



ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY

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“What think ye of Christ?”

(Matthew 22 : 42)

What think ye of Christ? is the test,
To try both your state and your scheme;
You cannot be right in the rest,
Until you think rightly of Him:
As Jesus appears in your view,
As He is beloved or not,
So God is disposed to you,
And mercy or wrath is your lot.

Some take Him a creature to be,
A man, or an angel at most,
But they have not feelings like me,
Nor know themselves wretched and lost.
So guilty, so helpless am I,
I dare not confide in His blood,
Nor on His protection rely,
Unless I were sure He is God.

If asked what of Jesus I think,
Though still my best thoughts are but poor,
I say He's my meat and my drink,
My life and my strength and my store,
My Shepherd, my trust and my friend,
My Saviour from sin and from thrall,
My hope from beginning to end,
My portion, my Lord and my all.

—*John Newtown, 1725-1807*

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

by DR. JOHN BOYD

Paul, in his epistle to the Galatians, teaches us much concerning the Holy Spirit in His relationship to the believer. These lessons may be divided into three groups :—

(1) *His Reception of the Holy Spirit*—at conversion (3 : 2), at the beginning of his Christian life (3 : 3), a constant supply of His power (3 : 5), the outcome of a promise (3 : 14).

(2) *His Enablings by the Holy Spirit*—to call God his Father (4 : 6), to wait in hope (5 : 5), to control his whole life (5 : 16), to oppose his fleshly nature (5 : 17), to lead him (5 : 18), to sustain his life (5 : 25), to reward him with eternal life (6 : 8).

(3) *His Obligation to the Holy Spirit*—to display the fruit of the Spirit (5 : 22), to keep in step with the Spirit (5 : 26), to sow to the Spirit—to seek His interests always (6 : 8).

It will be appreciated that the believer's life is controlled either by the Holy Spirit, or by the flesh. These are mutually antagonistic. The heart of the saint is the battleground, with the fortunes of war alternating between these two protagonists. The believer is led by the Spirit in that measure in which He is allowed to overcome the desire of the flesh. This Paul describes as sowing to the Spirit. The harvest is spiritual life—the life that really matters—a life enjoyed now, and lasting throughout eternity.

Paul uses another figure to express the operation of the Holy Spirit in the believer—‘the fruit of the Spirit’ (5 : 22). This he sets over against ‘the works of the flesh’ (5 : 19). Both of these are the outward manifestation of something within. The works of the flesh are manifest, much as the believer would like them to be hidden. Nor is the fruit merely an inward disposition. All of its components have a beneficial effect on others. But there the similarity ends. ‘Works’ are multiple, suggesting great activity, fussiness and variance of purpose. The word ‘fruit’ is singular, indicating the quiet, inward operation of the Holy Spirit, ‘the inherent energy of a living organism.’ The singular number suggests also the blending of these graces into Christian morality.

Five lessons are taught in Scripture concerning fruit, each exemplified in the fruit of the Spirit, as set forth in this epistle :—

(1) Fruit is the outward expression of a hidden life (Isa. 37 : 31). Bearing the fruit of the Spirit is an evidence of being born again, and of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

(2) Fruit indicates the nature of the tree (Matt. 7 : 16). The Holy Spirit reveals Himself in this fruit, for these graces are all divine attributes. It shows, too, that the christian has been made a partaker of the divine nature.

(3) Fruit is sweet-tasting (Song 2 : 3). Thus the fruit of the Spirit is well-pleasing to God (John 15 : 8), and to men.

(4) Fruit was given for food, for the benefit of man (Gen. 1 : 29). All the graces that go to make up this fruit of the Spirit bring blessings to men.

(5) Fruit is self-propagating (Gen. 1 : 12). It is the envelope containing the seed—reproducing its kind. The nine-fold fruit here described generates a like response in others.

The nature of the fruit of the Spirit is described for us in Gal. 5 : 22-23. Some see in this description a nine-fold cluster of fruit, arranged in three groups—(1-3) Godward, (4-6) manward, and (7-9) selfward. But this arrangement seems somewhat artificial.

Others suggest that the fruit of the Spirit is love, and the remaining eight virtues describe the outcome of love in the life. Thus love rejoices, suffers long, and is kind (I Cor. 13 : 4-6).

Again some see in these graces nine different component parts of the fruit, just as an orange is made up of peel, pith, pulp, seeds, etc. As no two oranges have the same relative composition, so christians manifest these graces in varying proportions. Some are more characterised by love than others; some by joy; some by long-suffering. Every believer possesses them all in some degree—an indication of the unity of the Spirit. But all are not uniform.

Let us examine the composition of this fruit. First is *Love*. This is the sine qua non of christianity. It indicates the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5 : 5); it is the proof of being born again (I John 4 : 7); it is the hall-mark of discipleship (John 13 : 35). Love is best defined as doing good to another regardless of any merit (John 3 : 16). Its keynote is action, not mere sentiment (I John 3 : 18). Love regards the other's need, not his attitude (Matt. 5 : 44).

Joy is gladness from a full heart—the result of the Spirit's activity in a sphere remote from the scrutiny of men. It is

independent of circumstances — looking beyond present affliction to a name written in heaven. The Spirit-activated christian rejoices in God (Rom. 5 : 11); in the hope of God's glory (Rom. 5 : 2); in answered prayer (John 16 : 24); in the joy of others (Rom. 12 : 15). Murmuring and grumbling are foreign to his nature (Jas. 5 : 9 RV).

*Be glad in the Lord and rejoice,
All ye that are upright in heart;
And ye that have made Him your choice
Bid sadness and sorrow depart.*

Peace here is not stillness, but rather the harmony of smooth-running activity for God. A motor-car engine, accurately timed, well-oiled and running sweetly, conveys well the idea. There are no jarring notes. Peace comes from the Holy Spirit having control of all the believer's faculties. All are in harmony with His will. The disquietude of worldly and carnal lusts is absent. Godly contentment is the result.

Longsuffering, lit., longmindedness, characterises one who suffers long before giving expression to his mind. He is slow to anger, bearing long with those who irritate and annoy him. He leaves his vindication with God, and waits patiently for it. The Holy Spirit, having put love into his heart, controls fleshly resentment and retaliation.

Gentleness, or rather, as R.V., kindness, is using oneself for another's good, looking not to one's own things, but each looking also to the things of others (Phil. 2 : 4). It is the inward working of the Holy Spirit, for He is 'the Highest : for He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil' (Luke 6 : 35).

Goodness seeks the welfare of others, and is measured by actions ; it marks the man who goes the second mile (Matt. 5 : 41); it goes beyond what is merely right (Rom. 5 : 7). Gentleness and goodness are nearly akin, but the former draws attention to the person benefitted, the latter rather to the benefit conferred.

Faith denotes confidence in the promises of God. It does not refer merely to a past dealing with God, when the believer first trusted in Christ, but is a daily dependence upon God for everything. The Revisers translated this word by 'faithfulness,' giving it an active rather than a passive significance. Faithfulness to God, and to one's fellow is the

evidence of a Spirit-led believer; he is as good as his word ; he can be depended upon. Both these ideas may be in view here. Both are becoming to the christian.

Meekness indicates a mind under proper control. It is not weakness, nor lack of energy, nor disinterestedness. The Greek word was used for a colt just broken into harness. The animal's natural strength was retained, but co-ordinated into useful channels. So meekness in the christian implies that his energies are being directed by the Holy Spirit. In conscious humility he allows God to use him towards the accomplishment of His purposes.

Temperance, or self-control, round off this list of christian graces. It is the mastery of the flesh by the Holy Spirit ; the subordination of the christian's lower fleshly interests to those of his spirit—the highest part of his being. It includes control of the desires, the appetites, the affections, the tongue and the temper. All are in subjection.

The production of these graces in the believer by the Holy Spirit as a composite fruit is God's norm for christian living. It was manifested in abundance in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. He showed His love by giving Himself for us (Eph. 5 : 2). Though the 'Man of sorrows,' Jesus rejoiced in Spirit (Luke 10 : 21). His joy, a full joy, He communicated to His disciples (John 15 : 11). The Lord also bequeathed His peace unto them (John 14 : 27). 'My peace,' not the peace of the world, which was but an empty formula (Jer. 6 : 14), but the deep-settled, inward peace of One who fully did the Father's will, He bestowed on them. With great serenity He appeared before Pilate—absolutely unmoved. This is peace indeed! The Lord's long-suffering was seen at Gabbatha, for 'when He was reviled, He reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not' (I Pet. 2 : 23). It will take the ages to come to teach us the display of His gentleness (or kindness) toward us (Eph. 2 : 7). His goodness was acclaimed by those who heard Him, and saw His works (John 7 : 12, Acts 10 : 38). The Lord's faith in, and His faithfulness towards, His Father are seen together in John 8 : 29. He was ever conscious of the Father's nearness. He always did what pleased the Father. Paul in 2 Cor. 10 : 1 bases an exhortation on the meekness of Christ, whom he had taken as his example, both of lowliness and of courage. His temperance was such that He never needed to retract a wrong word, nor

apologize for a wrong deed. His spirit ever had control, for He 'was justified in the spirit' (I Tim. 3 : 16). As to His spirit, He had God's approval that He was righteous.

This was the fruit of the Spirit in Him who was 'full of the Holy Ghost' (Luke 4 : 1). All these graces were seen in perfect harmony in His life; He is the christian's pattern. The same Holy Spirit dwells within him, and the measure in which he subordinates the flesh to the Spirit is the measure in which he will resemble his Lord in bearing the fruit of the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit will bring forth this fruit in the believer's life according as His leading is sought, and the flesh kept in subjection. The seed of the fruit is sown by constant reading of the Word of God. It is watered with prayer. But the Holy Spirit of God alone gives the increase that produces the fruit.

The believer has a very definite obligation to maintain a close relationship with the Holy Spirit throughout his life. He must walk by the Spirit (Gal. 5 : 16); the whole daily round of his activities should be lived in association with the Spirit, as Enoch did with God (Gen. 5 : 24); he lives by the Spirit, and ought to keep step with the guidance and direction of the Spirit (Gal. 5 : 25), to keep him from the sin of pride, strife and envy : he must sow to the Spirit—everything he does should be in the Spirit's interests, and for His glory; he will reap the value of this in eternal life.

Whilst the production of the fruit is the sole prerogative of the Holy Spirit, the believer must see that no works of the flesh hinder it. He must make no provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof (Rom. 13 : 14). The flesh must be crucified—kept in the place of death (Gal. 5 : 24). All these works of the flesh are the manifestation of selfishness, so he must learn to say 'no' to self. This will allow him to bear the fruit of the Spirit; this is the true christian way of living.

"That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."—1 Corinthians 2 : 5.

It is extraordinary power from God, not talent, that wins the day. It is extraordinary spiritual unction, not extraordinary mental power, that we need. Mental power may fill a chapel but spiritual power fills the church with soul anguish. Mental power may gather a large congregation, but only spiritual power will save souls. What we need is spiritual power.—Chas. H. Spurgeon.

STUDIES IN SOLOMON'S TEMPLE (12)

by JOHN B. D. PAGE, Harrow

In a short opening prayer at the consecration of the Temple, Solomon said, "I have built an house of habitation for Thee, and a place for Thy dwelling for ever" (II Chronicles 6 : 2). With the Ark placed in this newly built edifice, the Temple was "an house of habitation" for the Lord, pre-figuring the spiritual temple of to-day as "the habitation of God" (Ephesians 2 : 22).

Probably alluding to and contrasting the tent pitched at Jerusalem by his father, David, which afforded temporary cover for the Ark of God (II Chronicles 1 : 4), Solomon prayed, "I have built Thee an house to dwell in, a settled place for Thee to abide in for ever," as recorded in the corresponding passage of I Kings 8 : 13. When the priests had placed the Ark in the Oracle, "they drew out the staves" (I Kings 8 : 8, II Chronicles 5 : 9), indicating the permanence of its position, and so the Temple became "a settled place" for the Ark of God in contrast with the tabernacle where the staves were not taken from the Ark (Exodus 25 : 15). A dwelling may be either temporary or permanent, and both shades of thought are found in the NT Scriptures. Paul prayed "that Christ may dwell in your hearts . . ." (Ephesians 3 : 17), or "that Christ may make His home in your hearts" (Wey), and such a homely phrase conveys the thought of the permanence of Christ's abode—He cannot and will not withdraw! The true Church, as "an holy temple in the Lord," is "a settled place" for Christ "to abide in for ever" throughout time and eternity.

The Ark was not only placed in the Temple but it was put in the Holiest, the primary position where no other furniture was put. Both in our personal lives and in an assembly, Christ must have the foremost position and He is satisfied with nothing less. A tendency is to give Him a secondary position in our homes and to relegate Him to the background in our business lives, which often means that He does not have His rightful place in our assembly lives. Unless Christ is Lord of all, He is not Lord at all, as Hudson Taylor rightly said. We must acknowledge the Lordship of Christ in all spheres of life, both spiritual and secular. Failure to do so leads to spiritual defeat and unhappiness, but by doing so Christ is all in all to us and it means untold blessing.

To be continued . . .

CHRIST IN THE HEBREWS

by J. B. HEWITT, Chesterfield

"The Infallible Christ"

Chapter Three, Vv. 1-6.

The writer has already demonstrated the supreme glory of Christ over prophets and angels, so now he proceeds by a series of comparisons and sharp contrasts to show our Lord's superiority to Moses.

The Consideration of Jesus (v. 1). How inexhaustible this consideration is, and how truly inspiring as we "contemplate attentively" the faithfulness of Jesus as APOSTLE, representing God among men, and as HIGH PRIEST, representing men before God. The outstanding O.T. personality combining these two offices was Moses. Saints are qualified to contemplate Jesus for we are 'holy'—our position and character, 'sanctified in Christ Jesus'; 'brethren' our communion and association, not by race but by believing on Christ; 'partakers'—our calling, a present heavenly state, we have been made meet to be partakers. (Col. 1 : 12); Our calling is heavenly as distinct from the nation of Israel. (Eph. 1. 3; 2. 5, 6; 4. 1; 5. 30-32).

The Contemplation of Jesus (v. 1-6). Thoroughly think of His dignity, excellency, and authority. Think of His Name—'Jesus'; His Office—prophetical—'Apostle', priestly—'High Priest.' His character—who is faithful (R.V.); His work, as Moses also, His dignity—'Son over the house' and His superiority—'Worthy of more glory.'

Three of the greatest blessings and privileges vouchsafed to the Jewish nation were:— (1) The Law of God—Romans 3 v. 1-2; (2) Levitical Priesthood—Exodus 29 v. 1; (3) The Land of Rest, Canaan—Joshua 1 v. 2. The Law was given by Moses, the priesthood was invested in Aaron, and Canaan was conquered by Joshua. The writer proves Jesus to be greater than Moses as Apostle (ch. 3), greater than Aaron as Priest (ch. 5-8) and greater than Joshua as Leader and Rest Giver (ch. 4).

The consideration is not between Moses and Christ but between Moses and Jesus, that is in His Humanity as Son of Man (ch. 2). We must consider Him, to know Him, to love Him, to serve Him and to become like Him down here. This is the God-given way for deepening our appreciation,

increasing our acquaintance with Him and enlarging our affection for Him. We are losing the holy art of habitually considering Him and it is seen in the poverty of our worship and lack of maturity in Christian living. The name 'Jesus' (Matt. 1. 21) combines the title of Jehovah with the work of salvation which He accomplished.

Our Confession 'even Jesus' (R.V.). In our confession He holds the place of Apostle and High Priest in opposition to the confession in Israel of Moses. Whatever by others he be esteemed, He is so to us; and our inestimable privilege and honour is that He is so. He does not come behind Moses in faithfulness.

The Comparison—His Similarity to Moses. Moses was the object of the deepest veneration among the Jews, so there is Divine wisdom in speaking of Him to these Hebrew Christians. He was a type of Christ, both in character and career. Moses was their deliverer, leader, administrator, prophet and mediator with God. The comparison instituted between Jesus and Moses reminds us of Moses greatness. Christ like Moses was a Prophet (Deut. 18. 15) and introduced a new dispensation (John 1. 17). Each was divinely commissioned and supported in His work for God. They were Apostles of God and had a message for their day, both were marked by devotion to God and to duty, sincerity of purpose, patient forbearance, complete unselfishness and absolute surrender to God. The point of similarity here is faithfulness (Numbers 12. 7; Matt. 17. 5; Rev. 1. 5). 'Who is faithful,' this is the general designation of His inherent character. He is today what He ever was, faithful, so we in turn should have this feature in our character and confession.

The Contrast—His Superiority to Moses. We see His superior glory as the Builder of the house (v. 3). Moses only introduced the Hebrew economy. God was the Founder. Moses was part of it and lost in the economy which was given through Him. Christ was the Author of that which He instituted. The glory of Moses faded, but the Lord's glory is abiding. The fact and the degree of His superiority is clearly acknowledged; as the builder of a house has more honour than the house.

Jesus is superior in rank and position for Moses was part of the system entrusted to him, he did not originate it. Christ

as Son, is the Founder of the ages (1. 2); the Architect and Builder of the Church and is thus greater than the house He established. Moses is viewed as part of the building but Christ as the Builder (v. 3, 4); then as servant and Christ as Son (v. 5, 6). 'The servant abideth not, but the Son abideth ever' (John 8. 35). The Mosaic order pointed forward to the better thing which should come. Christ was the subject of such testimony.

Two houses are here in view, the house of Israel in which Moses was a servant; and the Christian Church over which Christ is as Son. The latter is composed of the saints of this dispensation (Ephesians 2. 22; 1 Timothy 3. 15).

Verse 6 explains what is meant by God's house today. We prove we are God's if we hold fast. Our salvation is not dependant on our holding fast. Endurance is the proof of our reality. Here our privilege and responsibility are emphasized. The proof of our being in the house is seen in corresponding conduct, holding fast our boldness and the glorying of hope unto the end. The faithfulness of Moses and ourselves is finite and temporal, but that of Christ is infinite and eternal.

Think of His greater glory, His office, work, appointment, faithfulness, honour, rank and superiority; may we prove our relationship to Him by saintly conduct, clear and courageous confession and exultant hope. To be continued . . .

THE OLIVE, THE FIG AND THE VINE

by J. C. R. TAMBLING

(continued)

THE FIG TREE

The next tree, the fig, is the first mentioned in Gen. 3 : 7, which seems to link it with the idea of righteousness. Yet there, only the leaves are mentioned : there was no true righteousness, just as it was in Israel in the day when the Lord Jesus cursed the fig tree (Matthew 21). Israel's righteousness was mere profession; there was no real fruit there. If the olive speaks of Israel as a *spiritual* nation, the fig tree gives us Israel as a *righteous* nation. How both ideas apply to us! "I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness : I saw your fathers as the first-ripe in the fig tree at her first season : but they came to Baal-peor, and separated themselves unto the shameful thing, and became abominable, like

that which they loved." (Hosea 9.10, R.V.). The olive tree goes back to Abraham, the fig to the *wilderness*, where God had a people for His own possession. We would not expect to find grapes in the wilderness : the verse tells us of the joy He found in His people in the midst of a world alien to Himself. In the wilderness, away from Egypt's influences, they appeared practically what He had constituted them—righteous. Note the repetition of the word "first" in the verse: how God prizes the first movements of His people towards Himself! And how easy for that "first love" to be left! Yet Israel failed in their separation to God as a righteous nation, and became abominable, like that which they loved. They took character, as we do, from their associates.

Hebrews 12 : 11 speaks of "the peaceable fruit of righteousness." Jotham's parable tells us of the sweetness of the fig tree. What a lovely character the man under the fig tree must have had, of whom the Lord could say, "Behold an Israelite indeed in whom is no guile!"—John 1 : 47. Nathanael under the fig tree had been confessing his own lack of righteousness, on the lines of *Psa. 32*, which should be read in this connection. *Psa. 32* is the first Psalm of the "Maschilim"—the wise ones of *Dan. 11 : 33*, the faithful remnant of the coming day who will draw special instruction from these particular Psalms—32, 42, 44, 45, 52, 53, 54, 55, 74, 78, 88, 89, 142. If we link *Psa. 43* with 42, we get fourteen of these in all. Nathanael is found by Philip, whose name means "lover of the house," National Israel, in *Psa. 32* may be like the horse or mule that has no understanding, but Nathanael, as one of the Maschilim, is one in whose spirit is no guile, and as brought to the Lord calls Him the Son of God and the King of Israel—a true remnant confession. We are not surprised that John omits the cursing of the fig : in his first chapter, we see a man who represents the righteous remnant amongst the nation.

Similarly, in *Jeremiah 24*, the nation is divided into two classes, "very good figs, like the figs that are first ripe"—indeed, as in the wilderness; and "very naughty figs." The good figs represented the righteous part of the nation who had accepted the Lord's judgement, and had gone into captivity. The burden of *Jeremiah's* ministry was that the people should know that it was God Who had raised up *Nebuchadnezzar*, and to go against him was to go against God. The

naughty figs would not accept this. It is the teaching of Hebrews 12 : despise not thou the chastening of the Lord,—those marked out as very good had indeed accepted it. “Now no chastening for the present seemeth joyous, but rather grievous, yet afterward, it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby. The righteousness seems to be practical here rather than what we have been constituted as in 2 Corinthians 5, 21. Jeremiah tells the same story as Hebrews 12. The faithful part of the nation submitted to the chastening of God. That discipline leads to their good (vvs. 5,6), and produces practical righteousness—“they shall return to Me with their whole heart” (7).

Fig tree exercises amongst the people of God then, would involve a development of those sweet qualities of character that God looks for in a people that He has constituted righteous. Amos was a gatherer of wild figs (Amos 7 : 14, A.V.mg.). What a work for each of us, in the sphere God has placed us in, that we might encourage the Lord’s people in the development of that “sweetness and good fruit.” The fig is twice linked with restoration and healing in the Scripture—in the case of the Egyptian in the field (all the marks of the world) in 1 Sam. 30 : 12; and in the case of Hezekiah, Isa 38 : 21. Hezekiah’s boil would speak of an eruption of the flesh to disturb the spiritual life : happy he, who, by his sweetness and good fruit, can exercise an influence that will lead to spiritual recovery and to an increase of praise —“we will sing *my* songs to the stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of the Lord.” (Isa. 38 : 20).

Luke 13 : 6-9 tells the story of the failure of the righteous remnant of the restoration, to bring forth fruit in the time of the Lord. And so Israel, with no real fruit of righteousness, have been removed, as the cursing reminds us : but their future as a righteous nation is hinted at in Matt : 24 : 32, and in the Song of Songs 2 : 13, where, after the winter, associated with the remnant’s sufferings, the fig tree putteth forth her green figs. Olive and fig tell the same story, that Israel has a glorious future. And what a sweetness will characterise them when, like Nathanael, they shall be presented as a righteous nation with “no guile!” And, beloved, the same sweetness and good fruit should characterise us!

THE VINE

What of the vine? "Thou broughtest a vine out of Egypt, Thou didst drive out the nations, and plantedest it." So runs Psa. 80 : 8, whence we learn that vine tree exercises began when Israel were given a place in the land. There, Israel was a choicest vine in a very fruitful hill—Isaiah 5 tells us. Not what the Lord did for this vine :

He fenced it—marking it off for His own.

He gathered out the stones thereof—Gentile nations thrust out of the land.

He planted it with the choicest vine—note His estimate of His people.

He built a tower in the midst—Jerusalem, cp. 2 Sam. 5 : 7.

He also made a winepress therein—the Temple, with its arrangements for bringing the people's offerings to God.

As such, Israel was called to bring pleasure to the heart of God, but instead of the voice of joy being found in the land, "He looked for judgement but behold oppression, for righteousness, but behold a cry." Isa. 5, 7. Indeed, "Israel was an empty vine,—empty for God—he bringeth forth fruit to himself." Hosea 10 : 1. "Yet had I planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed : how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me?" Jer. 2 : 21.

It is a relief to turn to John 15, and find there One Who can say, "I am the true Vine." Here is the Lord, the true Israel (cp. Isa. 49 : 3) bringing pleasure to the Father. Israel as a nation may have lost her vine tree privilege; prophesied in Isa. 5, declared in Psa. 80; under the Assyrian and Babylonian armies; failing to produce fruit, being only fit for fire, Ezek. 15. In contrast, the Lord, as the true vine, conveys joy to His own—"These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." (v. 11). His peace (14 : 27), His joy, His glory (17 : 22), all given to those who believe on Him, that they might take character from Him. With the Lord Jesus, we think of the One Who delighted the heart of the Father, and has made glad the hearts of those that believe on Him. Truly we can say, "Thy love is better than wine."

