayed in coming ages, while the latter term intimates the way, the means, and method of carrying out that purpose.

Foreknowledge. "For whom He did foreknow" (Rom. 8. 29). God's absolute *foreknowledge* of persons, of things, of events small and great, is necessarily a Divine attribute. With God all is one ever present. The Eternal God *is*. A past and future are relative ideas. But what a strength and consolation to God's tried saints that *they* individually were known to God in eternal ages, their life-history, the most trivial circumstances concerning them, every detail of life and character lay open to Him. All were and ever are before Him. The text in Romans 8 refers to individuals. We, and each personally, before Him in absolute knowledge of *what* and *where* we were, before Him in our sin and ruin, *yet* He chose us for blessing. "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son" in glory.

THE CELEBRATED PROPHECY OF THE SEVENTY WEEKS.

(Daniel 9. 24-27).

To whom does the prophecy of the seventy weeks refer—to Christians or Jews? To the latter undoubtedly. "Thy people" and "Thy Holy City" (verse 24) signify the Jews as a nation and Jerusalem their city. These both form the subjects of the prophecy, and to them *all* prophetic dates refer.

The seventieth week is future. The second half of it is variously spoken of as times, days, months, and "the midst of the week." In the prophetic or central part of the Apocalypse the history of the closing three years and a half is unfolded.

Are the weeks periods of days or years? All competent Hebrew scholars hold that the term "week" simply denotes *seven*—of days, years, or other denomination of time must be gathered from the context, and from the surroundings of the passage where the word occurs. The learned Tregelles says: "I retain the word 'week' for convenience sake, and not as implying seven days to be the import of the Hebrew word." That they are weeks, or sevens of years, is evident on the surface of the prophecy. In chapter 10. 2 we have weeks of days; in our prophecy weeks of *years*.

But now an important inquiry is raised. *When* and *where* did the 70 weeks or 490 years commence? We are informed by Gabriel that it was "from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem." Where do we find this Persian decree? The two historical books of the Restoration from the Babylon captivity of 70 literal years are Nehemiah and Ezra. There are several decrees in the latter book, but they respect the *temple*, whereas the one on hand refers to the *city*. Now in Nehemiah 2 we have the commandment in full referred to in Daniel 9. 25. This decree was promulgated in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the King. It is the very commandment referred to in our prophet to "restore and to build Jerusalem." Thus, then, we have the exact commencement of the 70 weeks—445 B.C. Nehemiah is the last historical book of the Old Testament, and this second chapter one of all importance as fixing the time when Jerusalem and the Jews come definitely within the scope of carefully measured prophecy.

The 70 weeks are divided into four unequal parts:

- (1) Seven weeks or 49 years during which Jerusalem is rebuilt.
- (2) Sixty-two weeks or 434 years *from* the restoration of the city *till* Messiah the Prince (compare Zech. 9. 9 with Matt. 21. 5).

- (3) One week or seven years in which the coming Prince of the Roman people will league himself with the apostate nation then returned to Palestine in unbelief (verse 27).
- (4) "Midst of the week," or three years and a half, during which the godly Jews or remnant are given over to awful tribulation, because of their refusal to worship the beast. This period is curtailed by seventeen days and a half (in all exactly 1260 days, Rev. 12. 6). The remaining days, seventeen and a half, needed to complete the three years and a half, is in accord with the word of the Lord recorded in Matthew 24. 22: "Except those days should be *shortened*, there should no flesh be saved." During these seventeen and a half days the vials are poured out in rapid succession on the beast, *i.e.*, the revived imperial power of Rome. Instead, therefore, of the great tribulation lasting 1277 and a half days (three years and a half), it is shortened to 1260 days. How exact is Scripture! How perfect is the Word of God!

The two first computations, *i.e.*, 49 and 434 years added, makes 483 years, or 69 weeks from the commandment to restore Jerusalem (Neh. 2) till "Messiah the Prince" (Matt. 21. 1-10). What is meant by this latter expression has been a difficulty to some. The reference is undoubtedly to Christ; but is it to His birth or His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, or to His death? Observe the terms of the prophecy. It concerns "*thy city*"—that is Jerusalem, the city of the great King; it cannot, therefore, apply to His birth in Bethlehem. Neither does it speak of His death as a victim for sin, for that comes *after* the completion of the 69 weeks and *before* the opening of the 70th (verse 26). We are convinced, therefore, that the sublime prophetic sight afforded us six days before the Lord suffered, when amid the acclaim of the multitude He was hailed as King on the way *to* the Holy City, and as Son of David *in* Jerusalem, is the reference to Messiah by our prophet.

We shall now transcribe in full verse 26. "And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for Himself (or, 'shall have nothing,' *i.e.*, His

throne, rights, &c.); and the people (the Romans) of the Prince that shall come (the prophetic coming ahead of the revived apostate power of Rome) shall destroy the city and the sanctuary (accomplished under Titus, A.D. 70); and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined."

Now, observe that the series of events foretold in this verse *form no part of the seventy weeks*. They come in *after* the sixty-two weeks (and the seven previously named), and *before* the seventieth. Between the close of the sixty-ninth week and the opening of the seventieth the whole history of Christianity has its place; Jerusalem is trodden down and the Jews scattered. The desolation of Judea is complete. It is a parenthesis of nigh 2000 years, one of grace to the Gentiles and of governmental wrath on the Jews. Israel has been judicially set aside as God's witness on earth, and the Gentile professing Church—the olive tree of public testimony, of which Abraham was the root and Israel the natural branches (Rom. 11)—takes the place of Israel in testimony. When the Church is fully gathered Christ comes down from Heaven and receives to Himself the whole body of believers from Abel onward, all His own are caught up in the clouds to meet Him in the air (1 Thess. 4. 17). Thus the lengthened break between the sixty-ninth and the seventieth week is doubly characterised: (1) By Jerusalem's desolation *still going on*, the subject of prophetic testimony. (2) By the calling out of the Church, also *going on* the subject of apostolic ministry.

When the long interval closes, which it does with the translation of the heavenly saints (1 Thess. 4; 1 Cor. 15), then the Jew and the Jewish question are taken up governmentally by God, and the course of the seventy weeks is resumed at the point where they were broken off (verse 27). The last week of seven years starts with the Roman Prince making a league or covenant with the restored (Isa. 18) Jewish nation, then apostate from God and truth. The Jews, immediately on their return, proceed to rebuild the temple, and offer sacrifice, accepting the Antichrist as their king (Dan. 11. 36) over them, and "*the prophet*" in his false ministry amongst them. "The

false prophet'' and the ''king'' are one and the same person (Deut 18. 15).

The relation of this future seven years to the revived Roman Empire in its ten-kingdom form (Rev. 13 and 17) and to Christendom and Judaism is unfolded in the Apocalypse. It is, however, the second half of the week which is of absorbing interest to all prophetic students; the history of the *first* three and a half years is nowhere given in the Scriptures. The covenant is broken in the midst of the week (Dan. 9. 27), the beast out of the bottomless pit (Rev. 17. 8) forces idolatry upon the nation, sets up an image on the temple as an object of general or national worship, which God-fearing Jews refuse, *then* bursts forth suddenly the great tribulation, which in its effects extend to the limits of Christendom, but its horrors are felt and endured chiefly in Judea, in Jerusalem especially.

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