And until Israel, the vine that God brought out, is "visited," as Psa. 80 puts it, to bring forth real fruit for God, in association with the Lord Himself—"the stock which Thy

right hand hath planted, and the Branch which Thou madest strong for Thyself," we are called, in worship, to present to our God "spiritual sacrifices ACCEPTABLE TO GOD by Jesus Christ," 1 Peter 2 : 5. We are here for the pleasure of God, and our appreciation of His Son, and presentation of Him to the Father in worship, thrills His heart.

The olive, then, speaks of the spiritual supply that the saints should minister ; the fig, of the sweet character and moral goodness of the saints, which will affect others, and the vine, of the refreshment and joy we are to bring to God and man, as planted in a pleasant place, with everything that can minister to our growth. "Green olive trees," "first ripe figs," "noble vines" with "new wine"—all speak of freshness, and spontaneity in our character and service. May the Lord bless these things to us.

THREE GRAND REALITIES

(Psalm xxxii)

by C. H. MACKINTOSH

In this lovely psalm we have God presented to us in three ways. First, we have Him as our Justifier ; secondly, as our Hiding-place ; thirdly, as our Guide. These surely are "Three Grand Realities." Nor is it merely that God provides us with justification, security and guidance, though even this were rich and abundant mercy and goodness ; but there is far more than this, He Himself has become our Justifier, our Hiding-place and our Guide. Wondrous provision ! Such is the moral grandeur of redemption—such the way in which the God of all grace has met our need. If God Himself is my Justifier, I must be perfectly justified. If He is my Hiding-place, I must be perfectly hidden. If He is my Guide, I must be perfectly guided.

Let us then, as guided by the light of holy scripture, and in dependence upon the teaching of the Holy Spirit, proceed to consider, in the first place,

GOD OUR JUSTIFIER

"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile." Oh ! the blessedness ! Transgression forgiven—sin covered. There is deeply imbedded in man's religious mind the thought that

he has to meet God as a Judge—that he, as a sinner, has, in some way or another, to satisfy the claims of a righteous Judge who will deal with him about his sins and exact the very last farthing. As the dying gipsy exclaimed, when told that he was standing at the very portal of the eternal world, “What! must I gang afore the Judge wi’ a’ my sins upon me!” Tremendous inquiry! If I have to meet God as my Judge, it is all over with me. “Enter not into judgement with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.” (Psa. cxliii. 2.) Hence, therefore, a soul, looking at God as a Judge, must be filled with terror, inasmuch as he cannot answer Him one of a thousand. “Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?” You cannot meet God as a Judge. Condemnation must be the issue of a meeting between a righteous Judge and a guilty sinner.

But, thanks be to God, He wears another character now. He is a righteous Justifier. Yes, a Justifier of such as cannot meet Him as a Judge. God must be righteous in whatever sphere He displays Himself. Whether as a Judge or a Justifier, He must be just. But, in this day of grace, during the acceptable year, the day of salvation, He is revealing Himself as “a just God and a Saviour”—a righteous Saviour-God. What a character! What a stupendous triumph of redeeming love! What an answer to Satan! What a balm for the convicted conscience and stricken heart! A Saviour-God! It is the very title which suits a lost sinner. It brings God near to me in the very condition and character in which I find myself. If God is a Saviour, it is precisely what suits me as lost. If God is a Justifier, it is exactly what I need as guilty. None but a lost sinner can have to do with a Saviour-God. None but a guilty sinner can have to do with God as a righteous Justifier. Nothing can be simpler. It places salvation and justification on a basis as simple as it is solid, and as solid as it is simple. God reveals Himself as a Saviour; the believing sinner walks in the light of that revelation, and is saved. God reveals Himself as a Justifier; the believing sinner walks in the light of that revelation, and is justified.

He is saved and justified according to the perfect standard of God's revelation of Himself. It is impossible to stand on more solid ground or occupy a more unassailable position than this. To touch the believer's salvation and justification is to mar the integrity of God's revelation.

And let the anxious reader remember who it is that God justifies, for this point is only second in importance to the question of who is the Justifier. Who, then, does God justify? Is it good people? Where are they? Is it those who have done their duty? Are any such to be found? Is it those who have fulfilled the law? Such would not need His justification, seeing that "the man that doeth these things shall live in them." If, therefore, a man could fulfil the law, he should have no transgression to be forgiven, no sin to be covered, and hence a Saviour-God—a righteous Justifier, is not for him. This is obvious. A man who has wrought out a legal righteousness does not want an evangelical one. "If righteousness come by law, Christ has died in vain." There was no use in His dying to get us righteousness, if it could be had some other way.

Who, then, does God justify? Hear it, anxious inquirer! He justifies the ungodly. Yes; such is the veritable language of holy scripture. "Now to him that *worketh* is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that *worketh not*, but believeth on him that *justifieth the ungodly*, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness *without* works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." (Rom. iv. 4-8).

Here then we get our answer, full, clear, distinct and conclusive. Two characters are placed in contrast, namely, "him that *worketh*," and "him that *worketh not*," and this contrast completely upsets all man's thoughts. It never could have entered into man's mind to conceive that righteousness was to be had without working for it—that God could justify the ungodly. And yet this is the very doctrine of scripture. If man could get righteousness by working for it, then clearly it would not be divine righteousness, for the simplest of all reasons, that this latter is to "him that *worketh not*." If God reveals Himself as the Justifier of the ungodly, then

is it a sheer denial of the revelation for man to come before Him in any other character. If I, as a sinner, bring my duties to God, I must meet Him as a Judge, for surely He must judge my duties to see if they are all right. But if I bring my sins to Him, He meets me as a Justifier with a full and free forgiveness and an everlasting righteousness. The peculiar glory of the gospel is that it reveals God as the righteous Justifier of poor ungodly sinners.

This is a marvellous truth. And if it be asked, as surely it must, by every exercised conscience, on what ground does this grand reality hold good? the answer is as clear and satisfactory as the most anxious soul can possibly desire. It is this—God, as a Judge, dealt with my sins at the cross, in order that God as a Justifier might deal with me at heaven's side of the empty tomb of Jesus. The death of Christ, therefore, forms the ground on which God can righteously justify the ungodly. A righteous Judge condemned sin on the cross, that a righteous Justifier might pardon and justify the guilty. What a profound mystery! Well may angels desire to look into it; and well may sinners, whom it so blessedly concerns, bless and praise Him who has counselled, revealed and wrought it all for them, through the accomplished atonement of Christ.

And here we would pause a moment in order to put a plain, pointed question to the reader. Dear friend, do you know God as your Justifier? Or, are you still thinking of meeting Him as a Judge? If so, you must be miserable. You can never enjoy true peace until you know and believe that God as a Judge has nothing against you as a sinner; nay more, that He Himself is your Justifier; that, in the death and resurrection of Christ, He has revealed Himself as a just God and a Saviour to you, an ungodly sinner.

THREE MEN IN JOHN'S THIRD EPISTLE

by J. G. GOOD

In this brief letter, the aged apostle John, sketches for us, three character portraits, two commended, and one condemned. There is teaching of the utmost importance, to all in assembly fellowship, contained within the compass of this short Epistle, focused upon Gaius, Diotrephes and Demetrius.

John notes the individual, this is emphasised in his Gospel,

where in chapter 1, in the space of eleven verses he mentions no less than five individuals. Surely if a lesson has to be learned, it is this, that a Divine record is being kept of my actions and motives, and that we at the Bema of Christ (2 Corinthians 5-10), shall be given the Lord's assessment of the deeds done in the body. What a solemn and a sobering thought. The Lord Jesus SAT over against the treasury, He SAW the rich casting in out of their abundance, and the widow her two mites, and He SAID, "Ye have done it unto Me." He is still sitting, and seeing and in a coming day will say! Will our life's work be able to stand the test.

(a) *Gaius*. There are three brethren at least in the New Testament bearing this name, Gaius of Corinth, (1 Corinthians 1. 14), Gaius of Derbe, (Acts 20. 4,5), Gaius of Macedonia (Acts 19. 29), and the Gaius addressed by Paul in chapter 16 of the Roman Epistle, verse 23, "Gaius mine host." Whatever the identity of the Gaius addressed by John, he certainly was of outstanding spiritual calibre, illustrated by the traits of character outlined by John.

1. *He was Worthy of John's affection.*

Gaius had a place in the affection of John, engendered no doubt by the sterling character of the brother, the quality of his service, and his devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. *He was Weak in body.*

How often is this the case with so many of the Lord's servants, suffering from some physical infirmity, is it not this very handicap which diverts the mind's attention from the temporal and tangible to the spiritual and eternal, we can in our day and age, think of many, who from a bed of sickness have made a tremendous contribution to the work of the Lord.

3. *He was Well in soul.*

Spiritual prosperity of the highest order, we live in a day when what is recognised is not so much my state of soul, but my material possessions, never let us make this substitute, the material for the spiritual, "He gave them their requests but sent leanness into their soul" (Psalm 106-15). and again "Men shall praise thee when thou doest well for thyself" (Psalm 49-18).

4. *He Walked in Truth.*

Not merely knowing the truth, but the truth in action, in

practical, daily demonstration, a walk governed by the Word of God.

5. *He Worked faithfully.*

If there is to be a standard to apply to our service today, what better than that which is found in verse five, "Beloved thou doest faithfully, whatsoever thou doest to the brethren and to strangers" in our varied spheres of service we apply ourselves with varying degrees of zeal, but Gaius was consistent, to those well known, or to those unknown, he extended unstinting hospitality! Let us differentiate between hospitality to the servants and the social round which is the arrangement operating in so many assemblies today, there was no partiality with the hospitality offered by Gaius!

(b) *Diotrephes* was singled out for the condemnation of John for the following reasons;

1. *He was a Pre-eminent man.*

"He loveth to have the pre-eminence" loveth, the present continuous tense, never content unless in the lime light. *Diotrephes* was a man of ability, perhaps out of his place, but nevertheless able to assert himself as a leader or to use a term foreign to Scripture "a leading brother." He had usurped the place reserved alone for the Lord Jesus "that in all things He might have the pre-eminence" (Colossians 1 - 18). The situation is fraught with danger, when a brother asserts himself as the alone mouth-piece of God, monopoly of the gatherings of the saints retarding the operation of the Spirit of God, a desire to sit in the judgement seat, lording over God's heritage.

2. *He was a Persecuting man.*

He put the saints out, and would not let the servants in! John writes "I wrote unto the church, but *Diotrephes*" this brother had assumed full control, he acted as a dictator in matters relating to the assembly. What a state of affairs exists when *Diotrephes* is allowed to usurp authority in any company. John writes "When I come I will bring to remembrance." Never let us forget that meekness is not weakness, to tolerate the actions of a *Diotrephes* without a murmur, is not in the best interests of the saints, we should seek to expose such an one, by the Scriptures of Truth, that the errors of his ways should be manifest.

Too often it is the case, that a lack of exercise among the saints, allows such brethren to exert themselves, and there is a difference between the brother who has something to say, and the brother who must say something!

3. *He was a Prating man.*

Make no mistake about it, Diotrephes could speak fluently, he could exploit a situation to his own advantage, he could point out unscriptural practices when it suited him to do so! "With evil words" O the havoc that can be wrought by a back-biting tongue, to misrepresent or discredit a brother or a sister, by suspicion and gossip, critical of their simplicity or lack of education, it is tragic but true! This word prating is connected with false accusation. The leprosy that afflicted Miriam physically, could affect us spiritually, if we engage in this type of conduct which can only bring reproach upon us, as individuals and as a collective company.

(c) *Demetrius* like *Gaius* was a stalwart in the things of God, the brother with a testimony in triplicate.

1. "*Hath good report of all.*" How important this is, that in every department of our lives, our testimony can be corroborated, consistency is a scarce commodity today. "Him whose words and acts agree let his footsteps praised be," so sayeth the Indian proverb. The Demoniac of Gadara was told by the Lord in Mark 5 "Go home and tell thy friends." This incident recorded by Luke says "Go home and shew thy friends." Apparently there was a link between the sayings and the doings of *Demetrius*. The world may not agree with us, but it is good when we can be acknowledged as having "been with Jesus." We cannot measure the impact upon the world of a consistent, regulated, godly testimony.

2. "*By the Truth itself.*"

This must be the apex of Christian experience, that the truth finds an answer in our lives. Some commentators believe that the truth mentioned in verse twelve refers to the Holy Spirit, so that the testimony of *Demetrius* was not only recognised by men in general but by God Himself; a Divine attestation of a life lived in the power of the Holy Spirit!

3. "*And we also bear testimony.*" There is so much flattery today, when we have become obsessed with personalities, and this is allowed to cloud our own personal convictions. There is a marked absence of this type of commendation given by John in respect of Demetrius, without bias, an outright approval of a transparent life of testimony. I am reminded of the words penned on the fly leaf of a Bible, "Give me grace O Lord to LIVE, 'tis easier far to die."

HOLD FAST — I COME QUICKLY

I come quickly—an oft repeated promise. A hope laid up in Heaven. An inheritance reserved for you. Sure ! Steadfast! The solemn word of Him who is the Truth : "I will come again." Let us live expecting Him whom our souls adore. He will break the silence, pierce the gloom of the darkening night at any moment now. His commanding will call us all away. "Caught Up"—how grand a word—taken hold of, lifted up, lifted out, caught away, Raptured! "And so shall we be forever with the Lord.

Oh, for the moment when our eyes shall first behold Him.

"Oh what will it be in Thy presence, when first

The sight of His glory upon us shall burst."

. . . those eyes, that face, those hands, those feet—

Himself—Altogether lovely.

It may be this year, this month, this week, Today ! We know not when, we certainly know He comes !

The night is dark, the days are perilous, the love of many waxes cold, the world prepares for its final leader and its doom. But He is coming for us ("I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth"—Revelation 3, 10) and we shall afterward come with Him and He shall reign.

His word to us — "Hold fast that which thou hast" — *A little strength* (weak but cling to His power) *His word* — read it, love it, cherish it, guard it, but even more important, obey it ! His name—love it, adore it, sing it, preach it, cling to it, gather to it, live for it. He comes! He comes! He comes!
—*Note from the Editor.*

"Why seek ye the Living among the dead, He is not here but is risen."—Luke 24 : 5, 6.

The history of many a derelict along the highway of theology is the sad story of the surrender of belief in the Resurrection of Jesus, followed eventually by the discarding of a simple faith in the shed blood of Calvary. "He died the just for the unjust that He might bring us to God." But that was not enough. God forever vindicated the sacrifice of the Son by giving back to Him the life that was surrendered. Down through the ages men have gladly died for a cherished faith, but from the beginning of time until now One only has come back to verify that the sacrifice was worth the making.

—F. P. Warren.

NOTES BY THE COMMITTEE

There is a spot where spirits blend,
Where friend holds FELLOWSHIP with friend;
Though sundered far, by faith we meet
Around one common MERCY-SEAT.

What a wonderful thing is fellowship, as revealed in the Scriptures! It is sharing together our riches in Christ. It is produced by the grace of our God, and is the result of the redemption work of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ. It is pleasing to our God, and it brings joy to the hearts of His redeemed people. The Scriptures reveal that it enables us to be companions and partakers, contributing and distributing, by our communications one with another. In the Apostles' days the saints "continued steadfastly" in it. (Acts 2 : 42). May this characterize each of us till our Lord be come, for then we shall enjoy it more fully in the ages to come.

As we review the year now past we praise our God for manifesting this fellowship through our little magazine. For the help and guidance given to our (Honorary) Editor we thank our faithful God. To our dear brethren who gave much time and study in submitting papers for our edification and profit we offer our sincere and heart-felt thanks. Again, we gratefully acknowledge the practical fellowship of so many of the Lord's people in our assemblies, or, who individually, made it possible for us to continue the publishing of the magazine during 1975, and we warmly thank all those who included us in the fellowship of prayer.

Despite rising costs of material, production and postal charges, we praise our God for meeting our needs, and encouraging us to arrange for the continuance of the magazine throughout another year, in His will. The fellowship, as revealed in these various ways, by so many of the Lord's people, moves our hearts in gratitude to our God.

NEW READERS ARE WELCOMED. For the guidance of these suffer us to repeat what we have previously stated. We shall be pleased to supply, post paid, copies of future issues, on request.

Please state NUMBER required that can be distributed profitably. The quantity can be amended at any time of the year. Kindly supply NAME AND ADDRESS WITH POSTAL CODE, IN BLOCK LETTERS, as most countries will shortly be operating computer sorting.

BACK NUMBERS are also obtainable on request, but we regret that many are now out of print. We can no longer send complete sets, but such as we have shall be willingly sent.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS. Kindly send these promptly with postal codes, but where possible, please obtain copies through the assembly parcel. Bulk despatch reduces labour and costs. As the magazine is issued through the free-will offerings of the Lord's people, it is the RESPONSIBILITY OF ALL TO AVOID WASTE AT ALL TIMES.

We shall appreciate efforts to introduce the magazine to your assembly, and to any Christians who may profit by it.

Please "CONTINUE STEADFASTLY" in the fellowship of prayer for us. We thank all those who do so. God delights to answer prayer.

ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY

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“Small Things”

*“It is accepted according to that a man hath,
and not according to that he hath not.”*

—2 Corinthians 8 : 12.

Only a drop in the bucket,
But every drop will tell;
The bucket would soon be empty,
Without the drops in the well.

A word now and then of comfort,
That costs me little to say;
But the poor old man died happy,
And it helped him on the way.

God loveth the cheerful giver,
Though the gift be poor and small;
What doth He think of His children,
When they never give at all?

—Words in Season

CHRIST IN THE HEBREWS

by J. B. HEWITT, Chesterfield

"The Introducing Christ"

Chapter Four, Vv. 1-13.

The Lord Jesus is greater than Isaac in heirship, (1, 2); than angels in Sonship and relationship (1, 4; vv. 11-14); than Adam in rulership (2, 5-9); than Moses in apostleship and stewardship (ch. 3), and now greater than Joshua in Leadership (ch. 4). Christ is the Sanctuary rest, the true Rest-Giver (Matt. 11, 28-30). He is greater than Joshua in His victory (v. 8, Josh. 23, 1), the Victorious One. Greater than David in the Sanctuary (v. 7; Ps. 95, 6-11; 132), the Gracious One. Greater than Caleb in His consistency (3, 16b), the Faithful One; and greater than Solomon in His clemency, (4, 16), the Merciful One.

The Rest of God (vv. 1-11)

To save us from wandering

The Call to Rest (v. 1, 2). Exhortation to godly fear. The promise of entering the "Rest" of God remains open and this calls for faith. No earthly Canaan could exhaust the meaning of that rest. Israelites missed Canaan because they did not add faith to the promises of God (v. 2). The application is made to us in verse 2. God always works on the principle of faith. It is exemplified in the offering of Abel, the obedience of Abraham and the choice of Moses, and in each case faith was rewarded by the blessing of God.

These "Hebrews" are exhorted not to come short of it as Israel did in their day (vv. 1, 11). Some of the promises are given in Exodus 23, 20-33, and they needed to be received by an obedient faith. Genuine faith is always obedient and persistent. The Rest God provided was preached unto them and unto us (v. 2).

The Character of Rest (v. 3-10). In verse 4 we have Creation rest. God rested after the work of creation was completed, this is rest typified because of a work done. In verse 3 it is Christian rest, rest realised because of faith exercised; faith is the key that opens the door. In verse 8 it is Canaan rest, rest prophesied, because of victory won. Some Israelites did enter Canaan with Joshua, but even these did not enjoy the final rest which God has prepared for those who love Him. Verse 9 is Celestial rest, this is anticipated because of the work of redemption; God rested after His work of creation (v. 4); Christ rested after His work of redemption (1, 3); Rest

is not cessation from work, nor inaction but the perfecting of activity. Exodus 31, 17 reminds us that the Sabbath is a sign between God and the children of Israel for ever. He called Israel to share His rest in creation, by appointing the seventh day as a sign between Himself and them. Creation did not exhaust God's rest, because He spake by Moses to Israel of a rest long after creation was finished. This description of His rest is connected with Canaan for this was His purpose for them. They failed to enter (v. 5), so God spake of another day of rest, which is deeper and more spiritual—a Sabbath rest, ceasing from one's own works. This promise was made five hundred years after Joshua, (v. 8), had given some rest.

We enjoy today the rest of salvation of the forgiven sinner—entered in the past (Matthew 11, 28). The rest of service, of the willing servant—enjoyed in the present and the rest of satisfaction, as glorified saints—experienced in the future (Hebrews 4, 9) all through the gateway of faith in God. Compare this chapter with the teaching of Leviticus chapters 23 and 25. The Sabbath day—rest from physical toil (Lev. 23 v. 1-3); the Sabbatic week—rest in spiritual life and labour (23 v. 10-22); the Sabbatic month—rest in spiritual worship (23 v. 24-33); the Sabbatic seventh month—rest in spiritual frames of mind (v. 34-44); the Sabbatic seventh year—rest in spiritual freedom (Lev. 25 v. 4-7); and the Sabbatic Jubilee—rest in spiritual hope (25, 8-55).

Rest in Christ (v. 9, 10). Moses led Israel to the border of the land of promise; but Joshua introduced them to the rest of Canaan. So the law led only up to Christ, it is Christ alone who leads us into the heavenly rest.

There is rest from weariness, sorrow and sin (v. 8); and rest in the completion of God's new creation (v. 9); this rest will never end.

In that eternal rest we will worship and serve our God, but without fatigue, distress, affliction or persecution. In that day we will gladly acknowledge that our entrance in to that rest depends entirely upon the redemptive achievement of Christ. Jesus is better than Joshua since He provides a better rest than Joshua did. Joshua in his life and work is a good illustration if not a type of Christ. There are many similarities, but Christ is greater in many ways. Better because of His Distinct Sonship, diligence in service, dependance upon

God, devotion to duty and displacement of all other servants. Unlike Joshua He never depended upon flesh and blood (Numbers 13); was never directed by human wisdom (Joshua 3 : 3, 4); never dismayed by superior forces (Joshua 8, 1; 7, 6; 10, 2); and never deceived by any enemies (Joshua 9, 4) nor ever defeated in any conflict.

Thus our Lord is the introducing Christ, leading us to rest and victory. God desires from us now, for present enjoyment, an attitude of soul which will give us glorious rest of heart and produce in us loyalty of conduct and character.

Our Response to His Rest (v. 11 R.V.). Here is the application of the argument of the previous verses, "Let us give diligence" and "today." For us God's "today" has arrived. The works of Judaism avail nothing so we should be diligent to enjoy God's rest provided in Christ. The spirit of disobedience that marked the people of Israel in refusing to enter the land of Canaan is a warning to us today. Unbelief leads to disaster and Israel's attitude betrayed an indescribable hardness of heart a wilful rebellion of spirit and a strange narrowness of mind. The warning closes with a two-fold reminder, first about the Word of God (v. 12), and then about God Himself (v. 13). The judicial power of the Word of God is seen here. It doomed the disobedient Israelites to exclusion from Canaan and shall exclude the unbelieving from heaven. Their disobedience was direct opposition to the Will of God.

The Word of God (v. 12-13) *To save us from wilfulness*

The "Word" of God is personified here, and endowed with all the attributes of God Himself, with whom it's identified, v. 13. The identification, however, is with God, not with the Son, for there is no trace of the Personal Word or Logos here. The Word of God is a minister of death to those who reject it and of life to those who receive it. (2 Corinthians 2, 15, 16). The word is living, it possesses life, power and efficiency, is actively alive, constantly active. It is active—it possesses energy, energetically efficacious; as such it is meaningful to us, applicable to our lives. It is "sharper," it has power, it has an incisive and penetrating quality. It lays bare self-delusions, judges the unseen motives of the heart. "Piercing" means to "go through," signifying that the Word penetrates to the inmost recesses of our spiritual being. "Dividing" piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of

joints and marrow. The reference may be to the knife of the priest as he tested the lamb for sacrifice. "Discerner" or "critical of" gives the idea of discrimination and judgement blended together. It takes cognisance of the emotions and purposes, as well as the actions which they produce. This word sits in judgement, upon us and upon unbelief which leads to departure from God.

In view of its power it is perilous to trifle with it. The Word of God convicts (Hebrews 4, 12); it converts (Psalm 19, 7); it cleanses (John 15, 3); it corrects (2 Timothy 3, 16); it confirms (John 8, 31); it consecrates (John 17, 17) and it comforts (Psalm 119 : 30, 54). The Word that searches, expresses and represents God Who is Omniscient and is our Judge. From Him there is nothing concealed — all things are naked in His sight. There is no covering possible, either natural or artificial, that can hide us from the eyes of God (Genesis 3 : 7, 10, 13).

Everything revealed, the word "laid open" means 'having the throat exposed' with the head bent back. This may be a reference to the sacrificial victim slain for the altar. Nothing escapes the notice of God, He is absolutely Omniscient. There is a day of reckoning coming, and we will have to give account to God of our life.

May we live each day in the light of "that day" and test our living by allowing the Word of God to criticise us, may we tremble at His Word. It will keep our thoughts and affections subjected to the Will of God and it will help us to appreciate the Lord Jesus, Who represents us before the Throne of God. We have a Priest there to save us from weakness.

THREE GRAND REALITIES (continued)

(Psalm xxxii)

by C. H. MACKINTOSH

Having considered this unassailable ground of peace; we most earnestly pray you to ponder it. If you are really anxious about your soul's salvation, you need not lay down this paper until you possess divine certainty that you are justified, and that God is your Justifier. Blessed certainty! May you know it now, through simply believing on Him who justifieth the ungodly, and you will then be able to follow us with intelligence and comfort while we dwell, in the second place,
on

GOD OUR HIDING-PLACE.

It is a remarkable fact, that so long as the sinner is at enmity with God, he is at peace with himself; at peace with the world; at peace with the devil; but the moment he is brought into full peace with God, he is at enmity with himself, with the world, and with the devil. Hence, no sooner do I know God as my Justifier than I have to cope with a host of spiritual enemies, within and around. This makes me conscious of another need; I want a hiding-place into which I may retreat at all times, nay, rather out of which I may never venture to shew myself. Now, God is this Hiding-place. "Thou art my hiding-place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance." What a difference between the condition of the soul here and in the third and fourth verses! "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer." What a contrast between the "roaring" of a sinburdened soul fearing judgement, and the "songs of deliverance" of a justified soul, hidden in God! And yet it is far better to roar in disquietude of spirit, than to cry, Peace, where there is no peace. True anxiety is vastly to be preferred to a false peace. But the believer has neither the one nor the other. His anxiety has been hushed into truthful repose by the knowledge of God as his Justifier and Hiding-place; and therefore instead of the roarings of disquietude, he can sing songs of deliverance. Blessed exchange! Instead of crying out, "Oh! the wretchedness!" he can sing aloud "Oh! the blessedness!" "Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance." "If God be for us, who can be against us!" "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place."

These are some of the "songs of deliverance" with which a Saviour-God doth compass about His justified and hidden ones. Would that we were more filled with them! Alas! that we should be more characterised by murmurings and complainings than by songs of triumph. Surely, if we would but ponder our mercies and blessings more deeply, our songs would be more abundant. Who have such reason to be glad as those who are justified by, and perfectly hidden in, God?

But we must close this paper by a brief reference to the third point in this lovely scripture, namely,

GOD OUR GUIDE.

This we may truly say is a grand reality. Yes, and we want it as we pass along through the labyrinths of this wilderness-world, in this day of perplexity and confusion. We want a Guide and God has undertaken to fill that office for us. "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go : I will guide thee with mine eye." What precious grace ! It is as though our God would meet us at each stage of our path and manifest Himself in the very character in which we need Him. When bowed down with guilt, and roaring in disquietude, our bones waxing old, and our moisture dried up, He shines before us as our Justifier—our Saviour-God—pardoning our transgressions and covering our sins. When surrounded by hosts of spiritual enemies, who would crush us in a moment, He opens His bosom to us, and invites us to find, in Himself, a retreat and a hiding-place from them all ; so that, instead of feeling ourselves compassed with foes, we are compassed with songs. And, finally, when called to pass through scenes of confusion and perplexity, He, in infinite grace, stands before us and says, "I will guide thee." What grace ! What nearness ! What intimacy !

And mark the way He guides. "I will guide thee with *mine eye*." This, as we know, is the most tender, delicate and affectionate description of guidance. We must be very intimate with a person and very near him, in order to be guided by the movement of his eye. It is a far more refined and exquisite sort of guidance than the movement of the hand or the sound of the voice. I must be gazing directly into a person's face in order to catch the glance of his eye ; and I must be intimately acquainted with his wishes and his ways, in order to interpret the glance and act upon it.

O that we entered more fully into all this ! Would that the guidance of our Father's eye were ever sufficient for us ! Would that we could just place our hand in His, and, gazing up into His countenance, be ever guided by the movement of His eye ! Then would our path be clear and safe, simple and happy. We should not, like the impetuous "horse," or the obstinate "mule," require the "bit and bridle" of circumstances ; but through communion with His mind we should know His will. How often are we at a loss as to our path ! How often are we ill at ease ! And why ? Because the guid-

ance of the eye is not understood. We ask God for guidance in reference to movements which He does not want us to make, and as to paths in which He does not want us to tread. "I don't know which way to turn," said some one lately to a christian friend. What was the reply? A very simple one. "Don't turn at all." Just so. If you don't see your way as to moving, it is very obvious you should stand still.

May all the people of God be enabled, by His Spirit, to walk as justified ones, to abide in their Hiding-place, and follow their Guide!

TABERNACLE GLEANINGS

by the late JOHN COWAN

It is our desire to take a look at the Tabernacle and, as guided by God the Spirit, to gather up for ourselves some of the riches of Spiritual thought that underlie the same.

We believe that a grounding in Tabernacle teaching provides a very substantial basis for a correct conception of the Assembly of the present day. The Spirit of God is able to engage, not merely our mind, but pictorially presenting to us, in picture form that, that is seen with the eye. Two senses are thereby engaged and the mental picture makes the grasping of Truth an easier task.

Before commencing to deal with the Tabernacle itself, we should like to look back a little and try to bring together some of the threads of Divine working and see how they are united together in this particular theme.

The Spiritual history of God's ancient people did not commence with the Tabernacle, but commenced in Egypt. There, under the shelter of precious paschal blood they were delivered from the rigor of Pharaoh's bondage and became in a night the people of the Lord, redeemed by precious blood. Here is the great truth of redemption, one moment under the bondage and slavery of Egypt, the next brought into the glorious liberty of the Sons of God. The message that Moses received from God for Pharaoh was, "Let my people go that they might serve me": God cannot be served or worshipped in Egypt, so Egypt must be left behind. Thus, out of Egypt, through the Red Sea, into the wilderness and unto God they come; and as God had said, "You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings and brought you unto myself" (Exodus 19. 4).

The word of God gives us a look at God's people in three different spheres, which, in the development of Divine purpose, bring us to the ultimate of God for His people. In Egypt they are under the Blood. In the wilderness they are under the Cloud, and in the land, each one is under his own vine and fig tree. From being prisoners in Egypt, they become pilgrims in the wilderness, and in the fulness of Divine purpose, become possessors in the Land—Redemption, Relationship, Reward. In Genesis there is no established economy in a collective way; it is only when we come to Exodus that the streams of Divine development begin to broaden out. All the seemingly different streamlets found in Genesis begin to run together, and to run into the widening river of Divine purpose, thus proving that what he has promised he is able also to perform. Not only has God now, a Redeemed people, but wonder of wonders, he wants to dwell in the midst of them. Thus, at this early date, we see the expectation of God from His people, seen in principle typically here, practically with the assembly of today and permanently in the Glory of eternity. "Behold the Tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people and God himself shall be with them, their God" (Revelation 21. 3). This then would bring us to our present study wherein we want to take a look at the Typical Tabernacle and gather up for ourselves, under the guidance of God the Spirit, some of the excellencies of Christ, as they are displayed for us in this typical way.

Psalm 29 says "Every whit of it uttereth His Glory," i.e. the Glory of Jehovah. It is worth while contrasting the Glory of Psalm 19 with the Glory of Psalm 29. In Psalm 19, the heavens declare the Glory of God, Elohim, The God of Creation, and upon this Glory every creature of God, without distinction, is allowed to feast themselves upon the wonder of His Creatorial work. There is a distinct difference in the Glory of Psalm 29. There it is the Glory of Jehovah, the God of Covenant relationship, and only those in Covenant relationship with Him are permitted to behold. This typical Tabernacle is a display of the Glory and Grandeur of the Lord Jesus in the variegated excellence and the multi-coloured beauty of His own person and work as it has been assimilated by His Saints, and now to be expressed by them as a Dwelling Place for God. God's people are now in the

good of a Remembrance of a Past Transaction associated with His Sufferings, and are resting in a Present Trust associated with His Sufficiency, and are rejoicing in a Prospective Triumph associated with His Supremacy.

The sweetness of our Present Enjoyment is supported by our Past Experience and sustained by our Prospective Expectation. Our love is now appreciating what our faith has appropriated, and our hope anticipates. In Exodus 24. 15-16 we have God calling to Moses out of the Cloud and saying unto him: Speak unto the Sons of Israel that they take for me an offering (a heave offering) of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart, ye shall take my offering and this is the offering ye shall take from them, Gold, Silver, Copper, Blue, Purple, Scarlet and Fine Twined Linen and Goats' hair. Rams' Skins dyed Red and Badgers' Skins, and Shittim Wood, Oil for the Light, Spices for the Ointment and for the Sweet Incense, Onyx Stones to be set in the Ephod and the Breastplate, and let them make for me a Sanctuary that I might dwell in the midst of them, according to all I shew thee. The pattern of the Tabernacle and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make. This is the third occasion in Exodus that God has called unto Moses in this particular way. First he called him out of the Bush (Exodus 3. 4), a Messenger on a Mission of Deliverance, then out of the Mountain (Exodus 19. 3), a Mediator with a Mandate of Demand. Now, it is out of the Cloud (Exodus 24. 15), a Master Workman with a Model of a Dwelling and the stern injunction to see that he makes it according to the pattern shewn him on the Mount.

Some idea of the wealth of Divine instruction contained in this wonderful structure might be gathered from the coverage that God gives it in His Word. Creation with all its wonder is dismissed by God with a few verses, yet, such is the Glory of the Tabernacle, that God is able to fill a number of books with its amazing detail, even down to its smallest pin, for every whit of it uttereth His Glory, the Glory of His Matchless Son.

Exodus then gives us the material of which it consists. Leviticus gives us the Ministry it contains, Numbers gives us the Movement it controls, while Hebrews gives us the Meaning it conveys. Let us look then briefly at the Material, every particle of which is an expression of Christ, not Christ

personally, but as he is seen in the Saints, and it is this that God requires to make a dwelling place for Him. Those excellencies and Glories that belong to Christ, but which have been apprehended and assimilated by His people He now requires, and opportunity is now given, that from devoted hearts driven by affection, there may be yielded up to Him. those preciousnesses in the abandon of Devoting love. This offering was not to be exacted by compulsion, nor to be regulated by prescription, but was to be the outflow of appreciative hearts; hearts driven by affection and made willing to yield up gladly and gratefully the expression of their gratitude and love.

This perhaps is the idea of the heave offering and conveys the thought that after every legitimate claim has been met, from that that remains, that, that could be claimed now as one's very own, even from that, one is prepared to gladly surrender to the claims of devoting love. This is seen in David in 1 Chronicles 29. 3, where he says, "Moreover, because I have set my affection to the House of my God, I have of mine own proper good (that, that remains) of Gold and Silver, I have given to the House of my God and above all that I prepared for the Holy House." This then is what God is prepared to accept, that, that speaks of Christ in the material described and given to God in the manner prescribed. To be acceptable, the material and the manner must coincide, for the Lord loveth a cheerful giver. Let us look then at the injunction given "Take for me" and "Make for me" — what words of condescending Grace. The Mighty God whose Glory fills the heavens desires now to find a habitation in the midst of His Redeemed people, saved by wondrous Grace.

LEPROSY

by J. G. GOOD

Leprosy in the Scriptures is a type of sin, reminding us that sin corrupts and pollutes, it is true that we received a once for all cleansing, when as sinners we accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour, but we must never forget that the danger of contracting defilement is a possibility, as we move through this world, which has become a vortex of iniquity. We need to know the daily cleansing of the laver of the Word (Psalm 119-9). Our daily salvation depends upon the regularity of our coming, unto God by Him (Heb.

7-25). The ministry of the High Priest is preventative, "to keep us from falling" (Jude 24), the work of the Advocate is restorative, "if any man sin" (I John 2-1). We associate leprosy with the sin problem, in the presentation of the Gospel, this can equally be applied to the saints, who become leprous by pursuing a path of disobedience to the revealed Will of God as made known in His Word. Lessons can be learned as we look at individuals, who, acting independently of God, were subject to the government of God, and became leprous as a mark of Divine displeasure. Surely, the record of Holy Scripture, has been preserved for our warning and instruction (I Cor. 10-11).

Miriam, the Leprosy of Evil Speaking. (Numbers 12-10).

"Were you not afraid to speak against My servant" (Numbers 12-8), this indeed is a solemn warning to any who would indulge in this practice of slandering the servants of God, or their fellow believers. Paul in Gal. 5-15 warned of the dangers which would attend such actions, "biting and devouring one another" the opposing factions in the churches of Galatia, i.e. those who supported the legalisers and the others who were on the side of the libertines, both were equally engaged in this pernicious warfare. When we think of the dear saints who have suffered insults and abuses, the victims of backbiting, as a result of which, many have turned aside, this type of behaviour is indeed shameful, and can bring nothing but reproach in its wake. Psalm 15-2 speaks of the WALK, WORKS, and WORDS of a citizen of Zion! Are we displaying them in our individual lives, as citizens of no mean city?

There were no feelings of retaliation on the part of Moses, rather the reverse, verse 13, Moses prayed for Miriam, the meekness of Moses shines through in this incident. "Now the (great man) man Moses was very meek, above all the (mean men) men which were upon the face of the earth" (Num. 12-3). Moses, character wise, had a right to be proud, speaking after the manner of men, but the reverse was true, he was very meek. How solemn to think, that his strong point, under testing became his weak point. (Num. 20-10).

Gehazi, the Leprosy of Covetousness. (2 Kings 5-27).

It was too much for Gehazi the servant, to see his master Elisha refuse the wealth of Naaman, and he said, "I will run after him" verse 20, is this not the language of a covetous

heart, a desire to acquire and possess that which is not our own. If ever there was a besetting sin afflicting the people of God, it is this sin of covetousness. What a contrast to Gehazi is Abram in Gen. 14-23 who refused the gifts of the King of Sodom, and as a result had the promise of God, (Gen. 15-1), "Fear not Abram, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." We find kindred truth in the letter to the Hebrews, Chapter 13-5, where the Hebrew believers are exhorted "Let your manner of life be without love of silver" (Newberry) "and be content with such things as ye have." What had they? The bands of the wicked had robbed them, they had taken joyfully the spoiling of their goods. Yes they had lost material things, but the writer would remind them, that eternal blessings were theirs which they could never lose. "We HAVE in heaven a great High Priest" (Ch. 4-14). "Which hope we HAVE as an anchor of the soul" (Ch. 6-19). "Ye HAVE in heaven a better and an enduring substance" (Ch. 10-34). Surely the promise of the protection and presence of the Lord with us is the only anti-dote for covetousness.

Uzziah, the Leprosy of Presumption (2 Chron. 26-19).

The tragic record of a king, who moved out of his sphere, and sought to officiate as a priest, swift judgement following from the hand of God. God had reserved this dual office for One only, and that the Person of His beloved Son. Melchisedec was a king-priest, the Lord Jesus alone is the priest-king, Zech. 6-14 would remind us "For He shall be a priest upon His throne." When Isaiah in Ch. 6 has the vision of the Lord high and lifted up, the Spirit of God is careful to record that "it was in the year that king Uzziah died, the earthly throne vacated but the heavenly throne filled, by One who abides for ever. The seraphim or burning ones displayed features non-existent in king Uzziah. "Each one had six wings, with twain he covered his face, (Reverence) with twain he covered his feet, (Humility) and with twain he did fly" (Obedience) four wings for worship and two for service, God must have His portion first. A true worshipper knowing the holy character of God, will never be guilty of presumption in the presence of God! Presumption is a heinous sin in the sight of God, and is to be deplored when recognised among the people of God. "Neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me" (Psalm 131-1).

O that this lesson was indelibly written on our hearts that we might know our allotted place and sphere and to rejoice there in for His Glory.

"Their priesthood ran through several hands,
For mortal was their race,
Thy never changing office stands,
Eternal as Thy days."

"Their range was earth, nor higher soared,
The heaven of heavens is Thine,
Thy majesty and priesthood Lord,
Through endless ages shine."

THE LEADING OF THE SPIRIT

by DR. JOHN BOYD

This is phrase only associated by many with the Holy Spirit guiding believers as to what part they may take at the Remembrance Feast on the Lord's Day morning, in a prayer meeting, or at an 'open conference,' as though these were its only expression. We do well therefore to examine its occurrence in the New Testament to find out its meaning, and to learn its true application to the gatherings of the saints.

The term 'led of the Spirit' is used in the New Testament four times altogether—twice of the Lord (Matt. 4 : 1, Luke 4 : 1), and twice of believers (Rom. 8 : 14, Gal. 5 : 18). IN NO INSTANCE IS IT APPLIED SPECIFICALLY OR EXCLUSIVELY TO THE FUNCTIONING OF THE BELIEVER AT THE BREAKING OF BREAD MEETING

Notice first the leading of the Lord Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit. Here we are on holy ground, and we must tread softly—One Person of the triune Godhead is leading Another. But we can learn much from the temptation of the Lord in the wilderness of what is implied in the believer being led by the Spirit. Note the three expressions used of the Lord's going into the Temptation—Matthew 4 : 1, He was 'led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil'; Mark 1 : 12, 'the Spirit driveth Him into the wilderness'; Luke 4 : 1, 'Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost . . . was led by the Spirit into (RV in) the wilderness'

Matthew's account stresses the Lord's submission to the Holy Spirit, and co-operation with Him. Jesus was led for a special task—'to be tempted of the devil.' It would seem from the word Mark uses—'driveth'—that the Lord went in the

irresistible impulse of the Holy Spirit. From Luke's account we notice that the leading goes side by side with being full of the Spirit. Note, too, that Luke says Jesus was led *in* (RV) the wilderness. Not only was the initial move indicated by the Spirit, but every succeeding step was directed by Him. The verb 'led' in Luke is in the imperfect tense—He was constantly being led. Even after the temptation the Lord returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee (Luke 4 : 14).

Let us apply the Lord's example to the believer to-day. As the Holy Spirit directed the Lord to the wilderness, so does He teach the believer His will. To be assured of His leading one should be filled with the Spirit—continually seeking to walk in his control. The Spirit's direction will be easily appreciated if one is constantly listening for it. A readiness to co-operate with the Holy Spirit is essential, even though the task be difficult, or to the flesh unpleasant. Not only will the Spirit indicate when one should commence an undertaking, but He will continue to support and direct in that task.

Consider now the other two references to the leading of the Spirit. First, that in Romans 8 : 14 is in the middle of a section which teaches that though those in Christ Jesus are not under condemnation, yet in them are two conflicting powers—the flesh and the Spirit. The believer lives either 'after the flesh' or 'after the Spirit.' The former is opposed to God, and submission to it cannot please God.

The believer ought not to walk after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Paul gives a three-fold reason for this. (1) Those who are after the flesh are dead as far as communion with God is concerned (v. 13). Compare also the widow in 1 Timothy 5 : 6. (2) Those who are led by the Spirit manifest the dignity of sons of God (v. 14). The Son of God was led by the Spirit, and so may the sons of God. (3) Those who are born again have received the position of adopted sons (v. 15). The believer should rejoice in his dignity as a son, and manifest it by submission to the leading of the Spirit rather than to the dictates of the flesh.

The last reference is in Galatians 5 : 18. In 5 : 13 Paul envisages the believer as one freed from bondage—of the law in the case of the Jew (4 : 5), and of idolatry in the case of the Gentile (4 : 9). Both of these were fleshly activities. Paul was concerned lest the Galatians should be again en-

tangled by the flesh in submitting to legal ordinances. If they walked by the Spirit they would overcome the tendency to fleshly desires, for the flesh and Spirit are irreconcilable opposites in their lives. Walking by the Spirit means that the whole round of the christian's activities is directed by the Holy Spirit. One who willingly submits to being led by the Spirit is controlled by a different power from that of obedience to the law. A picture of this is seen in the life of Rebecca. When she placed herself under the control of Abraham's servant for the wilderness journey she was no longer under the compulsion of the law, either of her family, or her city (Genesis 24 : 10).

Thus the leading of the Spirit takes us out of the realm either of fleshly desires, or legal impositions. We must dispense with these. Instead of engaging in the works of the flesh we should display the fruit of the Spirit. Paul sums up in a practical way in 5 : 25-26. Seeing that we have life through the Spirit we ought to keep step with the Spirit, and so with each other. This will prevent self-seeking, or envying others.

When His guidance is sought the Holy Spirit leads in every department of our lives. The Lord who told Peter where to find fish (John 21 : 6) still enables His children to make business decisions. The Spirit guides in family matters (Genesis 24 : 40) He advances in secular life those who put God's kingdom first (Daniel 6 : 28); He gives directions in church matters (Acts 13 : 2).

The question will now be asked, How can the leading of the Spirit be known? Paul deals with this in 1 Corinthians 2 : 9-16. It is spiritually discerned—a faculty that comes with conversion. It is comprehended by faith. He who unreservedly casts himself on the Holy Spirit for His leading will ultimately recognise that he has been so led. Note the testimony of Abraham's servant, 'I being in the way, the Lord led me' (Genesis 24 : 27). It can be asserted after the event has taken place, even if not fully appreciated during the process of the leading.

THIS GUIDANCE IS NEVER AT VARIANCE WITH THE WORD OF GOD, FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL NOT CONTRADICT HIMSELF. He speaks through the Word (Hebrews 3 : 7), and leads in accordance with what is written therein. For example, the Holy Spirit will not lead

a believer into an unequal yoke with an unbeliever, in view of 2 Cor. 6 : 14. A mind stored with the Word of God will know how the Spirit is likely to lead, and will be quick to discern His guidance.

In Acts 16 : 6-10 divine guidance is illustrated. Note the expressions —‘were forbidden of the Holy Ghost’ (v. 6); ‘the Spirit suffered them not’ (v. 7); ‘they came down to Troas’ (v. 8); ‘a vision appeared to Paul’ (v. 9). How they came to know God’s call is indicated in the words ‘assuredly gathering,’ lit., joining things together (v. 10). *Thus the course of circumstances often points to the Spirit’s leading.*

What must one do to expect the leading of the Spirit? It is given in response to prayer, as David requested, ‘Let Thy good Spirit lead me’ (Psalm 143 : 10, RVm.). The Lord said that the Father would give ‘the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him’ (Luke 11 : 13). This is explained by comparing it with the parallel passage in Matthew 7 : 11, where Matthew uses the words, ‘good things’ instead of ‘the Holy Spirit.’ The gift of Luke 11 : 13 is the ‘good things that pertain to the Holy Spirit—His guidance and His instruction.

Again, those will be guided who are filled with the Spirit, and live in the conscious enjoyment of His presence. As the Spirit is opposed to the flesh, the believer cannot expect to be led by the Holy Spirit if he is controlled by the lusts of the flesh. These must be avoided. The flesh—the old sinful, selfish nature in us—has been crucified at conversion, and must constantly be reckoned so. The desires to which natural appetites impel us must be subdued.

(To be concluded)

APPRECIATION OF CHRIST

by **GEORGE FALCONER**

Appreciation of Christ should be our constant occupation. He is the source of all that we need in this scene below and will be the object of our praise and adoration in a day to come. The Father found delight in Him, in Him “whose delights were with the sons of men” (Proverbs 8 : 31). If, as His people, we desire to find delight and pleasure in our adorable Saviour, then our best course of action is to live near to Him. For they who live nearest to Him see most beauties in Him.

Luke’s gospel would point this fact out to us. Luke tells

us of four people who had the inestimable privilege of sitting at the feet of the Lord in appreciation.

THE WOMAN WHO WAS A SINNER

(Luke 7 : 36-50)

This narrative possesses all the lessons for us to copy if we also would appreciate the Saviour. She heard He was in the house of the Pharisee and she brought an "alabaster box of ointment" no doubt costly and sacrificial. Determined that she was going to anoint His feet. His personality must have touched her heart for she began to weep and with those tears she washed His feet, then kissed them, then anointed them with the ointment. The most memorable day in her history—the day her sins were forgiven—the day her faith saved her. The Lord reproved the Pharisee for not providing the common courtesies and thereby no doubt missed the Lord's blessing. Our appreciation of the Saviour will teach us that we must appreciate one another, that we "ought to esteem other better than ourselves" (Phil. 2 : 3), that we should have due regard to uphold the common courtesies of christian living, and no doubt such practices will lead to greater love for the people of God. How have we fared since that day when our sins were forgiven? Is He still to us the Incomparable Christ? Is He still head and shoulders above the rest? Is He still the real "I am?"

Secondly,

THE MAN WHO WAS DEMON POSSESSED

(Luke 8 : 26-36)

The people who witnessed this miracle were ready to tell others about it (v. 36). They saw the wonderful change in the man. That "Change" that took place in our lives should always be in evidence. This was always the case with the Apostle Paul and his conclusion on this particular point was the advice he gave to the Corinthian believers (2 Cor. 4 : 10) "Always bear about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh." When the Lord rid the demon possessed man, he was found sitting at the feet of Jesus clothed and in his right mind" (v. 35). Surely, the spiritual lesson here for the saints is this. When we are in our "Right Minds" is when we cultivate the "Mind of Christ" (Phil. 2 : 5). Lowliness, Self-Abasement, Humility. These qualities characterized the Lord. Should not we emulate Him. They marked the writer to the

Phillipians. The only follower of the Lord who dared to say "be ye followers of me even as I also am of Christ" (I Cor. 11 : 1). Since we trusted our Saviour for Salvation every one of us can testify to the "Lines," the "Pleasant Places," the "Goodly Heritage" of Psalm 16 v. 6. We owe it all to Him. May our appreciation of Him grow daily. May we never allow it to become "dim" through worldly pursuits. An impoverished soul is an unhappy one. Meditation of Him will be sweet.

Thirdly,

MARY AND THAT GOOD PART

(Luke 10 : 38-42)

Mary was found sitting at the feet of the Lord listening and learning. Her sister was "cumbered with much serving." The Lord did not condemn her for that, but pointed out to Martha that Mary had chosen that "good part" "which shall not be taken away from her." The inference is obvious. Sitting at the Saviour's feet should be for us a daily exercise and experience. This is the place of safety and enjoyment. How easy it is to become tied to all kinds of good work. Works of mercy, activities perhaps with secular societies, with the moral welfare of man at heart, but nothing can compare with that 'good part.' We must set aside time each day to engage our hearts with that One who said : "Take my yoke upon you and learn of ME for I am meek and lowly in heart and ye shall find rest unto your souls." "For my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Matt. 11 : 29-30). Most of us deprecate and deplore the low spiritual state which has overtaken the people of God, but here is the way to recovery—developing a greater appreciation of the One who has blessed us beyond estimation.

Fourthly,

THE CLEANSED LEPER

(Luke 17 : 11-19)

Ten lepers cried for mercy (v. 13). On their way to the priest they were healed, but only one returned to give God thanks. With "a loud voice he glorified God and fell down on his face at the feet of Jesus." No appreciation on the part of the nine—only one gave thanks. The charge of human failure could be attributed to the nine. But can that charge be levelled at the saints? Have we forgotten that "in Him we live, move and have our being?" (Acts 17 : 28). "What hast

thou that thou didst not receive? . . . why dost thou glory as if thou didst not receive it?" (I Cor. 4 : 17).

Beloved brethren, let us see to it that our appreciation of our Lord and Saviour never wanes but increases, so much so that traits of His character can be readily recognised in us. May the Lord satisfy our hearts so that we can constantly exult in Him enabling Him to become nearer and dearer to us. You will observe that these four people were all found at the 'Feet of Jesus' teaching us that humility is the ground of our appreciation. May we ever keep humble and say like John (Ch. 3:30) "He must increase and I must decrease."

STUDIES IN SOLOMON'S TEMPLE

by JOHN B. D. PAGE

THE ARK OF THE COVENANT

The Ark of the Covenant, the only piece of furniture taken from the Tabernacle into the Temple, was placed by the priests in the Holy of Holies and put under the outstretched wings of the two large cherubim which covered it. The priests drew out the staves from the Ark, placing them behind the Ark (II Chronicles 5 : 7-9, I Kings 8 : 6-8). The Ark is described in Exodus 25 : 10-22, and of course, not in Kings or Chronicles.

By bringing the Ark, which was of timber overlaid with "pure gold," into the Temple, it meant the introduction of "shittim wood," a wood of the wilderness whilst only wood of the Land had been used in the temple and for its furniture. The shittah tree grows in seasonally dried up river beds of the wilderness, and so it is not a majestic tree like a cedar but stunted in growth with its roots protruding above ground. Apparently, an allusion to the shittah tree is in Isaiah 53 : 2, where we read that the Servant of Jehovah "shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and a root out of dry ground; He hath no form nor comeliness . . ." Therefore, the shittah tree and its timber, shittim wood, depict the great stoop from Godhood to the lowest rank of Manhood even that of a slave, which the Lord Jesus became (Phil. 2 : 6-8).

Although unattractive, the shittah tree produces a fine grain wood, hard and durable, which may be the reason for "shittim wood" in Exodus 25 and onwards being rendered

“incorruptible wood” in the Septuagint Version, and it directs us to the sinless Manhood of the Lord Jesus.

The Ark of the Covenant is one of the most perfect types of the Person of Christ. The “shittim wood” speaks of His Manhood in humiliation and such wood signifies that, for His incarnation, the Son of God “was made in the likeness of men” and “in the likeness of sinful flesh” but sin apart (Phil. 2 : 7, Rom. 8 : 3). The “pure gold” is a symbol of His Deity. In the Person of Christ, “God was manifest in the flesh” (I Tim. 3 : 16). He was perfect God and perfect Man, and not partly divine and partly human. How God could become Man, and in His Manhood never cease to be God, and yet be one undivided Person, is beyond human comprehension, but it is the truth of Scripture. With the Ark in the temple, the “shittim wood” and the “pure gold,” symbols of His humanity and Deity respectively, are a constant reminder that God in Christ has identified Himself with us by way of incarnation, and yet remaining untainted by sin.

The Mercy Seat, which rested on the ark as a lid, was of “pure gold” (Exodus 25 : 17), and it was sprinkled with the blood of the sin offering by the high priest once a year (Lev. 16 : 14). Such a ritual under the Law prefigured how the claims of God’s righteousness have been met by the atoning death of Christ, and so the blood stained mercy seat becomes a place of mercy.

When placed in the Temple, there was nothing in the Ark except the two stone tablets inscribed with the ten commandments by the finger of God and put there by Moses at Horeb (I Kings 8 : 9, II Chron. 5 : 10). The law, which was God-given, demands obedience of which the Scriptures speak three times concerning Christ. As Man, He was obedient unto righteousness whereby many are made righteous (Rom. 5 : 19). As a Son, He learned obedience in yielding to His Father’s will (Heb. 5 : 8). As a Servant, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto the death of the cross (Phil. 2 : 8). His path of obedience led ultimately to His exaltation.

Christ is now Lord and our submission to His Lordship requires obedience from us. Initially, it means “obedience to the faith” like that of a great company of priests in the early church (Rom. 1 : 5, Acts 6 : 7), and subsequently “bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (II Cor. 10 : 5).

To the Old Testament saints, the mercy seat was the throne of God and the ark His footstool, for they beheld the Lord, symbolized by the Shekinah glory, sitting upon the mercy seat between the cherubim and reigning whilst they worshipped before the ark, His footstool (I Chron. 28 : 2, Psa. 99 : 1, 5). The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews may have had such scriptures in mind when he says, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in the time of need" (4 : 16).

A MEDITATION

by H. C. SPENCE

The Lord is good unto them that wait for Him, to the soul that *seeketh Him*. (Lamentations 3 : 25). The Psalmist's soul longings are expressed in (Psalm 27 : 8) When THOU saidst "Seek ye My face, my heart said unto THEE, THY face LORD will *I seek*."

We have a beautiful glimpse of a *seeking soul* in the 3rd Chapter of the Song of Solomon, verse 1, 2, 3, 4. Four times in these verses the spouse speaks of "Him Whom her soul loveth." A fervent love, out of a yearning heart seeking after her Beloved is very lovely to behold. "I sought Him and found Him not" in the streets, and in the broadways she sought "Him Whom her soul loveth" and her cry is the language of a seeking soul in earnest. (verses 2, 3). It was Himself the Lover of her soul that she was seeking, no one, but her Beloved could satisfy her deep longings. No one could take His place!

So the LORD JESUS Himself is the object and centre of the heart's affection. LORD JESUS! THOU art enough, the mind and heart to fill. "I have found Him Whom my soul loveth" (verse 4). Truly the LORD JESUS is the fountain of all joy to the soul that findeth Him, "he that *seeketh findeth*."

We have a precious reminder of the LORD'S gracious dealing with those first disciples in John's Gospel (Chapter 1). When John the Baptist pointed them to the Lamb of God, and when they heard they followed Him. And the LORD saw them following, and said unto them "*What seek ye,*" and they said unto Him "Where dwellest THOU?" And He said "Come and see" (verse 39). And what a blessed result through one of the seekers Andrew—"He findeth his own

brother Simon and said "We have found the Messiah which is being interpreted the CHRIST (the Anointed) "And he brought him to JESUS" (verses 41, 42).

Another lovely scene in John's Gospel chapter 20 is that of another seeking soul Mary Magdalene. Last at the Cross she was also first at the tomb seeking the One Whom her soul loveth. He was still precious to her heart! The Risen LORD Himself spoke to her "*Whom seekest thou?*" (v. 15).

She heard Him call her by name—"Mary," and found Him Who was *everything* to her. The Lord knew her longing heart and she craved to be near to Him but it was expedient that "He must ascend unto His father" and He gently said "Touch me not for I am not yet ascended to My Father, but go to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father and your Father and to My God and your God" (John 20:17). The ascension pointed her to a *greater nearness to Himself* by the coming of the Holy Spirit (John 14:16-17).

ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY

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“How Shall He Not?”

“He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?”

(Rom. 8 : 32).

Did He once suffer agony
On cruel Calvary,
And shall He hear thy cry of pain
And fail to comfort thee?

Did He once weep for others' woes
And bind the broken heart,
And shall He see thee bowed with grief
And fail to share a part?

Canst thou not trust His loving heart?
Oh, gaze on Calvary!
If He hath loved thee then so much,
Shall He not care for thee?

—E. Margaret Clarkson.

THE LEADING OF THE SPIRIT

by DR. JOHN BOYD

(Concluded)

Let us now consider a particular leading of the Spirit—that pertaining to the Breaking of Bread meeting. Here we do well to enquire whether or not it is scriptural for several to take audible part at this gathering, necessitating the direction of the Spirit. Our knowledge of the functioning of a Remembrance Feast is confirmed in Scripture to two portions, Acts 20 : 7-12, and 1 Corinthians 11-14.

In Acts 20 Paul appears to have been the sole speaker. This was, however, a special occasion, when the company desired to obtain the maximum benefit from the Apostle's visit. The Holy Spirit was using one with an outstanding gift—who could edify the church, and glorify God. The circumstances guided them as to the Spirit's leading—that Paul should have the monopoly on this occasion.

Chapters 11-14 of 1 Corinthians are concerned with the normal functioning of the Lord's Supper, and are left for our present-day instruction. The frequent use of the expression, 'when ye come together' in chs. 11 and 14, indicate that both chapters refer to the same meeting. Thus, at the Lord's Supper in Paul's day there was an opportunity for thanksgiving (14 : 16), singing, ministry, prophetic revelations, speaking in tongues and their interpretations (14 : 26). The exercise of these gifts was engaged in by several brethren (14 : 29). All gifts were not resident in one person (12 : 11).

Now the question arises, How does a brother know when to take part? How does he avoid confusion? Whilst there is no mention of the Holy Spirit in ch. 14 it is reasonable to suppose that He who had led the believers during the week, would not desert them at the Lord's Supper. *The Spirit leads in the gatherings of the saints precisely as He does in everyday living.* His guidance is not a supernatural prompting; not an emotional crisis; not a sudden impulse. It comes not through feelings, but out of an intelligent assessment of what is suitable for the occasion; it is an exercise of the understanding (1 Corinthians 14 : 15); it is the consequence of coming to the meeting with a full basket—a mind stored with God's Word, a heart filled with God's worship. The Holy Spirit prepares the heart and mind before the meeting. He may or may not provide the opportunity at the meeting

to use what He has given. The leading of the Spirit will indicate the opportunity when it presents itself.

Praying, singing, thanksgiving and speaking are all functions of the believer's spirit. This is under the control of the man himself (1 Corinthians 14 : 32); it is the sphere of the Spirit's operations (Romans 8 : 16).

How the Holy Spirit controls the spirits of the saints in these exercises is seen in 1 Corinthians 14, where several principles are given as to when one should take part. (1) His exercise should be for God's glory (v. 25). (2) He should seek the profit of all — to their edification (vv. 26, 31). (3) Several should take part (v. 29). (4) There should be waiting for one another—'one by one' (v. 31); no undue haste; no unseemly rushing (1 Corinthians 11 : 33). (5) There should be nothing done that would lead to strife or confusion, but rather that which harmoniously fits in with what has already gone (v. 33). (6) A brother who, after commencing, realises that he is not being helped by the Spirit, should quietly take his seat again, that another whom the Spirit is guiding may find room (v. 30). (7) Each one must be activated by love—love that desires to profit others (13 : 1); love that does not envy another (13 : 4); love that seeks not the self-aggrandisement of the speaker (13 : 5).

The Spirit's guidance at the Breaking of Bread meeting will be more readily appreciated if the believer has been consciously led by Him throughout the week; if he has not been walking after the flesh. How is the Saturday evening spent? If one is not then walking by the Spirit he cannot expect His leading on the Lord's Day. Hatred, wrath, strife and envying amongst brethren are works of the flesh, and prevent the discernment of the Spirit's leading. Such a brother would do well to obey the Lord's injunction in Matt. 5 : 24. A conscious dependence on the Holy Spirit is essential, recognising one's own unworthiness and inability. One wanting to take part must learn to distinguish between the leading of the Spirit and the promptings of the flesh. His own glory must not be considered—not what credit he can get out of what part he takes. Nor must he be bound by tradition, 'We have always done this,' 'This is the best way to do it.' Circumstances will often guide the believer as to what part, if any, the Holy Spirit would have him take.

Thus does the Spirit lead in the assemblies of God's

people. We should ever seek to walk by the Spirit, to be so led by Him in the secular life that church life will be but a continuance of that control. Thus in all things God will be glorified.

PAUL AND JEREMIAH

by J. C. R. TAMBLING

If Isaiah gives us in full measure the *salvation of God*, Jeremiah gives us an insight into the character of the *man of God*. Romans has a similar function, in relation to Christianity, to that of Isaiah : it establishes us in the Gospel, prior to our being taken on to the "mystery" of the Church. The Corinthian letters, following, give, very fully, an account of what the man of God, in the present dispensation, is like : hence these letters answer to Jeremiah. We find that Paul often seems to have Jeremiah in mind : he quotes the same passage from the prophecy in both letters.

The passage in Jeremiah runs thus :

"Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches, but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth, and knoweth Me, that I am the Lord, which exercise lovingkindness, judgement and righteousness in the earth, for in these things I delight, saith the Lord" (Jeremiah 9 : 23, 24).

We are grateful to see that the first quality He exercises is *lovingkindness* : He is always the same in that ! Paul uses the verses, firstly in I Corinthians 1 : 21, and there the verses seem to be in his mind from at least v. 26 of the chapter. We get there the wise, the mighty and the noble, (Jeremiah's "the rich"), all these God has set aside to bring in Christ, the Wisdom of God, made to believers all that we need, so we are taken out of ourselves to recognise, in v. 30, the glorious fulness of Christ, made unto us wisdom — even righteousness, sanctification and redemption — wisdom including these other things : such I believe to be the thought of the verse. Then again, he uses Jeremiah in the second letter (ch. 10 : 17), this time in a very different context. Whereas in the first letter, Paul quotes to show that *natural* gifts and qualities are irrelevant in comparison with the gain of knowing the Lord, in the second letter, with his apostleship challenged, he is indicating to us that God confers

spiritual gifts—spiritual wisdom (compare 10 : 5), might (see 10 : 10) and riches (see 10 : 15), and that these may be a great blessing, as in the hands of Paul, but they are not to be the ground of boasting. Rather, it is the God Who is the source of all these blessings Who is to be the One delighted in.

And how these things work out in the experience of Jeremiah ! In *his* case, as in Paul's, he lived to see everything taken away from him, so that he was left only with the Lord. "Thou Lord, remainest for ever," are some of his last recorded words (Lamentations 5 : 19).

The dual use of Jeremiah's words in Corinthians suggests a line of inquiry, in trying to compare the lives of these two men of God. First and Second Corinthians tell us much about Paul, but we will not restrict ourselves to any one letter. We will trace some of the correspondencies via Jeremiah's prophecy ; suggesting references for further study.

Chapter 1.

"Before I formed thee in the womb I knew thee"—v. 5.

"Separated me from my mother's womb" — Gal. 1 : 15.

Prophet to the nations—v. 5. Note, especially comparing 25 : 17, 18, that Judah is regarded as but one of the nations, it being set aside as God's people. Paul's first miracle—the blinding of Elymas, in Acts 13, is prophetic of the setting aside of Israel "for a season"—Acts 13 : 11. With Jeremiah as the prophet to the nations, compare Paul as the "apostle to the Gentiles." Rom. 11 : 13. Both were called to act for God in a sphere which would need them both to enlarge their hearts.

Jeremiah—hated by the Jews, v. 19.

Paul—"perils by mine own race"—2 Cor. 11 : 26.

We can contrast the way that God lays a warning on Jeremiah in v. 17 with the way in which He deals with us now in a dispensation of grace.

Chapter 11.

Note here Jeremiah's death being plotted at Anathoth, (vvs. 19-23). Anathoth was the place where his parents came from, and the place where his portion was. Similarly, Paul seems to have had the loss of all things connected with home—"for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things." (Philippians 3 : 8).

Chapter 13.

Prophesying with tears—v. 7.

First Corinthians was written “with many tears,” (2 Cor. 2:4).

Chapter 15.

Jeremiah has been interceding for the people in 14 : 18-22; he gets his answer here in v. 1. He had already been told not to pray for them, 14 : 11, but his love for them was greater than could be contained.

Paul—“I could wish myself accursed”—Romans 9 : 1—the Apostle’s language as he thinks of the Jews’ refusal to take the Gospel. His heart’s desire and *prayer unto God* was that they might be saved.

v. 16—note “the weeping prophet’s” joy, and its source.

Paul — “as sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing” (2 Cor. 6 : 10).

Chapter 16.

Jeremiah is here seen as the unmarried prophet. Not taking a wife was part of his service for the Lord. With Paul, he might say, “have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife,” (1 Corinthians 9 : 5), but his exercise in the Lord’s work meant that he did not.

Chapter 17.

“The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond : it is graven on the tables of their hearts . . .” —v. 1.

“Ye are manifestly declared to be an epistle (*not* epistles) of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tables of stone, but on fleshly tables of the heart.”—(2 Corinthians 3 : 3).

Compare with this Jeremiah 31 : 33 (and see below), and note the contrast between the ministry of the prophet in days of law, and the new covenant ministry of Paul : to be the Spirit’s script-writer in inscribing some impression of Christ on the renewed — heart-of-flesh, not heart-of-stone — heart. “That which came out of my lips was right before Thee” —v. 16 “We labour, that whether present or absent, we may be well-pleasing unto Him.” (2 Corinthians 5 : 9, R.V.).

Chapters 18, 19.

Israel as clay in the potter’s hand—18 : 6, to be destroyed, 19 : 11. Paul — “Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another to dishonour?” (Romans 9 : 21). Israel is pictured in that chapter as “vessels of wrath, fitted to destruction.”

Chapter 20.

Put in the stocks,

Paul is put in the stocks, (Acts 16 : 24)

Note Jeremiah's extreme depression, v. 7.

Compare Paul's depression—e.g. (2 Cor. 2 : 12,13, 7 : 5).

Chapter 23.

"The Lord our Righteousness" — v. 6.

"Christ is made unto us wisdom from God, even righteousness . . ." (1 Corinthians 1 : 30)

"I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran" — v. 21.

"For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ" (2 Corinthians 11 : 13)

Chapter 26.

Compare Jeremiah's experience in the house of the Lord from v. 8 onwards with Acts 21 : 27 to end.

Chapters 28, 29.

Here we find Jeremiah opposed by false prophets, Hananiah and Shemaiah. In Paul's case, he was opposed by Elymas, (Acts 13 : 8), or "a certain orator called Tertullus," (Acts 24 : 1; see also 2 Corinthians 11 : 13).

In 29 : 26, Jeremiah is called mad. Compare Acts 26 : 24, and 2 Corinthians 5 : 13. "For whether we be beside ourselves, it is unto God." An identical accusation was made about the Lord, (Mark 3 : 21).

In the period of the "times of the Gentiles" — the period beginning with Nebuchadnezzar's complete control of Jerusalem—Jeremiah 25, and Daniel 2 give us the beginning of it all—Jeremiah bids the remnant who have gone to Babylon to pray for the peace of Babylon "for in the peace thereof ye shall have peace" (ch. 29 : 7). Identical instructions are given by Paul (in 1 Timothy 2 : 1-4), that we should pray for all kings, and for all in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty. The spiritual course of action is not to be seen in the voting booth, or in political involvement: it is simply to *pray* for the powers that be; however opposed to the people of God they may appear to be. Paul could hardly have expected Nero to give him any help, but he exhorts that prayers be made on his behalf.

Chapter 31.

Compare the way that the Lord comforts Jeremiah, v. 26, with the "comfort of God" that Paul received (2 Corinthians 1 : 3,4, 7 : 6).

From v. 31 onwards, Jeremiah announces the new covenant to be made with Judah and with Israel.

"God . . . hath made us able ministers of a new covenant, not of letter, but of spirit," (2 Corinthians 3 : 6). Paul is seen in Second Corinthians as a competent new covenant minister, but he is dealing with the *spirit* of the new covenant, not ministering the literal truth of it, which clearly has to do with Israel in the future. The spirit of the covenant is that God is giving to His people—see the "I will"s of Jeremiah 31—not *demanding* from them, as He was in the old covenant of Exodus 24. What God is doing for His own is the glorious theme of the first seven chapters of 2 Corinthians. Our hearts are being written on, (3 : 3), so that the local assembly in which we meet is constituted an epistle of Christ. We *all*—again note this is for all the assembly,—are being changed, (3 : 18). Then, too, God has shone in our hearts, (4 : 6). What has He shone in? Paul calls it "this treasure" in the next verse. We would probably find it difficult to define what that "treasure" was, as we would find it difficult to define what is "the unspeakable free gift" of ch. 9 : 15. Enough to say that we are in the realm of God's unspeakable gift—that we have God FOR us! The truth of these things, Paul, as a new covenant minister, gives us.

Chapters 36, 37, 38.

Here, as elsewhere, we see Jeremiah in prison. Compare "in prisons more frequent," (2 Corinthians 11 : 23).

In 38 : 13, we see the prophet *taken up* out of the prison and the mire by cords. In 2 Corinthians 11 : 33, Paul tells us how he was *let down* out of a window by a basket. Truly, neither servant could stand on his dignity! But the flesh, its comfort, and pride, has to be mortified. And the man who was let down, tells us, in his next chapter, how he was "*caught up*"—the glorious answer to suffering, as it will be for each of us in a coming day! (1 Thessalonians 4 : 17).

Jeremiah is taken to Egypt, and dies there, out of the land of promise. The great Apostle ends his days in Rome. What inglorious deaths! And yet what destinies these men wielded! One is set over nations, to root out and to pull down, to build and to plant: kingdoms thus entrusted to him. The other pronounces the final word over Israel's being set aside, in the purposes of God, (Acts 28 : 25-28), and brings in something more glorious, the Church, the truth of which he min-

isters (Colossians 1 : 25, 26), the vessel that God has designed to display His glory throughout eternity. Jewish tradition, of uncertain reliability, says that Jeremiah was stoned to death. Compare Hebrews 11 : 37. Paul says, "Once I was stoned," (2 Corinthians 11 : 25).

Giants in their times in the things that they did for God—yet the point is that they were *men of God*, and these things were written for our learning. They could not have been what they were if they had not had a secret history with God. And of that we learn, as we compare their ministries.

CHRIST IN THE HEBREWS

by J. B. HEWITT, Chesterfield

"The Inaugurating Christ"

Chapters 4 : 14—5 : 10

This portion introduces us to the main part of the great theme of the book. Chapters 5, 6 and 7 bring before us the supremacy of the true Priest Himself. Chapter 8 the sphere and ministry of the Priest as the Mediator of a better covenant. Chapters 9 and 10, the sufficiency of His Work in dealing with sin and opening the way into the holiest of all.

The word "High Priest" does not occur in any other Epistle "High Priest" and "Great High Priest" are referred to seventeen times in Hebrews. "Priest" and "priests" ten times; "Priesthood," five times. The subject of Priesthood introduced in ch. 2. 17, 18 is developed in ch. 4. 14—5. 10. Here it is compared with Aaron's; in chapter 7 it is contrasted by being likened to Melchisedek's. Jesus is presented as being a merciful and faithful "High Priest" (2 : 17). His faithfulness is discussed in 3 : 1-6. Here he deals with His gracious and sympathetic nature (4 : 14-16). In ch. 5 : 1-4 we see the general qualifications of priesthood and how Christ excellently satisfies these qualifications (5 : 5-10).

The Encouragement of His Priesthood 4.14-16 Its Comfort

The subjects "Jesus" and "Son of God" are now combined in this section. Our Lord is called "great" telling us of His dignity. He is great personally and officially. Great because of His divine nature (1 : 1-2, 3 : 6). He is the great resource of His needy people in the wilderness, He is able to keep us from falling. Being a person of high distinction and power, He eclipses Aaron and that order of priesthood. "High"—authority pre-eminent in His office, not a subor-

dinate. Israel had many high priests, but none was ever called "Great."

"Priest" tells us of sympathy, of One who cares, comforts and welcomes all who approach Him. He is perfectly able and perfectly willing to intercede for us. "Passed through the heavens," tells of victory and refers to His exaltation (1 : 3; 2 : 9). Thus His ministry excels the Aaronic for it takes place not in an earthly tabernacle but in the very Presence of God. It infers that all earthly priesthood and ceremony are abandoned by God, set aside for ever. These heavens were the Veil which our High Priest "passed through" into the heaven of heavens, the immediate Presence of God.

"Jesus"—His nearness, oneness, and sympathy with us because of His humanity and His earthly history (2 : 9). Jesus did not come out of the race of men, He came into it; God prepared for Him a body (2 : 16; 10 : 7).

"Son of God"—His Diety and sufficiency. He has absolute power and overthrew satan and demons who attempted to impede His progress to the Throne of God (ch. 2 : 14, Col. 2 : 15). The bringing together of the human and divine natures was to encourage the readers to "hold fast" their confession. He has ability "touched" because He suffered like us, and also suffers when we suffer. Had He never become incarnate, He might have pitied us, but He could not have sympathised with His people. The double negative is equal to a strong affirmation, it is impossible for Him not to sympathise. Not only feeling FOR US, but feeling WITH US.

"Infirmities," do not necessarily refer to sin here, nor are they limited to sufferings, they cover all the frailties of human nature. The Lord not only came out of all His trials sinless; in Him sin did not exist. He came through all His temptations victorious (12 : 2). His sinless nature contained nothing that responded to temptation, as does ours (John 14 : 30). We have two things to help us : (1) consciousness of possession—"having" present participle indicates that He exists and acts at Priest continuously without intermission. Our worship is now carried on in the heavenly sanctuary alone. (Heb 10.19; Phil. 3.3). (2) Contact with the Throne "draw near." Keep on drawing near. Mercy for justification. Grace for sanctification. The mercy available to man and obtainable from the Throne of grace is ministered by the High Priest.

Coming with confidence and freedom of speech. Today there is no separating veil — no isolating distance — no thunder and fire. We enjoy nearness, intimacy and abundance of grace and mercy through Christ. Our approach should become a daily spiritual exercise. The message for our conscience, “hold fast.” Keep clinging to it and never give it up. A word for the heart, “Come right up,” He understands and undertakes.

The Excellency of His Priesthood 5.1-10 His Credentials

From the Supremacy of Christ as Priest, (4.14-16), we turn to His Suitability for the Priesthood (5 : 1-4) and His Sufficiency as Priest (v. 5-10).

The Qualifications of a True Priest. v. 1-4

The opening word “for” is almost equivalent to “now,” giving an additional fact and demonstrating that whatever was essential to the office of a high priest is found in Christ. He had all the characteristics and qualifications of a High Priest, but had none of the imperfections of the Aaronic order. The essentials of priesthood are fellowship with man, sympathy with infirmity and appointment from God.

Ordination. v. 1: He must resemble man and be human. He must reveal God and be holy. This chapter is wholly given to interpreting the purpose and principles of the sacred office. Selected from among men, — no stranger to those whom He represents. Serves on behalf of men, in their relations with God.

Compassion v. 2. Individual of wide sympathy and compassion, moderate in his feelings. Neither too severe nor too lenient because he knows what weakness is. But this measured mildness cannot be compared with the unlimited sympathy which the sinless Son of God feels for those who have wandered from the way (4 : 15).

Representation. v. 3. Verse 2 is the priest manward—sympathy; verse 3 is Godward, acting for the people, especially on the Day of Atonement when he identified himself with the people and offered for himself and the nation an expiating sacrifice. Mediation before God, ministering blessing to men. Christ’s sacrifice absolute and final (ch. 10 : 10). Under the old covenant no sacrifice was offered for wilful and persistent sin and this is also true under the new. This is a basic principle in the Epistle (Num. 15 : 22-31).

Call and Consecration (v. 4). No man lawfully assumes the office of high priest unless divinely called to it. Any assuming the office were judged as was Korah, Dathan and Abiram. Only Aaron and his sons were called of God. Aaron's call honoured him v. 4, Christ's call glorified Him v. 5, Christ had Divine appointment v. 4, Divine approval v. 1-2 and Divine anointing v. 10.

To verify His appointment two quotations are made from the Psalms to prove that He not only bears the insignia of the Priest in His character, but in addition, He receives His investiture through a heavenly calling. In Psalm 2, He is heralded as Son at the Incarnation, and in Psalm 110 honoured as Priest at His Ascension. God bestowed upon Christ the title, function and dignity of this priesthood.

The double glory of Kingship and Priesthood as seen in Melchisedec is stated here. The glory of Kingship is Christ's (1 : 3; 2 : 9) and now the glory of Priesthood (5 : 5), both of them received from His Father. His appointment is better in source—by God; in relationship—"My Son" and better in order—"of Melchisedec." He was greeted in glory in the greatness of Sonship, and saluted in the Heavenly Sanctuary as Priest. He has all the credentials of high rank and noble office. Psalm 110 describes Messiah as King (v. 1-3); Priest (v. 4); and Conqueror (v. 5-7). Trace the references to this Psalm in the N.T. In His experience He encountered to the full the abandonment of obedience, the agony of suffering and the anguish of death v. 7.

His prayer for deliverance was heard and His resurrection was the answer. May we worship as we muse on the indescribable wonder of His humanity, of the Divine will which directed His movements, the amazing sympathy which surrounded His steps, His earnest supplication, His instruction through suffering and His official perfection for His office v. 9.

His Distinction as Priest v. 10. When compared with Aaron:— Better in qualification. "The Son" not *a* Son. Like Aaron He was called, and like Phinehas He acquired a title to it, (Numbers 25). Divinely chosen by God His Father v. 5. Better in His consecration v. 6. Aaron's was partial, called, washed, robed and anointed. Christ's priesthood is eternal (7.28). The period of the work of Aaron is transient, but Christ's is permanent. Greater in His identification v. 7. In

His humanity, humility and the intensity of His prayer life. His sinless suffering manhood, "in the days of His flesh." Greater in devotion v. 8, His godly piety, learned obedience experimentally, always subject to His Father's will. Greater in His accomplishment v. 9. He obtained eternal salvation. Greater in recognition v. 10. Saluted by God as Priest in resurrection and ascension. Greater in His resources v. 10, Order of Priesthood eternal. Never any depletion of His resources (4.14-15; 7.25). Better in instruction (Mal. 2.7). His teaching for us today includes disciplining and directing to make us partakers of His holiness. He is better in Intercession which sustains and succours us (ch. 7, John 17). Better in His benediction (Nu. 6. 25-27 with Luke 24.50). He gives us abundant life, abiding rest and abounding joy. May we consider how great He is, how gracious He is and how generous He is.

TABERNACLE GLEANINGS

by the late JOHN COWAN

"Let them make me a Sanctuary that I may dwell in the midst of them according to all that I shew thee, the pattern of the Tabernacle and the instruments thereof." (Exodus 25, 8-9).

Here we have *God's Desire* : Let them. *Make Me* a Sanctuary : *God's Determined Dwelling Place* : That I might dwell in the midst of them : *God's Design* : According to the pattern I will shew thee.

Previous to this, God's dealings had been with individuals, but now on the ground of Redemption wrought, a people have been prepared, which in a typical way, will be able to express the great purpose of the heart of God. His delights were with the sons of men, and, delighting in them, He delivered them, for said He : "This is my rest forever, here will I dwell, for I have desired it. (Psalm 132-14). Not that this people deserved it, but because that God had desired it: How this opens up for us the wondrous purpose of the counsel chambers of eternity, with the desires determined, which, in time, should be displayed.

Let Them : *Make Me*. Their Camp and His Courts are now to be linked together, a people whom He had purchased and purged are now to provide the Sanctuary of His Desire.

Gather My Saints together, those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice : a Holy God in the midst of His Holy Ones, those whom He has Saved and Sanctified, a pilgrim people, journeying homeward, having the pleasure and protection of His Presence as they journey home, yet having the present joy as a habitation of God, of satisfying Him in a Sanctified Service, of grateful worship and adoring love.

This then is what God has envisaged, and so, from hearts now freed from Egypt's bondage, in the joyous liberty of the Sons of God, their liberty to be the spring of their liberality and labour, in constructing that, that God desires, a Sanctuary in the midst of them.

Not only has God desired this dwelling place, but it must conform strictly to His Design; there is nothing left for human opinion, the pattern has been clearly shown, and if every whit of it has to utter His Glory, then every whit of it must conform to the pattern given.

Could we, perhaps, just pause a little here? Is this not where so many Saints of present day experience have failed? Instead of loyally and lovingly conforming to His Word and Will, they have introduced that, that panders to their pleasure, the selfish interests of the human heart, instead of that which will minister to His interests and be for His pleasure.

I am quite sure that much that is seen today could never stand comparison with the pattern given, yet such is the depravity of the human heart, and the determination of its self-will, that, even when attention is drawn to such things, there is the persistence to pursue the bent of natural desire instead of that so clearly taught in Holy Writ. The Tabernacle of a past day, typically expressed the Dwelling Place of God, and when we relate this to present day experience, is a pictorial presentation of the Church of God today. We are not taught the doctrine of today by the light of the type, but in the light of the doctrine of today, the type can be clearly understood. Shadows may give us outlines, but it is the substance that fills the detail in, and so, if these typical teachings are to be helpful for us, we must view them in the light of the doctrine of today, "the Holy Spirit's parable for the times now present."

The material from which the Tabernacle has to be constructed has been Purchased by Christ, Processed by the

Holy Spirit, until finally it is to be Possessed by God Himself, and so with that which has been purchased and procured from Egypt, the work begins. Willing hearts are yielding up in the willingness of devoted love, the preciousnesses of Christ which they possess, while the wise-hearted are putting it together in conformity to the pattern given, as guided by the Spirit of God. That was the practice in that day, that is the practice still, and only that which conforms to the pattern can God accept.

Possibly, we could take a look at the materials required and try to gather up something of their Spiritual significance.

The Gold, the Silver, the Copper, three metals : the Blue, the Purple, the Scarlet, three colours. Fine Twined Linen and Goats' hair, two fabrics. Shittim Wood, one kind of wood. Rams' skins dyed red and Badgers' skins, two kinds of skins. Oil, one kind, spices in variety, with Precious Stones of varying kinds. Eight kinds of material; eight is a new beginning, and so, there is commenced, to be completed, that which never had been seen on earth before, a habitation for God in the midst of His Redeemed People. In seeking to gather up the spiritual meaning of these materials, human speculation would be vain. It is only from the Word of God as their usage is traced therein that any idea could be formulated as to their spiritual signification, and so a careful tracing of their usage in the Word of God provides the clue.

Gold then has an ornamental usage and supplies both beauty and dignity to the user. Glory, possibly, could be its spiritual importance and as far as human values are concerned, in expressing dignity possessed, was expressive of its highest claims, i.e. "Thou are this head, this head of Gold."

Silver has a commercial value and always seems to have the monetary side of things in view, "Current coin with the merchant man," and is clearly seen as the price paid in full : Redemption by paying the price would be the theme, not redeemed with silver, but with precious blood.

Copper was the metal that had a utilitarian import: Ability to endure the fire, with a ductility that enabled it to be easily fashioned into the different vessels of common usage. Its inherent quality was endurance, particularly from the fire, and would be expressive of that Holiness that endures.

The colours always speak of the splendour of a thing and

so we have the beauty of the Blue, the Splendour of Heaven, the Blend of the Purple, the Imperial Splendour of Dominion and power, then the Brilliance of the Scarlet, earthly glory and splendour, and when combined together are a display of variegated splendours and glories only seen in Him. Fine twined Linen is the righteousness of the Saints and is expressive of the righteousness of Conduct which those of Holy Character display. Goats' Hair provides a degree of difficulty, as there are so few occasions where its mention is made. It is a fabricated material, the outcome of the women's exercise and possibly the product of the tent. Rams' skins dyed, the intensity of Priestly Consecration; Badgers' Skins, the expression of Pilgrim Character; Shittim Wood, incorruptible in character, strong, straight and smooth, with an adaptability that fits the sinless character of the Blessed Lord.

Oil is always typical of the Spirit, His power to blend the fragrances of Christ, His power to shine and show the beauties that belong to him. Spices are the variegated fragrances so wonderfully expressive of qualities of excellence, pleasing in their character, and, when blended together by the apothecary's art, present a piquance and a fragrance most unique; Precious Stones so varied in their character and colour and expressive of intrinsic qualities of priceless value, precious variegated excellencies of such wondrous worth.

These materials, with all their predominating qualities, expressive of the multi-coloured excellence and worth of Christ, as processed by the Spirit, in accordance with the pattern given, provide the Habitation of God desired by Him.

BLESSED ASSURANCE

by J. G. GOOD

"IT IS WRITTEN" *PERMANENTLY* (Romans 3-10).

The Scriptures are numerous which direct us to the abiding character of the Word of God, "For ever, O Lord, Thy Word is settled in heaven" (Psalm 119-89). "For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass, the grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away, but the Word of the Lord endureth for ever" (I Peter 1-24). "Heaven and earth shall pass away but My words shall not pass away" (Matthew 24-35).

Surely this is a truth to lay hold upon, in a scene marked

more than ever by change and decay, what a support, the unchanging, Word of the living God, a stronghold to the child of God in a day of moral and spiritual departure! God's Word takes character from God Himself, eternal and immutable, O that this would grip our hearts. When our God legislates, no revising is required or change of policy contemplated, this particularly applies to the principles and practices of a New Testament church, it is dangerous to upset God's order of things, (Heb. 8-5). "See saith He, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount." To quote another passage from Malachi 4-4 "Remember ye the law of Moses My servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel," still valid in Malachi's day despite the fact that a thousand years or so had passed since the law had been given!

In Josiah's day of revival, the book of the law was found in the house of the Lord (2 Kings 22-8). What follows the finding of the book? Reading and conviction of heart (verse 19), and a desire to honour and obey the truths contained therein, the emphasis being on that which was "written" (2 Kings 2-13; 23-3). Have we a "Thus saith the Lord," it is good to reiterate and remind our hearts of that which is written, a digging of the old wells, (Gen. 26-18) *a re-statement of old truths, to refresh and reinforce, both heart and mind!!*

"IT IS FINISHED" PERFECTLY. (John 19-30).

The cry that reverberated through the courts of heaven and echoed in the vaults of hell, the cry of the Conqueror "It is finished." The wrath of God exhausted, the righteousness of God vindicated, the claims of God satisfied. What a Work! What a Worker! Many have not been able to complete the work for which they were commissioned, because they were cut off in death, but the wonder of the glorious Cross work of our Lord Jesus Christ is that it was in Death that He finished the Work. "I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do" (John 17-4).

We glory in this blessed truth of the finished work of the Lord Jesus, once for all, needing no repetition, or addition, accomplished and perfected for ever to the eternal satisfaction of a thrice holy God!

*"Here we rest in wonder viewing,
all our sins on Jesus laid,*

*and a full redemption flowing,
from the sacrifice He made."*

Hebrews 9-14 reminds us "Who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God." This sacrifice has been offered and accepted at the Bar of Eternal Justice. Satan has been rendered powerless, (Hebrews 2-14), death for the believer has been vanquished, (I Corinthians 15-57), "the vail of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom" (Matthew 27-51), He brought to an end the Levitical order of things—no more need of temple worship. It was from the Top to the Bottom, all the movement was from God, we had no claim upon Him, God has come out in Grace in the person of His Son, in order that we might be fitted to go in! (Heb. 10-19).

"IT IS I" *PERSONALLY* (Mark 6-47).

What a beautiful picture of the High Priestly ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ, He was on the mountain top as the disciples were engaged in the arduous task of contending with contrary wind and waves. In times of stress and anxiety sometimes we wonder "My way is hid from the Lord" (Isaiah 40-27), being the language of despair. Never let us forget that He is on the mountain top, with a perfect knowledge of our pressing need! We do well to "Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus" (Hebrews 3-1), as the Apostle, He is the SENT one, representing God before men, as the High Priest He is the SYMPATHISING one, representing men before God. We are upon His shoulders—the place of strength, and upon His breast—the place of affection!

We are in the fourth watch, the darkest hour of the night is the hour before dawn, the closing days of the dispensation of God's grace are upon us, the next event on the prophetic calendar is the personal return of the Lord for His own. "It is I" the Lord Himself (I Thessalonians 4-16). The rapture of the Church is so important and precious that it cannot be entrusted to angel or archangel, the Lord Himself. As we contend with the contrary experiences of life may we hear His word assuring us of His presence in the trial "It is I." Ere long we shall hear the trumpet sound, the assembling shout, we shall be with Him, "It is I" will be a reality and for eternity!

STUDIES IN SOLOMON'S TEMPLE

by JOHN B. D. PAGE

THE CONSECRATION OF THE TEMPLE

When finished, the Temple was consecrated to the Lord, as described in I Kings, ch. 8 and more fully in II Chronicles ch. 5 - 7.

Briefly, the consecration consisted of the Ark of the Covenant being taken from its tent and placed by the priests in the Oracle of the Temple when the House of the Lord was filled with His Glory. Outside, Solomon pronounced a short prayer of blessing upon a vast crowd of people assembled for the occasion, which was followed by his long dedicatory prayer to God, after which fire from heaven consumed the sacrifices upon the altar and all the people saw the Glory of the Lord upon the Temple.

Solomon's Prayer :

Before considering the coming of the Glory of the Lord, we shall note Solomon's short opening prayer when he said, "I have built an house for Thee, and a place for Thy dwelling for ever" (II Chron. 6 : 2). With the Ark placed in this newly built edifice, the Temple was "an habitation" for the Lord, prefiguring the spiritual temple of to-day as "the habitation of God" (Eph. 2 : 22).

Probably alluding to and contrasting the tent pitched at Jerusalem by his father, David, which afforded temporary cover for the Ark of God (II Chron. 1 : 4), Solomon prayed, "I have built Thee an house to dwell in, a settled place for Thee to abide in for ever," as recorded in the corresponding passage of I Kings 8 : 13. When the priests had placed the Ark in the Oracle, "they drew out the staves" (I Kings 8 : 8; II Chron. 5 : 9), indicating the permanence of its position, and so the Temple became "a settled place" for the Ark of God in contrast to the tabernacle where the staves were not taken from the Ark (Exodus 25 : 15). A dwelling may be either temporary or permanent, and both shades of thought are found in the New Testament. Paul prayed "that Christ may dwell in your hearts . . ." (Eph. 3 : 17), or "that Christ may make His home in your hearts" (Wey); such a homely phrase conveys the thought of the permanence of Christ's abode—He cannot and will not withdraw ! The true Church,

as "an holy temple in the Lord," is "a settled place" for Christ "to abide in for ever" throughout time and eternity.

The Ark was not only placed in the Temple but it was put in the Holiest, the primary position where no other furniture was put. Both in our personal lives and in an assembly, Christ must have the foremost position and He is satisfied with nothing less. A tendency is to give Him a secondary position in our homes and to relegate Him to the background in our business lives, which often means that He does not have His rightful place in our assembly lives. Unless Christ is Lord of all, He is not Lord at all, as Hudson Taylor rightly said. We must acknowledge the Lordship of Christ in all spheres of life, both spiritual and secular. Failure to do so leads to spiritual defeat and unhappiness, but by doing so Christ is all in all to us and it means untold blessing.

The Finished Work :

It was not until "all the work that Solomon made for the House of the Lord was finished" that "the Glory of the Lord filled the House" (II Chron. 5 : 1, 7-9, 13f). The work had first to be finished, because an unfinished Temple could not be filled with the Glory of the Lord. Of the tabernacle, centuries earlier, the Scriptures state, "when Moses finished the work, then the cloud covered the tent . . . , and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle" (Exodus 40 : 33f).

A finished work followed by the glory is a principle found in the Scriptures, not only in connection with the tabernacle and the temple but also Christ and the Church. Having resolved to finish His Father's work, to which He gave expression once to His disciples and then to the Jews (John 4 : 34, 5 : 36), our Lord prayed later, "I have finished the work . . . , and now, O Father, glorify Thou Me . . ." (John 17 : 4f). From the cross, in the hour of apparent defeat, Christ cried triumphantly, "It is finished!" God then "raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory" (I Peter 1 : 21) by giving Him "a body of glory" (Phil. 2 : 21) and after the forty days He was "received up into glory" and was "crowned with glory and honour" (I Tim. 3 : 15, Heb. 2 : 9). Having finished His work on earth, He was glorified !

During the course of constructing the Temple, the Glory of the Lord was a prospect and likewise with the spiritual temple, which the Lord is now building, the glory is yet to come, even as Paul says, "Christ in you, the hope of glory"

(Col. 1 : 27). Whilst Christ now indwells His Church, the glory is a hope to be realised at the Lord's return, and the work of building this "holy temple" will have been finished when each of us will be "a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed" (I Peter 5 : 1). We now "rejoice in the hope of the glory of God" (Rom. 5 : 2), but, when the last "living stone" will have been put into place, the work will be finished and then this "spiritual house" will be glorified, "having the glory of God" (cp. Rev. 21 : 11). Our prospect now will then become our possession! Until the dawning of that day, our present privilege is to "glorify God in our body" (I Cor. 6 : 20), by living lives that will bring glory to Christ.

NEW TESTAMENT PRIESTHOOD

by **EDWARD ROBINSON, Exmouth, Devon.**

The importation into the New Testament of Old Testament practices is a common feature to-day in Christendom. So widespread is it that it is generally accepted as perfectly normal without question. This is the more remarkable when we remember that the Church, originating at Pentecost, is not a continuation of Tabernacle service but an entirely new departure in the ways of God and, moreover, is not the subject of prophecy as is Israel. This is not to say, of course, that there is not much valuable instruction for us to-day in our study of the old economy. Its value is specially recognised when looked at, not merely historically, but retrospectively in the light of the New Testament truth. Paul, for instance, using the language of Genesis (2 : 23, 24) refers to the Church (the body of Christ) as 'of His flesh and of His bones.' (Eph. 5 : 30).

This importation we have mentioned is high-lighted in the continuation in religious circles of a special class of priests whose credentials are vested in the laying on of hands. Some idea of the theory of apostolic succession would appear to be in the minds of many, which has no place in New Testament doctrine. Accompanying this conception of a particular section of Christians in whom is vested peculiarly divine authority is a use, especially in 'high church' circles, of so-called holy water, incense, etc. Special vestments heighten the appeal to the religious mind together with a system of hierarchy and a ritual order which ensures the smooth operation of the service of God. In one large section of christen-

dom there is even the assumption by one in the office of priest to receive confession of sins and to extend remission, no doubt all in the Name of God. A study of the teaching of the New Testament will show clearly that for all these things there is no justification whatever.

For every true Christian the Scriptures are the first and final authority for doctrine and practice. Nowhere in them will be found, in spite of centuries of tradition, any idea of the office of the clergyman. It is an innovation, certainly not obtaining at Pentecost nor in apostolic times. Undoubtedly there have been many able, sincere and godly men following the vocation and a large proportion of Christians accepting the situation. Nevertheless, in such circumstances the full liberty of the Holy Spirit is thereby inhibited. His freedom to choose whom He will to use at any particular time and occasion is frustrated by the system whereby He is confined to a designated person. His service in the Church has been likened to that of the Commander in the field of operations whilst the Field Marshal is at headquarters (Christ, the Head of the Church, in heaven). How thankful we should be for the presence here in the Church on earth of the Holy Spirit to ensure the continuance of the service of God and of the testimony unimpaired until the return of the Lord Jesus to take Himself His bride, the Church. What then does the New Testament teach concerning the priesthood for to-day?

It is quite evident from the New Testament that no special theological training and no human form of ordination are requirements for qualification for priesthood. On the contrary, it is the normal function of the believer in Christ as the apostle Peter, writing to the dispersed Jewish Christians, clearly shows in his first Epistle :—

‘To Whom (Christ) coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, *an holy priesthood*, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.’ (chapter 2 : 4, 5).

Again :— ‘But ye are a chosen generation, *a royal priesthood*, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him Who hath called you out of darkness into His Marvellous light.’ (2 : 9).

These direct statements admit of no misunderstanding and are indeed reinforced by John in the book of Revelation (1 : 6, 5 : 10, 20 : 6) in terms very similar to those of Peter. It is the privilege and the responsibility of every Christian to be exercised to answer to the calling as we are exhorted 'Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.' (Heb. 12 : 28).

"Lord, speak to me that I may speak
In living echoes of Thy tone :
As Thou has sought, so let me seek,
The erring ones, the lost and lone.

O teach me Lord, that I may teach
The precious things Thou dost impart,
And wing my words that they may reach
The hidden depths of many a heart.

ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY

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THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER

Thirty pieces of silver
For the Lord of Life they gave;
Thirty peices of silver—
Only the price of a slave!
But this was the priestly value
Of the Holy One of God;
And they weighed it out in the temple,
The price of the Saviour's blood.

Thirty pieces of silver
Laid in Iscariot's hand;
Thirty pieces of silver
And the aid of an armed band,
Like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
Brought the humbled Son of God
At midnight, from the garden
Where His sweat had been like blood.

"Thirty pieces of silver"
Burns on the traitor's brain;
"Thirty pieces of silver!"
Oh! it is hellish gain!
"I have sinned and betrayed the guiltless!"
He cried with a fevered breath,
As he threw them down in the temple,
And rushed to a madman's death.

Thirty pieces of silver
Lay in the House of God;
Thirty pieces of silver,
But oh, 'twas the price of blood!
And so for a place to bury
The strangers in, they gave
The price of their own Messiah,
Who lay in a borrowed grave

WM. BLANE (Lays of Life and Hope)

CHURCH PRINCIPLES (1)

by J. HEADING

THE CHURCH AND ITS STRUCTURE

Acts 5, 12-6; 11, 19-30

Church topics occupy a prominent part of the New Testament, but balance is necessary since there are so many other topics. Some believers have no concern regarding church matters, holding strange ideas about others who believe in and act on church truth, perhaps to soften their own conscience. But we must be faithful to the Word of God.

What is the most complicated structure in God's creation? Not the stars, or the structure of the earth, but the human body, Psa. 139 : 14. The most powerful microscope (optical) will not reveal the ultimate details of His handiwork, nor the electron microscope magnifying 100,000 times. "Let us make man," Gen. 1 : 26, shows He had a plan beforehand, and all prior acts of creation in Gen. 1 were designed so that the Masterpiece should fit in. Where there is life, the purpose, power and keeping ability of God are seen to the uttermost.

The same in the spiritual realm. The blind materialist thinks all the creatorial complication is entirely automatic, in origin, continuance, with no ultimate object. But the Christian knows the mind of God controls all things, and that there is also a spiritual realm. God has a new creation with purpose and spiritual structure. Men see the church as an architectural building, or as a denomination, but believers see it as a spiritual body. We can appreciate this truth only when we have God's point of view.

The "church universal" embraces all believers—it is not localized. It has a heavenly origin, chosen before the foundation of the world, Eph. 1 : 4. It was hidden during Old Testament times even from the prophets, Eph. 3 : 1-8. It has a heavenly destiny, to be presented unto Himself a glorious church, Eph. 5 : 27. To believe that we are included would ween us from worldliness, flesh, in daily life and local church activity.

For God gathers His people into localized groups—the churches—to serve Him, and to display the Christ-like character of the whole. These pages will deal with the latter,

the local church. The former is for the heart, the latter for the hands. The former for hope and affections, the latter for service. The former is for eternity, the latter for time. The former is for display to the heavenly hosts, the latter for display amongst men. The design of the universal church and the local churches had been known to God before he made the worlds. No wonder His creation reflected features of the church! Hence the human body reflects life, variety of members, control. The tabernacle and house reflect foundations, dwelling and service.

Let us find a local church, and examine its structure. The natural religious mind would say right from the start: Something is missing. They would look for a pope, an archbishop, a bishop, a vicar, etc., in charge of a state church or denomination. They would look for a cathedral or parish church, rather than a hall void of religious relics, altars, vestments, etc. Rather, they would find a meeting under divine control, with no one man in authority, else they would be denying the Headship of Christ and the authority of the Holy Spirit. Generally, men love one man to be in control, elected in a democracy and self-appointed in a dictatorial regime. But the church, on spiritual ground, has its spiritual unseen Head—He is “head over all things to the church, which is his body,” Eph. 1 : 22, a position given Him as exalted by God. See Col. 1 : 18. Hence believers are members of His body, subject to His authority through His Word and Spirit. Similarly, 1 Cor. 12 shows divine control over the local members, “dividing to every man severally as he will.”

From the point of view of a building, “other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ,” 1 Cor. 3 : 11. Similarly in 1 Pet. 2 : 6 (quoted from Isa. 28 : 14), a chief corner stone is laid in Zion, showing an exactly laid foundation to bear the weight of the building. Also in 1 Pet. 2 : 7 (quoted from Ps. 118 : 22) the Lord is seen as a Headstone—the complement, the top stone or coping stone to complete the building. Here is a miracle, the top and bottom are finished in the resurrection of Christ before the rest of the building in between! Not : In Eph. 2 : 20, the church is built “on the foundation of the apostles and prophets,” namely founded on their doctrine and practice, as Matt. 7 : 24, where building on a rock is equivalent

to hearing and keeping the Lord's words. These concepts are very practical, for if we believe this and act upon it, a company will be so different from those with earthly organizations and heads and hierarchies.

The members and stones. All we see visibly are men and women distinct from the world, with a faith owning a Living Controlling Head. They own Christ Lord of their lives, Head of the church, but not King (He is King to Israel, and to the millennial world). Each member of a local church is purchased with blood, Acts 20 : 28,—“ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price,” 1 Cor. 6 : 19. God adds believers (but never unbelievers) to the church, Acts 2 : 47, as the Lord said, “I will build my church,” Matt. 16 : 18. Others dare not add themselves to the local church in Jerusalem, Acts 5 : 13. Each has signs of life, as members of the body of Christ, 1 Cor. 12 : 27; hence they are productive and can produce fruit. The church can multiply (in numbers) and be edified (in character), Acts 5 : 31. Each is built on the proper divine foundation; they are “living stones,” “a spiritual house,” 1 Pet. 2 : 5, suitable for the dwelling place of God and for service. Each member has a name quite distinct from the world's names. Thus they are “called saints,” 1 Cor. 1 : 2, namely separated for and to Him, unlike the purely religious use made of the word in the world. Many times they are called “brethren”—the Lord calls them “my brethren,” John 20 : 17; (perhaps they are “brethren” when we speak to them, “saints” when we speak about them). We must not be ashamed of scriptural names just because the world may think of them as old-fashioned—though they are old-fashioned if they go back to New Testament times. Nor must we be confused by the world's notion of “saints.” Additionally, all members are called “priests”, 1 Pet. 2 : 5, unlike the world's concept of a priest which is largely taken from the Old Testament Levitical priesthood and the heathen priesthood of old.

Such members are not united by club rules or laws; rather, as one body we are members of “THE Christ,” 1 Cor. 12. 12, the definite article often being used to denote the Head plus His members. Again, we have all been baptized by one Spirit into one body, v. 13, and it is the unity of the Spirit, Eph. 4. 3, that keeps members in holy harmony. In fact, the truth of the one body should keep us from disuniting influences, the Lord and His Word keeping us united thereby.

Variety of Structure. The millions of living cells of a living body biologically are "differentiated," namely with different size, shape, chemical composition, function, although all started off as one cell. Exactly how cells change form, composition and function remains a great mystery. Similarly in the structure of the church—all members are able to do different things, and are doing different things in harmony, although all have a common second birth in Christ.

Some few of the men folk are singled out as elders or bishops (from which word come the great ecclesiastical perversions). These are men who are pastors in the flock with special ability to guide, lead, feed, admonish, comfort, defend. They are not joint heads, and do not usurp the position of Christ who is the "great shepherd," Heb. 13. 20. Such men are chosen by the Holy Spirit and not by the flock, Acts 20. 28. They are not necessarily an instantaneous appointment as soon as a local church is established. The list of their qualifications (not novices, given to hospitality, apt to teach, etc., 1 Tim. 3. 1-7; Tit. 1. 7-9) enable the local church "to know them who are over you in the Lord," 1 Thess. 5. 12, and enable the men concerned to desire such a good work (their own exercise in the matter), 1 Tim. 3. 1.

Every member seems to be serving in some capacity, unlike many religious congregations, where all sit and listen and do nothing. In fact, all are called "deacons," the common word for servant or "minister." The only ones who do not serve in maturity are (i) those young in the faith who are learning, developing, (ii) those too old who served faithfully in the past, (iii) those who through weakness have lost the spiritual qualifications necessary, 1 Tim. 3. 8-13. Yet everything looks remarkable! Here is there a mutual harmonious outworking of so many different types of service. The ignorant unable-looking man proves to be an able teacher of the Word! This is because the three Persons of the Trinity are engaged in calling and equipping, for such varied work as evangelists, pastors, teachers, Sunday-School teachers, with the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge. In Rom. 12. 3, *God* has dealt to *everyman* the measure of faith, having gifts differing according to the grace given. In Eph. 4. 7, it is *Christ* who gives—to *everyone* of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

In 1 Cor. 12. 11, it is the Spirit who divides to *every man* as He will. All this is the result of the Lord having ascended so that the local churches can live and work.

Sisters in Christ likewise take the place in service allotted them by the Spirit, but not by the customs of the present day. Thus Phoebe was a "servant of the church," namely a "deaconess," Rom. 16. 1-2, not engaging in public teaching in the church, 1 Cor. 14. 34. 1 Tim. 2. 12, though teaching at home, Tit. 2. 4; Acts 18. 26. Their work is hospitality, Luke 10. 38-42, and ministering to the saints, without which the work of the Lord could not go forward.

More mundane matters are included in the structure. Is finance dealt with by someone who works in a bank, but not doing anything else? Rather, the more menial jobs are done by men who are "full of faith, power, doing great wonders, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom," Acts 6. 3,8. Such men are chosen by the local church for mundane matters, BECAUSE of spirituality and gift. They will be experts in their own spiritual gift, and in smaller local churches perhaps elders as well.

CHRIST IN THE HEBREWS

by J. B. HEWITT, Chesterfield

"Christ the Select Forerunner"

Chapter 6 v. 12-20

In this chapter we have EXHORTATION v. 1-3 "Let us go on." The Christian life is never meant to come to a standstill. EXPOSURE v. 4-8 "going back," a warning about apostasy. ENCOURAGEMENT v. 9-20 "going through," the evidences of new life v. 9, 10; the expectation of the fulfilment of the promises of God v. 11, 12; the example of the man of faith v. 13-16; the established Anchor and the entrance of our Forerunner v. 17-20.

Trace the seven references to "salvation" and the "Let Us" in this book.

A Shining Example v. 13-15. Abraham's example as the inheritor of the promises is held up before us for inspiration. He was tested by God in many ways and came through triumphant, because he was patient. He learned to obey and trust God, he refused to be rewarded by worldly power, and readily offered up his best to God. Gen. 22

We are encouraged to go forward by the promise to faith

v. 12, and the oath of confirmation on v. 12, and "thus inherit the promises" of a God who cannot lie v. 12, 18.

A Secured Hope v. 16-18. Abraham had a sure promise of double binding. It was God's Word, and that made it sure, and it was confirmed by an oath. God became His own witness and guarantor and that made it doubly sure. The promised blessing was realised in Christ.

In a sense we are like refugees v. 18, but the refuge has been reached in Christ, and the believer is eternally sure. The illustration is the "cities of refuge" in Num. 35. 9-15. There is no other hope of rescue from judgement than "Christ Jesus our Hope" 1 Tim. 1.1. Our Lord has opened a way to the Presence of God for every saint in every moment of need. The Anchor within the veil holds us safely who are yet outside, afflicted and tossed with tempests. "The present life is the sea; the soul a ship; the hidden bottom of the sea, the hidden reality of the heavenly word. The soul of the believer, as a tempest-tossed ship, is held by the anchor within the veil, fastened by faith to the blessed reality within the veil" K. S. Wuest.

A believer has to learn that there is a hope which identifies him with heaven, and his present blessing is the appropriation of Christ. The words "sure" and "steadfast" are not qualities of the Anchor, but refer directly to our hope within the veil. This hope of entrance is the anchorage in heaven where Jesus is for us. He is the pledge that one day we will enter forever within the veil and rejoice when we see His glory. John 14.3; 17.24.

The Successful Forerunner v. 19, 20. The Forerunner is already in heaven for us. Our hope rests on the fulfilment of the promise guaranteed by the oath and the presence of our High Priest within the veil. The risen Lord is enthroned in the glory as the "firstfruits" of His redeemed people, there He performs His priestly ministry. Psalms 110. 4. Forerunner means a "pioneer" suggesting others will follow. The Levitical high priest did not enter the sanctuary as a forerunner, but only as the people's representative. The people could enter the court but never the sanctuary. Our Forerunner goes nowhere that His people cannot follow Him. He has entered on our account, for our advantage, as our representative. With our High Priest there, it is safe for us to follow, so "Let us draw near" and enjoy His help. Note the order

"after Melchisedec." He is an eternal High Priest and carries upon the shoulders of His omnipotence, and upon the heart of His infinite love, those who place their faith in Him, into the presence of God.

Christ is our Refuge—flee to Him with your troubles. He is our Anchor—faith links us with Him. He is our Fore-runner—follow Him in all things. He is our Priest to fully meet all our need.

NOT MINE, BUT THINE

by **EDWARD JAMINSON**

"Saul is dead;" the jubilant cry of David's men upon receiving news of the fall of the King of Israel. For them it meant an end of wandering, the closing of a period of historical unrest and insecurity, the dawning of a new day that would ultimately usher in an era of kingly rule and righteous government.

No place on earth had been so attractive to this loyal band as the inner cave at Adullam with the presence of David so real and his assurances so rewarding. The promise that one day the throne of Israel would be occupied by Jesse's worthy son, the man of God's appointing.

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

Having been privately anointed by Samuel (16 : 13) and now learning of Saul's death, David could well have said "now is my opportunity to take control of the situation." Truly everything seemed in his favour; Saul out of the way, a faithful company of followers, God's promise of success. Now all that remained was to take the reins in his hands and rule the nation. Does not the Scripture instruct us that favourable circumstances are not always an indication of Divine guidance.

While the natural man looks for place and longs for authority the man of God gladly says "Thy will be done." What a high spiritual tone would characterize the companies of God's people today if all were willing to wait God's time and appointment. In the context of the local church there exists the danger of leadership being weakened by those who are ready to take advantage of a situation rather than wait God's time and pleasure.

Consequently, David chooses to wait upon God in total dependance instead of making the most of an opportunity; truly leaving upon the page of Scripture a pattern to be observed by all true followers of the Lord.

MAKING INQUIRY

Obviously David never reckoned Saul a hindrance between himself and the kingdom, otherwise he would have taken the throne at the time of Saul's death. It was sufficient for David to place his confidence in the Almighty being assured that one day he would reign over Israel. With pleasure he could have prided himself in the fact that opportunity was knocking, convincing himself that now was the time to win Saul's friends, vanquish the gloating Philistines and enthrone himself over the nation. Such may be the attitude of the carnal man but surely not the exercise of the spiritual.

"David enquired of the Lord" (2:1). What depth of sincerity do these words convey to the reader. An enquiry made by means of the Urim and Thummin on the breastplate of the high priest. The means by which God's will would be manifested to Abiathar in relation to David's desire to know God's purpose for him. David knew the Lord and feared walking independant of Him which would result in the Divine plan being interrupted.

Let it be remembered that this business of seeking God's will is not restricted to those who by nature of their calling have greater time to devote to quiet meditation or to those who find themselves actively engaged in public witness. We are happy to say that the discerning of the Divine will is the privilege and responsibility of all His children regardless of calling in life. It is in fact the daily exercise and joy of thousands of hard working Christians and is beyond the reach of none.

As David learned the great lesson of enquiring after God's will, so may we be enabled to wait patiently upon the Lord rather than take advantage of a situation which may ultimately result in carnal means being used to achieve an apparent spiritual end. The problem today, is not that of God refusing to make His will known to us but rather of God's people choosing to ignore His holy purposes. Divine guidance is not a question of the believer pleading with God to guide, but of God pleading with the believer to let

Him guide.

Let us then put away the evil scheming of the flesh and enquire from the Lord what His plan and purpose would be for our lives. This may not of necessity be a smooth course but we are assured it will work out to His glory.

DIVINE APPROVAL

The horizon was clear, circumstances were in his favour; the support of the people was evident. Nevertheless, the lonely fugitive who has proved God through deep and trying circumstances longs to move only in accordance with His will. Is this not the experience of many a Christian? The trials of life only cause us to look with greater dependance to the Lord for guidance in the future.

“Go to Hebron”—How concise an instruction, and yet how precious to the seeker. No multiplicity of words, no persuasive language, a simple and plain answer to a heart that longs only to hear the voice of Divine Approval.

STUDIES IN SOLOMON'S TEMPLE (13)

by **JOHN B. D. PAGE**

THE SHEKINAH GLORY

Having put the Ark into position, the priests came out from the Holiest, and then the Cloud of the Glory of the Lord filled the Temple, but it was not until “all the work that Solomon made for the House of the Lord was finished” that “the Glory of the Lord filled the House” (II Chronicles 5:1, 7-9, 13f). The work had first to be finished, because an unfinished Temple could not be filled with the Glory of the Lord. Of the tabernacle, centuries earlier, the Scriptures state, “when Moses finished the work, then the cloud covered the tent . . . and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle” (Exodus 40 : 33f).

A finished work followed by the glory is a principle found in the Scriptures, not only in connection with the tabernacle and the temple but also Christ and the Church. Having resolved to finish His Father's work, to which He gave expression once to His disciples and then to the Jews (John 4 : 34, 5 : 36), our Lord prayed later, “I have finished the work . . . , and now, O Father, glorify Thou Me . . .” (John 17 : 4f). From the cross, in the hour of apparent defeat,

Christ cried triumphantly, "It is finished!" God then "raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory" (I Pe. 1 : 21) first by giving Him "a body of glory" (Phil 3 : 21) and forty days later He was "received up into glory" and was "crowned with glory and honour" (I Tim. 3 : 15, Heb. 2 : 9). Having finished His work on earth, He was glorified.

During the course of constructing the Temple, the Glory of the Lord was a prospect and likewise with the spiritual temple, which the Lord is now building, the glory is yet to come, even as Paul says, "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1 : 27). Whilst Christ now indwells His Church, the glory is a hope to be realised at the Lord's return, and the work of building this "holy temple" will have been finished when each of us will be "a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed" (I Pe. 5 : 1). We now "rejoice in the hope of the glory of God" (Rom. 5 : 2), but, when the last living stone" will have been put into place, the work will be finished and then this "spiritual house" will be glorified, "having the glory of God" (cp. Rev. 21 : 11). Our prospect now will then become our possession! Until the dawning of that day, our present privilege is to "glorify God in our body" (I Cor. 6,20) by living lives that will bring glory to Christ.

The circumstances of the momentous occasion of the finished Temple being filled with the Glory of God should not be overlooked. When the priests were come out of the Holiest after placing the Ark, Levites, arrayed in white linen, having cymbals, psalteries and harps, stood with one hundred and twenty priests at the east side of the Golden Altar in the Holy Place, sounding trumpets. With one voice and trumpet accompaniment, a song of praise and thanksgiving ascended to God, and the House was filled with the Cloud of the Glory of the Lord (II Chron. 5 : 11-14).

The filling of the Temple with the glory of the Lord was apparently in two distinct phases, as described in II Chronicles ch. 5 and 7, separated by Solomon's dedicatory prayer in ch. 6. It is interesting to note that when the Temple was filled with the Glory inside, priests and Levites were present, but the Glory upon the Temple outside was seen by "all Israel." Surely, this is suggestive of the Lord's coming again to the air and then to the earth.

Concerning this wonderful occasion, we should note the parties who witnessed the scene and their location. First,

the "priests" saw the glory in the House of the Lord, and we, as believer-priests, will be in a coming day 'where He is,' so that we may 'behold His glory' (John 17 : 24). Next, from a distance outside, "all Israel" saw the glory *upon* the House, and in the age to come a regenerate Israel, from a distant relationship as subjects to their King, will see Him in His glory and beauty (Isaiah 32 : 17).

Such a scene of priests blowing trumpets and Levites singing a psalm of praise when the Glory of the Lord filled the temple reminds us of the fast approaching day when "the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout . . . and with the trump of God" and, in response to the trumpet call, we shall be caught up to meet Him in the air (I Thess. 4 : 16f). Then the "spiritual temple, which the Lord is now building, will be glorified, for we all as "living stones" will be changed into His likeness by putting on bodies of glory. As it was an occasion of praise when the earthly Temple was filled with the Glory, so in that coming day "when His glory shall be revealed, we shall be glad with exceeding joy" (I Peter 4 : 13).

Our attention has been focussed upon the coming of the Glory inside the Temple, but what happened outside?

In the midst of the Court and before the Brazen Altar, Solomon stood upon a brass platform, made purposely for the occasion and, from it, he delivered a short address to a vast crowd of people assembled for the consecration of the Temple (II Chron. 6 : 1-11). Then kneeling down before this great assembly and with outstretched hands towards heaven, he offered a long prayer of thanksgiving to God (II Chron. 6 : 12-42). At the end of his prayer, fire from heaven consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices upon the Brazen Altar and the Glory of the Lord filled the Lord's House. "When all . . . Israel saw how the fire came down and the glory of the Lord upon the House, they bowed . . . and worshipped . . ." (II Chronicles 7 : 1-3).

This scene of sacrifice accepted by fire from heaven and the visible manifestation of the Shekinah Glory directs our thoughts to the sacrificial sufferings of Christ and His coming in regal glory. As "all Israel" saw the fire consume the sacrifice and beheld the glory upon the Lord's House, so in a future day all the tribes of the Land of Israel shall look upon Him, Whom their forefathers pierced, when they shall

see the Son of Man coming with power and glory. "They shall mourn for Him," that is, they will not be sorrowful for His Coming but at His coming, and a godly sorrow will pervade the hearts and minds of a remnant who, as a regenerate people, will enter the millennial kingdom. See Zech. 12 : 10, Matt. 24 : 30.

The sacrificial ritualism for consecrating the Temple lasted seven days during the seventh month, and it was followed immediately by the seven day Feast of Tabernacles (II Chron. 7 : 4-10). This Feast, the last and the climax of the annual Feasts of the Lord, was an occasion for rejoicing before the Lord (Lev. 23 : 40, cp. Neh. 8 : 17), and it anticipates dispensationally Messiah's millennial reign of righteousness and peace when a regenerate Israel will say, "... this is the Lord, ... we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation" (Isa. 25 : 9).

TABERNACLE GLEANINGS

by the late JOHN COWAN

In the first month, in the second year, in the first day of the month, the Tabernacle was reared up, so, Moses finished the work: then the cloud covered the Tent of meeting, and the Glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle. A Finished Task, a Filled Tabernacle, but a Further Teaching yet to be given, before it will be able to function in the manner of the Divine requirement.

Not only does God desire to dwell amongst His People, but it is also His desire that His people should be able to approach Him, and thus, a basis for this communion must be laid. So, God again called unto Moses, this time, not out of the Bush Ex. 3, nor out of the mountain Ex. 19, nor yet out of the cloud Ex. 24, but now out from the Tabernacle. In Ex. 3 it is a Messenger on a Mission of Deliverance, in Ex. 19 it is a Mediator with a Mandate of Demand, in Ex. 24 it is a Master workman with a Model of a Dwelling, but now in Lev. 1 it is a Minister with a Ministry of Direction. Exodus gives us the material of which the Tabernacle consists, Leviticus the Ministry it contains; thus in the good of this Ministry, the basis of approach is laid. A Burnt Offering and a Meal Offering for Acceptance, then a Peace Offering, in order that the enjoyment of their acceptance may be experienced and enjoyed.

Although now a redeemed people amongst whom the Lord is pleased to dwell, yet, such is the fallibility of his people, that inadvertently communion may be disturbed, and in order that it may be restored and enjoyed a sin and a trespass offering have also been given. It is our intention now to take a look at the completed structure, every whit of it expressing the Glory of God, the Glory of Holiness, the Beauty of Divine order, everything established according to the pattern given—God in the midst of His Redeemed People, to journey with them, His Presence protecting, His Power providing. Happy art thou O Israel, who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord. God has come out in order that His people may go in, so as we seek to consider the approach provided, it is not our desire to isolate principles and attempt to apply them in this isolated way, but to take the whole in its integrated sense and interpret the New Testament Doctrine in the Draperies of the old. We realize that, to do so, our intelligence must be sanctified by the Holy Spirit, and our imagination restrained; to be spiritual without losing our touch with earth, and to be practical without losing our touch with heaven.

Starting out from the Camp, the Court would first be approached. Although God is in the midst of His people, and all inside the Camp enjoy this nearness of His Presence, yet there are nearer nearnesses that can only be enjoyed as we exercise ourselves to progress along the pathway that His Grace provides. This exercise of His people would begin in the Camp and would bring them to the Court, where they may experience and enjoy, in this nearer sense, a fellowship and communion with their God.

If we were allowed to walk round about the Court, the unbroken continuity of the fine twined linen in all its spotless purity would cause us to think of the Holy character of God, how that holiness becometh his house for ever, and how that he must be had in reverence by all those that are about Him. No one could be allowed to approach, unless the requirement of His Holy character had been fully met; this then would suggest the necessity of the Gate, the only means of access into His Presence to obtain this nearer view. The Gate completed the enclosure and, while composed also of fine twined linen, was richly ornamented with the needlework of colours, the Blue, the Purple, and the Scarlet.

Twenty cubits was its length and the height five cubits answerable to the hanging of the Court.

If the fine twined linen of the Court proclaimed the Holiness of God and the requirement of His Holy character, here is a means of access answerable to His claims. There are three avenues of access into the presence of God with their differing degrees of nearness, namely the Gate, the Door, and the Vail, giving unfoldings of the Glory of Christ, which as apprehended and appropriated by us, will enable us to gather up in an appreciative way these unfoldings of God as Christ has told him out. The Gate then gives access into the Court, and is expressive of those excellencies of Christ, meeting all the claims of Divine Righteousness and imparting them by imputation to us who believe and thus allowing us as justified ones to enter the sphere where justified joy is experienced and enjoyed.

These avenues of access as described by God the Spirit are very fitting indeed and are always descriptive of the particular sphere of nearness into which we desire to come. The Gate is always the Gate of the Court; the Door, the Door of the Tabernacle; whilst the Vail is always the Vail of the covering, i.e. the Covering for the Ark. The Gate then is the fitting expression of our access into the Court. Amongst the many functions enacted at the Gate, judicial claims, i.e. clearance from guilt seems to have been the most important, Justification being a judicial term, and as all judicial claims have been met by Him, access through Him has been made available for us. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have *access by Faith into this Grace* wherein we stand" Rom. 5. 1.

PAUL'S FIRST LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS

by R. WOODHOUSE BEALES

It is not our purpose to expound this whole Epistle, only to emphasise certain matters and give a resumé for the reader's consideration of that which is mostly misinterpreted, and to emphasise the main issues. Firstly we should consider the importance of the city lying as it did midway between the two capitals, Jerusalem, the religious centre and Rome,

the military centre. Moreover it was the world port of commerce to which men of all nations would come for trade. It is therefore the only epistle which deals with the matter of various tongues. Men of all nations would come there and many would doubtless enquire why these folk met together on the day after the sabbath (the Jews' holyday) and what was their purpose. May we dare to suggest that many of these men would be met at the quayside by women of loose morals (which gives point to the chapter on this matter) and would wonder what this new doctrine and practice was.

Now apart from the opening of the epistle and salutations and the end chapter we want to emphasise that it is ALL corrective, for practices and conditions were tolerated there which were almost unmentionable. When for instance we want to read about the Lord's supper we do not normally read the opening verses 1 Cor. 11, 17-22, nor the concluding ones (vv 28-34) (Why is this?) Nor when we want to read about the resurrection of the body in chap. 15 do we usually point out that they were denying this truth (vv 12-19) nor do we point out the words of the apostle in vv 35, 36.

Now these Corinthians had written to Paul raising other questions as to virgins and the eating of certain meats. However, those of the house of Chloe, the bearer of their letter to Paul, had told him of other things which were being taught and practised there. Some of these sinning Christians were being removed by death because of their sinfulness and many were weak and sickly because God was dealing with them in discipline, but Paul does not commence his tirade against them over these important matters. He commences with things which to this day are actually gloried in—Sectarianism which was being practised and which would ultimately divide the church, it is seen all around us today and alas, is gloried in. Names, parties and factions have so multiplied that today they are practically uncountable. (The late Mr. Wm. Hoste used to say "the tribes of Christendom, would that there were only twelve!"). There was not a church anywhere which was in such a parlous state and which had within it the seeds which have now produced a veritable forest.

Now these things are not mere unessentials, but lie at the very foundation of Christianity, and there appears to be no remedy whatever.

The great chapter on Love (13) is in between the two chapters which deal with the working of the spiritual body of the church i.e. it is the oil between the chapter which describes the machinery of the church, and its actual working. Even the Lord's supper had deteriorated (even if it had ever commenced well) into a drunken orgy.

They were a temple of God, but were defiling it, and were puffed up (a word occurring four times) and he was afraid he would have to come to them, not in love but with a rod (ch. 4). If he came to them it might be to deliver the sinning one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh (5:5). They were also going to law with one another thus exposing themselves and their sinfulness to the world. But there was a race to be run and a prize to be won, if only they would abide by the rules. Israel in the wilderness were an example to them regarding the way God would treat with them and reward them that obey Him. (10:1-15). And all this in view of the great Hope of the Coming again of the Lord (15:51-58). The great chapter on resurrection we cannot here stay to expound, but note it is a classic and indeed all these faults of the carnal Corinthians, only serve to bring out the great truths in which we now rejoice.

May we say here that both in this epistle to Corinthians and in Ephesians the Church is likened to a Temple and also a Body. We believe that Ephesians has the whole "universal" Church in view, but here, though the wording is similar, we believe it is the local church in view. The same characteristics would surely, or should be similar if God is to be glorified and His purpose attained. May reader and writer alike put His glory first in both spheres and avoid sectarianism like the plague that it is.

There are Christians today who, because they cannot agree with one another break away and form what they call "another assembly" but this is just the very thing that this epistle warns against, nay, forbids!

Is it possible that there might be a measure of recovery before the Lord comes? Who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and make manifest the counsels of the hearts, THEN we may indeed have praise from Him. Otherwise how can we look forward to seeing Him, knowing that we shall have to give an account?

We must point out one or two matters with which we have not dealt and they are as follows:—Just as Tongues have ceased, so have prophecies (see Revelation ch. 22, last few verses), so that they who say they can speak in Tongues should also be able to add to the prophecies in the Word, but this is strictly forbidden under the most dire warnings of eternal penalty. Nothing can be added to the divine revelation and indeed we would ask any who claim special gifts along these lines to tell us plainly, WHAT has been revealed of divine truth since the scriptures were completed. We invite a clear and plain answer to this most important question. History has been unfolding itself for nineteen centuries since the scriptures were written, so we invite a plain answer to our question.

Sects and parties have been formed innumerable which is strictly forbidden and yet what do we hear of this? Nothing. When we meet Paul (as we hope some day to do) what shall we answer him when he asks us (as well he might) “What sect or party did you ally yourself to when on earth, what name did you take) and if we dare to answer him truthfully, he may well ask us. Did we not read the epistle to the Corinthians and if so why did we not obey it? What answer shall we give?

And what about the place and function of the woman in the assembly? Did they take a prominent part and did they speak publicly to a mixed audience? If so why did they thus disobey the injunctions. The word speak in this connection is the usual one and it does NOT mean, as some have said “chatter.” In the temple of old and the Tabernacle, as well as among the apostles, while women have their place, there were none such in these companies. Why not, we may well ask? The head of the woman is the man, for Adam was first formed, then Eve; and it was not Adam who brought sin into the world by listening to the voice of the enemy, but woman and while women have their place in the assembly (and a most important one it is) to lead or to speak publicly are not included in these, and just as the head of the woman is the man, so the head of the man is Christ, so saith the scripture. No, there were no women giving their name to any of the tribes of Israel and none called to be apostles.

So in Corinth there was much confusion and much sin tolerated and indulged in and even, dare we say boasted in, and Paul earnestly called upon them to repent, lest their "lampstand" be removed as was the case in question in the two chapters devoted to the assemblies in Revelation, where each assembly is looked upon as an individual lampstand, and not simply a branch of a main lampstand. Note how those assemblies are called upon to repent, almost every one of them.

Now did all this exhortation, all this blame have any effect upon the Corinthians? Yes indeed it did and we are thankful to have a second epistle to them from Paul indicating their exercise, their sorrow and he writes again to comfort and sustain them (see II Cor. 7:5-16 shewing the effect of Paul's letter when Titus brought to Paul news of the way in which they had responded and the comfort they had now given him through their repentance).

In conclusion may we note the last words of the two Testaments. In Malachi 3:6, the words are "lest I come and smite the earth with a curse" but the last words of the New Testament are just the reverse and there is a threefold Blessing, Rev. 22:7, 12, and 20, relying upon hearing and keeping and doing the commandments of the Lord. It is not so much a reward we seek after but only His commendation, in that day. May writer and reader alike aspire to that great consummation of all our hopes.

Nor have we pointed out the fact that while the Lord's supper is referred to in detail in I Cor. 11, Paul has said something quite different in Ch. 10 v. 17 he says "WE being many are one bread . . . for we are all partakers of that one bread or loaf" and there of course it is unbroken, nor does he there apply any such meaning to the cup or wine. Also in Ch. 12 vv 12-28 he emphasises how that oneness in the LOCAL church should function, wherein we see that EVERY member is equally important and necessary to each other, as in our own literal bodies. We cannot imagine one part of our physical body wilfully injuring another part! This, once acknowledged and applied should lead to true fellowship and would preclude any "divisions" such as were ruining the church at Corinth.

Note attributed to John Wycliffe:—"It will greatly help thee to understand scripture if thou mark:—not only what

is spoken or written, But of whom, And to whom, With what words, At what time, Where, To what intent, In what circumstances, considering what goeth before, and what followeth after."

Also we might add that a text without its context is a pretext.

Doctrinal Summaries

by Walter Scott (1)

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)" (Psalm 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** of God (Romans 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 the thoughts 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, etc., (Matt. 15. 19). **After** the cross the testimony of the Holy Spirit 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 (Romans 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 a 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 (Psalm 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.

THE DESIRES OF THE HEART

by HENRY C. SPENCE

“One thing have I *desired* of the Lord that will seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in His temple.” (Psalm 27 : 4).

This aspiration of the Psalmist is lovely to consider and in Psalm 63 : 2 David further expresses his spiritual longing “to see Thy power and Thy glory, so as I have seen Thee in the sanctuary.”

May the desire of our hearts be to know His presence and by faith to behold more of the beauty of the Lord in the sanctuary. To contemplate the beauty of His walk, to behold the beauty of His love and to meditate on the beauty of His words.

There was a time when we “saw no beauty in Him that we should *desire* Him” but the Holy Spirit has revealed Him to our souls as “the altogether lovely One” (Song of Songs, chapter 5 : 16).

Thus we may sing with the hymn writer:—

“One thing my Father, only one,
My heart’s *desire* of Thee,

To know Thy well-Beloved Son,
And all His beauty see."

Again in Psalm 73 verse 25 the Psalmist declares "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that *I desire* beside Thee?"

And yet again in Psalm 37 verse 4 the lovely promise "Delight thyself also in the Lord and He shall give thee the *desires* of thine heart." As we delight ourselves in the Lord we shall be granted spiritual desires. And with the bride in the Song of Solomon chapter 2 say "I sat down under His shadow with great *delight* and His fruit was sweet to my taste" (verse 3 last clause).

With the prophet Isaiah we shall express adoringly "The *desire* of our soul is to Thy Name, and to the remembrance of Thee" (Isaiah 26 : 8).

This would lead us to the consideration of the heart's *desires* expressed by our Lord Jesus Himself. Firstly in Luke chapter 22 we are reminded "And when the hour was come He sat down and the twelve apostles with Him and He said unto them "*With desire* I have *desired* to eat this Pass-over with you before I suffer" (verses 14-15).

How wonderful is the Lord's holy affection when He had in mind the Lord's Supper. What an appeal to our hearts! "This do in remembrance of Me". (Luke 22 : 19).

In the Gospel of John chapter 17 verse 24 at this juncture of the Lord's High Priestly prayer Our Lord Jesus expressed the *desire* of His heart which will be granted by the Father when His bride is complete: "Father I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me be with Me, where I am, that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me, for Thou lovest Me before the foundation of the world."

The heart's *desire* of the Son to the Father is that His redeemed people might be *with Him* where He is. What unfoldings are revealed to us by the Lord of Glory concerning the consummation of our salvation when His heart's *desire* shall be fulfilled "Thou hast given Him His heart's *desire*, and hast not withholden the request of His lips" (Psalm 21 : 2).

We are reminded that in that day "The *Desire* of all nations shall come" (Haggai chapter 2 verse 7). May the Lord kindle our *desires* towards Him in these closing days of time, till we see His face.

QUOTATIONS from John Douglas (Ashgill)

Things written aforetime were written for our learning :

ROMANS For our EDUCATION
1 CORINTHIANS 10 For our WARNING
TIMOTHY For our EQUIPMENT
HEBREWS For our ENCOURAGEMENT

The Life of DAVID in 6 points and 2 threes :

The Valley of Elah — Victory Gained
The Cave of Adullam — Reproach Endured
The Throne of Israel — Glory Enjoyed

Joseph, David and Daniel did their greatest deeds for God while they were in their 'teens :

JOSEPH conquered Egypt's Morals
DAVID conquered Gath's Goliath
DANIEL conquered Babylon's Music

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ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY



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Sold - By Thee

?

It may not be for silver,
It may not be for gold,
But still by tens of thousands,
The Prince of Life is sold;
Sold for a godless friendship,
Sold for a selfish aim,
Sold for a fleeting trifle,
Sold for an empty name;
Sold in the mart of Science,
Sold in the seat of Power,
Sold at the shrine of Fortune,
Sold in Pleasure's bower.
Sold where the awful bargain
None but God's eye can see!
Ponder, my soul, the question:
Shall He be sold by thee?
Sold! O God, what a moment!
Stifled is conscience' voice—
Sold! And a weeping angel
Records the fatal choice!
Sold! But the price accepted
To a living coal shall turn,
With the pangs of a late repentance
Deep in the soul to burn.

WM. BLANE (Lays of Life and Hope)

ISAIAH 53 AND ISAIAH 6

by J. C. R. TAMBLING

Isaiah's prophecy—all sixty-six chapters of it—has a great place in the New Testament. Sixty times the book is quoted there, with, in all, forty-five passages being alluded to. Seeing these quotations should always send us back to the original context, to find it enriched! So when we find John, by the Spirit of God, bringing together two vital chapters—the 6th and the 53rd chapters written, we believe, by the *same* Isaiah, we have much to learn.

As we read John 12:37-41, we note that John begins by quoting the chapter that, if we were reading Isaiah through, we should come to later—he begins with the first verse of ch. 53. "Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?"

"Our report" has the sense of "the report that was delivered to us." Isaiah is not speaking for himself: he is giving the voice of the repentant remnant of Israel, in the day when "My people shall know My Name" (Isaiah 52:6), a yet future day, of course, as at present the nation knows nothing of the sort. Jehovah gives us His view of His "righteous servant" in 52:13-15, then the stage is cleared, as it were, for the nation to give *their* view of Him, how they refused to hearken to the report sent to them, and did not perceive the presence of the Lord in grace—the Arm of Jehovah. How relevant this is, as a confession, to John 12! For in chapter 12:36, He departs from the Jews and hides Himself. His public manifestation to them, even in Jerusalem, has resulted in obdurate unbelief. So v. 37 tells us. The next time we see the Lord Jesus in John's Gospel, it will be in ch. 13, in the upper room, away from the unbelievers, with those who in grace He calls His own. The Arm of Jehovah has been seen—has even raised the dead—yet Israel have refused to discern it.

John explains this unbelief, by reference to Isaiah 6. In that chapter, Isaiah sees the Lord—Adonai, the Sovereign One—and He gives Isaiah, not a general commission, but a new message—that the nation were to be dispersed from their land. How long that state of affairs has lasted! In John, grace (the Arm of the Lord) is followed by judgment—the sentence passed on the nation, from Isa. 6. Behold the good-

ness and the severity of God! John quotes from ch. 6: "He hath blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them." Eyes and heart are singled out. The eyes should have seen the Arm at work. In the signs He did, He manifested forth His glory. (John 2: 11). Never say that He laid His glory by. To have done that would have been to have made Himself less than God. The heart should have received the report given—the words of grace He spoke.

After quoting Isaiah, John adds, "These things said Isaiah, when he saw His glory, and spake of Him." The Adonai of ch. 6 and the Servant of ch. 53 are the same—the Lord Jesus. So much is clear. Why is the order of chapters reversed? Does it suggest to us that *chronologically*, 53 comes before 6, so that we get "the sufferings of Christ, and the glories—plural—that should follow?"

And in banding the two chapters together with that statement in v. 41, is it not to emphasise that there was a glory to be seen in the One Who was despised and rejected, as well as when He is seen as the Man on the throne? Moral glories marked Him down here. John said, "We beheld His glory . . . full of grace and truth," (John 1: 14). David prayed that he might, "in a dry and thirsty land," "see Thy glory, so as I have seen Thee in the sanctuary," (Psa. 63: 2). Isaiah saw the glory in the sanctuary, and then saw a far different glory in the One Who grew up before Jehovah as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground. What a wilderness was this to the Lord! The glory John saw in the despised One, he tells us of in his Gospel, in the Revelation, he tells us of the Man on the throne.

Isaiah 53 and 6 belong together, then. And there are some links of interest. What does Jehovah say? "Behold, My servant shall prosper (A.V. mg.), He shall be exalted, and shall be extolled, and shall be very high." And in ch. 6? "In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord, sitting upon a throne, *high and lifted up*, and His train filled the temple. He is on a throne, but "Heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool," Isa. 66: 1. The heaven of heavens cannot contain Him. The throne is in heaven, but He claims the earthly temple as well. Truly, He shall be higher than Agag, "lifted up." Delitzsch explains

52 : 13 as "He will rise up, He will raise Himself still higher, He will stand on high." The threefold repetition is worthy of Deity. Three, in the Scriptures, is connected with the full manifestation of the Godhead. Isaiah goes in for couplets—"Comfort ye, comfort ye," "peace, peace," "line upon line, line upon line," "awake, awake,"—but the Seraphim cry "Holy, Holy, Holy"—a threefold repetition, again, that is suited to the context—the greatness of Christ. The threefold division of the Seraphim's wings seems to have a related significance.

"Kings shall shut their mouths at Him". . . . Why? Because this One, marred more than any man, is hailed by Isaiah as "the King, Jehovah of hosts!" This King needs no further description! No need to say where His territory is. The whole earth is full of His glory! Isaiah says that he is a man of unclean lips, acknowledging himself to be a moral leper, like the King who had descended into the grave, as a picture of the helpless state of the nation. The Kings shutting their mouths suggests that they also are taking the place of lepers (compare Lev. 13 : 45, Job 40 : 4), with the Lord taking the place of the Priest, "sprinkling" them from defilement. The present writer is unwilling to lose the word "sprinkle" of the A.V. with its sense of a priestly work; invoking for support David Baron, amongst others.

If, in the day of His glory, others appear as lepers, how different when He was on earth! Not "mine eyes have seen the King," but, "when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him." This One—"the King in His beauty," "the glorious Lord"! (Isa. 33 : 17, 21). No, men thought otherwise of Him when He came forth to serve, as 53 : 3 shows. And at the end of that public service, "we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God". . the word "stricken" ("naga") being the word employed for the inflicting of leprosy. Men esteemed Him as no better than Uzziah who was plagued for his presumption.

Before Him, Seraphim hide their faces. They, who represent the burning holiness of God, do not look on Him Who is holy. But when He was here with the glory veiled, "we hid as it were our faces from Him." Man prefers not to see the sight of God here in grace, and suffering for righteousness' sake. Before Him, Seraphim cover their feet,

but of Him, Scripture says "How beautiful . . . are *the feet* of Him that bringeth good tidings," (Isa. 52 : 7), commenting on the walk of Him, Who, having proclaimed peace, went out as a lamb to the slaughter, led away from prison and from judgment.

When Heaven speaks, "the posts of the door moved." What could He have said in Pilate's judgment hall? Yet "He openeth not His mouth." Why was He silent? "He sitteth alone, and keepeth silence, because He hath borne it upon Him," (Lam. 3 : 28). (The whole of the chapter is relevant to the sufferings of Christ). What was borne on Him? Let Isa. 53 : 6 answer. As accepting what God had given Him to bear on the Cross, He remained silent before men. The God Who judgeth righteously had set Calvary before Him.

But in chapter 6, the Lord Jesus pronounces judgment on the nation. For their unbelief, and refusal to hear, the people are to be given over to blindness. These solemn words echo through Matt. 13 : 14, Mark 4 : 12, Luke 8 : 10, as well as through John 12. In Matthew, the words are quoted when the Lord, having failed to find fruit as He desired from the nation, goes out to begin a new ministry, as a sower, sowing the seed of the Word to produce fruit for the harvest—at the end of the age. In John, the words occur at the end of His ministry on earth. They are quoted again in Acts 28 : 26, 27. There we get the end of Paul's distinctive ministry to the Jew. The glory has departed. The Jews' opportunities of repentance, and of embracing the Kingdom, seem to have gone for ever from them. "According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear, unto this day. Blindness in part is happened unto Israel, until . . ." (Rom. 11 : 8, 25).

But if such must be the sentence, faith sees grace behind it all, and asks, as Isaiah did, (6 : 11), "Lord, how long?" God hath not cast away His people whom He foreknew. A great future awaits Israel, after the Church has been taken home. To this future, ch. 53 bears witness, in contrast to ch. 6. After the Crucifixion, "He shall see His seed." That is renewed Israel, compare Psalms 22 : 30, Psalm 45 : 16. "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied." Not only will He have a portion with the great—or, literally,

“a portion in many”—taking the wealth of the Gentiles for Himself,—but “He shall divide the spoil with the strong.” That is how the nation are described, compare Dan. 11 : 32, Psa. 110 : 3. Consequent on the death of Christ, Israel have been set aside, a prey to the Gentiles. Yet chapter 53 ends and ch. 4 begins, with glorious promises of regathering for that people scattered and peeled, in association with the Lord Himself, the One they will yet acknowledge, with weeping, as they do, prophetically, in Isa. 53. Not one of God’s purposes for Him, for the Church, which, of course, is not, save in application, referred to here, or for Israel, or for the earth, can ever fall to the ground. No, rather, “the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand!”

CHRIST IN THE HEBREWS

by J. B. HEWITT, Chesterfield

“The Interceding Priest”

Chapter Seven

The priesthood of Melchisidec is a fact to be recognised, more than a figure to be interpreted. The Son of God in His humanity is better than Moses and Joshua in the household of God, and now better than Aaron before the throne of God. Here we reach the summit in Priesthood. The Lord is the Forerunner Who entered within the veil to dwell there as an abiding Intercessor. The priesthood of Melchisidec finds its continuance and consummation in Christ. As Priest we see His Sufficiency, ch. 2. 16-18; His Suitability ch. 5. 1-10; His Sympathy ch. 4. 14-16; His Superiority ch. 7; His Sphere ch. 8. 1-6; and His Sacrifice chapters 9 and 10. May we avail ourselves of His perpetual ministry day by day. This chapter is concerned only with the Person of the priest not with His work, because no priestly work is associated with Melchisidec in Genesis 14. Christ as our Priest ever continues and everlastingly cares. Melchisidec as the political and spiritual leader of his people. This will be true only when Christ reigns in righteousness and will unite kingship and priesthood in Himself. Zech 6. 13; Isa. 32. 1, 17.

The Dignity of His Priesthood v. 1-3. From this illustration we are helped in our understanding of what Christ is to us and what He has done for us. Melchisidec is the first personal instituted type of Christ as Priest. It is SPECIAL

"This" denotes something specially eminent in the person spoken of. God arranged the details of his life to make him a suitable type of Christ. His priesthood is not derived nor inherited. He is introduced as if he were one from heaven, appearing reigning and officiating. ROYAL "King of Salem" His amazing likeness to Christ; He stands alone in person, name, royal position and character v.1. King of righteousness, Isa. 32. 1; King of Peace Isa 9.6; Jer. 23.6. Majesty and authority are invested in Christ. HELPFUL "He blessed Abraham"; his priestly ministry. His order of priesthood comes in properly with the millennium.

The title, "Most high God" connects itself with that golden age, when God will be supreme. His blessing upon Abraham and blessing God is typical of the very two things Christ will do. Luke 24.50; Psalms 22.22; Hebrews 2.12.

Spiritual and Peaceful v. 2. "Righteousness" in the O.T. prophecies is the fundamental characteristic of the Messiah and His kingdom Psalms 72. 1,2; Isaiah 9.7; Jeremiah 23. 5,6; Daniel 9. 24, fulfilled in our Lord 1 Cor. 1.30.

This is a higher order of priesthood than Aaron's. He was rightful in authority and peaceful in all activity. One who is anterior and superior to all mediators. PERSONAL v.3 This order of priesthood possesses a dignity underived and unsurpassed, having neither beginning of days nor end of life. This man was a real person and his titles indicate supremacy. His priestly office was derived from his personal dignity, and in this he resembles the Son of God. Here is an office without ancestry or posterity, no one preceded or succeeded him.

Almost alive before He was born; alive after he was dead. In the Aaronic order the priests who could not prove their genealogy were disqualified. ETERNAL "abideth a priest." In the timelessness of his priesthood he resembles the Son of God. These are the qualities which differentiate the priesthood of Melchisedec from the ordinary priesthood. No one can follow him in his office. The characteristics of his priesthood were superiority and duration.

The Superiority of His Priesthood v. 4-10. A comparison of Melchisedec and Abraham prove the former's eminence, greatness and pre-eminence. (a) By BENEFACTION v. 4 The greatest of the Patriarch acknowledged the grandest of

the Priests, "gave the tenth of the spoils," to a Gentile priest. Thus the Aaronic is inferior. (b) By ASSOCIATION v. 5 Only the tribe of Levi had a warrant to take tithes from their brethren but Melchisidec received tithes from the founder of the nation.

His personal greatness entitled him to receive tithes. He had a special right before and above the law. (c) By DISTINCTION v. 6 Abraham had special privilege and honour conferred upon him, "the promises" yet he received the blessing of Melchisidec, refreshing the weary warrior with the bread and wine of heaven. (d) By COMPARISON v. 7. There is no dispute "the less is blessed of the greater." Abraham was only a prophet but Melchisidec was King and Priest. (e) By DURATION v. 8. The Levitical priests are mortal men, they retain their office for a time, the new order is marked by immortality. Thus the priesthood to which Christ belonged was before, superior to, and continues after the Levitical.

The Excellency of His Priesthood v. 11-14.

INEFFECTIVE. The Aaronic priesthood was not only transitory, but limited, it lacked finality of function and completeness of operation and effect. The whole system could never remove sin, nor grant a position before God v. 11.

INCOMPLETE but the new is independent, a different priest and after another kind. INADEQUATE v. 12-14 It must be superseded for it did not restore the lost access to God. In our Lord the priesthood has passed from Levi to Judah, a tribe not mentioned in the legislation of Moses concerning priesthood. Thus the spiritual priesthood supersedes the legal and sacerdotal. The new priesthood is not limited by bounds of time, nor associated with a legal system. "Our Lord"—stresses Deity; "sprang"—His Incarnation v. 14 His priesthood is deathless, ageless and timeless in its administration.

The Permanency of His Priesthood v. 15-19 The supernatural advent of the Eternal Priest was preshadowed by Melchisidec and promised by David Psa. 110. This priest is different in nature v. 15 in constitution v. 16. "Endless" is not duration, but the quality of the life, it cannot be dissolved. Different in authorisation and Divine acknowledgement v. 17.

The Father Himself solemnly declared Him to be so before the angels in heaven, and revealed it to men on earth by the prophet David.

Christ's priesthood will never be superseded for it is marked by finality. God will never take Him away and give us another. Christ brings in a better hope, in Himself, with immediate access to God v. 19.

The Perpetuity of His Priesthood v. 20-25. The revelation of God's eternal decree in the solemn oath is further proof of the superiority of Christ's priesthood. v. 19. The purpose of God is immutable and the divine oath establishes the Lord's eternal priesthood. Verses 20-22 stress its immutability and verses 23-25 its continuity. We have a better Surety and covenant bringing better privileges and results.

His priesthood is unique as to its origin v. 21; unchanging in its character v. 24; unfailing in its objects v. 25, because of His ability, assurance and acceptance. May we trust the changeless Christ who holds His office by virtue of the unalterable Word and Will of God.

The Suitability of His Priesthood v. 26-29. His power is absolute v. 25; He is always able to save and succour, so we need never change our priest. His lofty moral characteristics and the consequent perfection of His high priestly work make Him indispensable to us. His perfections are apparent v. 26, Godward, manward and selfward. In Him we see true manhood at its highest and best, man without sin. Superior in personality v. 27. Priesthood is based upon sacrifice and Christ's priesthood perhaps most of all, for He is in Himself the great Antitype of all priesthood. Trace the word "HIMSELF" and the many "NECESSITIES" in this letter. His work on the Cross was High Priestly in character. His provision is adequate, for His glorified humanity is the pledge of His accomplished work.

Superior in potentiality v. 28. The contrasts drawn between His perfectness and their weakness, between His diety and their humanity emphasise His superiority.

As we think of the perfection, power, purity and provision of His priesthood may we rejoice that He is just suited to our case.

CHURCH PRINCIPLES (2)

by J. HEADING

THE CHURCH AND ITS SERVICE

1 Cor. 11. 1-16.

We have seen that structure in a local church is important. Christ is seen as Head and foundation. Believers as saints are placed there by God. There are a few with local charge (the elders), and all have some qualifications and gifts for service. All this is so unlike what is practised in high ecclesiastical circles. We would therefore expect the service in a local church to be quite distinct from the ritual, repetition and religion practised in these circles. If we opted to run our own affairs, we could arrange our service according to our own tastes and policies, or we could seek out a denomination to satisfy these tastes. But God expects those whom He has saved NOT to have tastes and policies of their own—"let him hear what the Spirit says unto the churches," Rev. 2. 7, etc. This is not bondage, but a glorious liberty to enjoy God's methods and ideals. If a man is spiritual, let him acknowledge that Paul's writings are the commandments of the Lord, 1 Cor. 14. 37.

In the Old Testament, the tabernacle service was regulated by ceremonial law, showing how the offerings were to be offered, the ritual of incense, the day of atonement and other feast days (Leviticus). In every case, exact instructions were given to Moses to obey. In the New Testament, the local churches are not under law or ceremony, but as belonging to the Lord they submit to His revealed will and control. The recognition of this is vital for all service.

I Corinthians 11-14 are the great chapters on principles in service. Chapters 1-10 deal with individual conduct in the light of local church membership; chapters 11-16 deal with the service and doctrine of the church. In particular, 11. 1-16 shows the individual's (both men's and women's) display to the Headship of Christ. 11. 17-end, presents service Godward, the Lord's supper. Ch. 12 shows service amongst the saints—the variety of gift given by the Spirit, yet with unity in the church maintained. Ch. 13 shows the motivating power of love to pervade the outworking of service. Ch. 14 deals with the regulation of the use of specific gifts in the church (in other words, in chapters 12-14, doctrine is spelt out before

practice). 15.1-9 presents service sinnerward, namely the gospel.

The display of the Headship of Christ. There is no ceremony in the functioning of a New Testament church, as there had been in the Old Testament types; yet God requires a few things that really cannot be called ceremony. This contrasts with many religious circles, where there is plenty of ceremony, but the abandonment of most things that God wants. Even in circles that profess to follow the Word of God, there can be an easy-going take it or leave it attitude adopted. The first feature that Paul notes in chapter 11 is that brethren's heads are uncovered in the Lord's service, but that sisters' heads are covered. This has nothing to do with tradition, custom, convenience or pleasing the men-folk (though John could have no greater joy than to see his children walking in the truth, 3 John 4); rather this act on behalf of both men and women alike is a service of display that pleases God. In the order in 1 Cor. 11-15, all other forms of service *follow* from this. Paul adopts three arguments—spiritual, creatorial, natural, followed by an appeal to follow other churches. The woman's head reflects upon man's authority, headship and glory. Man's head reflects upon Christ's authority, headship and glory. In all church service, there can be no rivalry between men and Christ for authority, headship and glory. God would have us all recognize this fact (i) devotionally in our hearts; (ii) displaying it outwardly, (iii) walking in practical conduct giving the Lord all the glory. Hence both men and women are needed to set forth this truth—it is NOT just the province of the sisters only. The brethren look at the display that the sisters give; the sisters look at the display that the brethren give. Read 1 Cor. 11. 1-16 in the light of these remarks, and you will find that a difficult passage becomes easier. Also read 1 Pet. 3. 3, where the adorning is not outward, but rather showing the hidden man of the heart; in the sight of God this is of great price; 1 Tim. 2. 9-15.

Service Godward. Many young converts love to run into activity immediately after conversion, but the Lord has another way. In Mark 3. 14, the Lord chose twelve, that they first might be WITH Him, and then to be sent forth to preach. Later, in Mark 6. 31, they told Him what they had done, so He said that they should come apart into a desert

place to rest awhile. In other words, our hearts should turn first to the Lord and then to the many forms of service. This is the object of the Lord's supper, 1 Cor. 11, 20; it is placed first in the list of church activity because it brings us into special contact with Him. Believers come together in a scene of moral night to remember Him until He come, an event that will bring in the morning. Note: The Lord's supper is that aspect of the Breaking of Bread that is Godward, 1 Cor. 11, 20, the word properly being dominical. Elsewhere in the New Testament, the word appears only once: "the Lord's day," Rev. 1, 10. On the other hand, "the Lord's table," 1 Cor. 10, 21, refers to the blessings of lasting fellowship flowing to us throughout the whole week. In the next chapter we shall consider details of the meeting for breaking bread, but here we stress that our hearts and objectives are wholly for God in that meeting. In 1 Peter 2, 5, we function as a holy priesthood, offering up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Such a concept "all for God, nothing for self" is irksome to the mind that thinks that church service is directed wholly to men. But this cannot be spiritual, as the Lord asked, "Could ye not watch with me one hour?" Matt. 26, 40.

Service saintward. Following the order in 1 Cor. 12, we must never forget that we are here to serve one another as members of a family. Even then, the service is for Christ, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me," Matt. 25, 40. We all have differing needs, and differing abilities. The whole is tempered together so as to serve the whole, so totally there should be no one-sidedness in service. In Paul's case, there was a lovely evenness; on the one hand there was the "care of all the churches," 2 Cor. 11, 28, and on the other, "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel," 1 Cor. 9, 16. On the one hand he "declared all the counsel of God," Acts 20, 27, and on the other he testified "the gospel of the grace of God," v. 24.

Ability in service is just as much a miracle as is conversion. There are important principles for the use of gift: There are "diversities of gifts," 1 Cor. 12, 4—the ability is given by the same *Spirit* to all. In verse 5, there are "differences of administrations," namely the spheres of service where the gift is used; it is the same *Lord* to all. In

verse 6, there are "diversities of operations"—the results of such service; yet it is the same *God* that works all in all. Here is dignity and spirituality since the Trinity is engaged. Consequently, the service is entirely in His hands—with no room for the energy of the flesh and of the world. We do not entangle ourselves with the affairs of this life, 2 Tim. 2. 4; only those after the flesh mind the things of the flesh, while those after the Spirit mind the things of the Spirit, Rom. 8. 5. We must therefore examine ourselves to see how we fit into God's work locally; how would God have us develop in preparation of soul?

There is not only the doctrine of service as in chapter 12, but also the underlying motivation characterized by love, as in chapter 13. This is not defined in the chapter; God is love, but cannot be "defined." The use of gift without love profiteth nothing. Only the characteristics of love are mentioned, so we can discern it. Thus there is no pride, no seeking self-glory, no trade with iniquity, but only in the truth. Love does not acquiesce with worldly ways in brethren.

Then chapter 14 shows gifts plus love in assembly service; by writing the chapter, Paul shows love in correction. The basic principle is that all the gifts that God endows at any particular time must be used "all for edifying," 14. 26, namely the objective must be the development of Christian life, character and service. The mere desire to use gift for outward show (as was taking place in Corinth) is not a sufficient reason to use that gift. In all service, we must think of the intended results. Don't rush in; God is not the author of confusion, v. 33; rather all must be done decently and in order (i.e. consecutively), v. 40. Above all, God expects the spiritually-minded to own His commandments in service, v. 37.

Service sinnerward, 1 Cor. 15. 1-10. Paul recalls the gospel that he "preached unto you" when they were unconverted in Corinth. For such an object, God calls "some evangelists," Eph. 4. 11. Personal testimony is distinct from public testimony (Acts 8. 4 seems to be the former). There is nothing worse than listening to a preacher preaching the gospel when he has no ability of gift in that direction. Hence young converts should seek to be built up in doctrine before public service. The gospel is too solemn for inexperience to mar it, since the message concerns Christ and Him crucified and raised again.

The work of elders. An elder is not made in a day, but is recognised in a local church when spiritual maturity is reached. Their work will be done, even if the time has not come when men are recognized as elders; ultimately the church will perceive them—if they desire the work and if called by the Spirit. Thus in Acts 14. 23, there were no elders in the churches founded during the first missionary journey; only at the end were they discerned by Paul, after they had grown first.

Elders are not policy makers, leading the flock in strange paths where the sheep do not want to go; sheep have no "lord's over God's heritage," 1 Pet. 5. 3, since the sheep have spiritual sense as well as the elders! Their work is manifold: They willingly feed the flock of God without the idea of gain, 1 Pet. 5. 2. They are examples to the flock, v. 3. They speak the Word of God so that others can follow their faith, Heb. 13. 7. They hold fast the faithful word as they have previously been taught, so that by sound doctrine they can exhort and convince, Tit. 3. 9. They take care of the church of God, 1 Tim. 3. 5. They labour and admonish, and should be esteemed very highly for *their work's* sake, 1 Thess. 5. 12. They rule and labour in word and doctrine, 1 Tim. 5. 17. They must take heed to themselves firstly, and then to all the flock, to feed the church of God, Acts 20. 28. Additionally, when numbers are small, such men may have to engage in administration as well—e.g. to do the work of Acts 6.

TABERNACLE GLEANINGS

by the late JOHN COWAN

Our approach and access into the court having now been obtained by Him, there have also been facilities given in order that it may be maintained by us. The Gate is the answer to the judicial claims of God. "It was exacted from Him and He became answerable" Isa. 53. 7. R.V. The Gate answerable to the height of the Court. It might be profitable to look at some of the features of the Gate, as to its length and breadth and as to the colours and the material of which it is composed. Length is used in the scriptures to denote the course of a thing such as the course of life, while breadth has the character and circumstances of the thing in view. The length and breadth of the Gate would correspond to what we find in John 16. 28. "I came forth

from the Father and came into the World, again I leave the World and go to the Father." His entrance into time with all the circumstances associated therewith. Twenty is the length while five is the breadth. Twenty is divine values while five is human weaknesses associated with Divine strength; when I am weak then I am strong, so in the length and breadth of the gate we see in the course of that life in time every standard of Divine values fully met. The Gate was displayed by four pillars and could possibly be that four fold presentation of the Lord Jesus as presented by the four Gospellers in the record which they make. The Blue in John, the Purple in Mark, the Scarlet in Matthew and the Fine Twined Linen in Luke, each displaying their own particular conception of the Lord Jesus in this fourfold way, yet requiring a blending of the four to fully set Him forth; The Blue is Heavenly Splendour, the Purple, the Splendour of Imperial dominion, the Scarlet the Splendour of Earth in a Kingly way, while the Fine Twined Linen, that righteousness of conduct in all its spotless purity, only seen in its perfection in the manhood of the Lord Jesus here on earth, the Beauty of the Blue, the Blend of the Purple, the Brilliance of the Scarlet, with the Basis of the Fine Twined Linen for their display. Having availed ourselves of the avenue of access seen in the Gate, it is our privilege now to enter the Court and enjoy to the full the variegated excellencies of this nearer view.

The Court then is a presentation of a sphere of service, expressing the Fellowship of Communion in a unity of unbroken and unblemished character, as the various materials of its composition describe, containing also the vessels for the maintenance of this communion and for its restoration when it has inadvertently been broken. Communion is the consciousness of nearness and intercourse, while Fellowship is the active expression of it.

This sphere then is an enclosure of three hundred cubits supported by sixty pillars and is expressive of the power of resurrection fulness, having been made available to us, and in which we, having taken it up, will be enabled to stand in testimony for Him as being in the world, yet not of it. The Court then is described for us, as having one hundred cubits of fine twined linen on the South side, supported by twenty pillars and one hundred cubits on the North side

supported by their twenty pillars. This then would speak of the fact that, not only have we been brought into a sphere of delightful privilege but also into a sphere of definite responsibility, and if the unity of things have to be maintained, we must shoulder our responsibilities as well as share our privileges.

Twenty plays an important part in the construction of court and is a constant reminder that the fulness of sanctuary values is the expectation of God. The good is not enough, he wants the best, and only the best is good enough for him. Surely beloved, when we consider the sphere into which we have been brought and that, not in a typical sense, but in all the Spiritual fulness of all its actual Riches and Glory and Beauty, surely this would encourage us not to laze about basking in the sunshine of the sunny south, whilst others are burdened excessively, endeavouring to maintain in a united way the rigours of the North. The South side is the sunny side, where the wealth of divine blessing is constantly experienced and where it is an easy matter to witness for God. This is the side where effortless enjoyment can be experienced without any thought of responsibility. We must remember, however, that great as our privileges are, our responsibilities are equally great, and while we can enjoy to the full the many blessings that privilege has brought, we must be prepared to take our share of the North side with the enablement given to us, to shoulder our responsibilities, and not to shirk them.

This then is the Fellowship into which we have come and in order to maintain it, according to divine expectation, there have been facilities given to us which we are expected to use and not abuse. The Court then is a display by us of the spotlessness of Christ, not Christ personally but characteristically as seen in you and I. The standard is an exacting one, but not an impossible one, and in order to maintain it in the purity of Divine expectation, it calls for constant exercise and constant care.

We have been briefly considering the pillars in their collective capacity. It might be well for us now to take the same brief look at them in their individual setting. There is an eightfold significance associated with each pillar and this would speak of the new position into which we have now come, the responsibilities we are called upon to discharge

and the rich privilege which is ours in so doing. First of all there is the pillar itself, shittim wood its composition, reminding us of the great change that has taken place in each of our experiences, at one time in the world, drawing our sustenance from it and satisfied with our position in it, but God had an interest in us, and from the bareness of nature's distance and death, He brings us into the place of nearness and life, "out of the Kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of the Son of his Love," cutting us off from the old life, severing us from the old root and establishing us now upon the new foundation whereby old things pass away and all things become new. This, of course, would speak of the brazen socket, the merit of Christ, from being in the world, now, not of the world we stand upon His Merit alone, from being in Adam where all die we are now in Christ where all shall be made to live, to live now not to ourselves but to Him who died for us and rose again.

Then, there is the Hook, the Connecting Rod, the Chapter, the Pin, the Cord and in all its excellency and display, the beauty of Christ, not Christ personally, but as displayed in you and I, in the five cubits square of fine twined linen, answerable to the compass of the brazen altar, from whose established basis all testimony Godward and Manward comes. In the Pillar, then, we have the shaft of our New *Strength*, the Socket our New *Standing*, the Linen our New *Service*, the Hook our *Suitability for Service*, the Chapter the *Servants' Crown*, the Connecting Rod our *Suited Links* with Him and with one another, the Cord our *Support* and the Pin our *Security*. Thus furnished, we take our place, endeavouring to maintain the Unity of the Spirit in the uniting bond of Peace.

Having considered, in a brief and suggestive sense, our approach toward God by way of the Gate and into the Court, our attention would be taken up with the vessels that the Court contain. These vessels, in a wondrous way, speak very eloquently of the Lord Jesus Christ in connection with the basis which He has established in relation to our communion with God. We sometimes speak of the Joy of the Justified; this evidently is the expectation of God from His People, and would be their continual experience so long as they measure up to the standard of the Claims of God. We know that, such is the efficacy of the Blood of Christ,

we can never lose our Salvation. We have been saved and that eternally, but, there is the solemn possibility, that we might lose the joy of our Salvation. This then is the purport of these vessels, because, we being what we are, and sin being what it is, it is possible, even though in an inadvertant way, to lose the joy of our Salvation and to have our Communion broken.

The Court Vessels, then, provide that basis for our unbroken communion and for its restoration, if and when the break takes place.

"THE DEW OF HERMON"

by C. H. M.

(Psalm cxxxiii)

The expression at the head of this paper has, it seems, long proved "a geographical puzzle" to some. But to one who has the mind of Christ it is no puzzle, but a most striking and beautiful figure. Hermon is the very loftiest peak in all the land of Palestine, and from its snowy cap, when all the surrounding country is parched, the refreshing dew descends upon the mountains of Zion: and this is one of the figures used by the Holy Ghost to illustrate the beauty and pleasantness of brethren dwelling together in unity.

Let us quote the entire psalm.

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments. As the dew of Hermon that descended upon the mountains of Zion;* for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore."

Here we have two lovely illustrations of unity among brethren. It is like ointment descending from the head of the high priest to the skirts of his garment; it is like the dew descending, in refreshing power, from Hermon's snowy top.

How truly delightful! And yet they are but figures used to set forth the divine idea of unity among brethren. But how is the unity to be promoted? By living sufficiently near to our great priestly Head to catch the fragrant ointment as it descends from Him—to be living so near the Man

* The interpolated words, "and as the dew," spoil the beauty of the figure.

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in the glory as that the refreshing dew of His grace may drop upon our souls, thus rendering us fragrant and fruitful to His praise.

This is the way to *dwell* in unity with our brethren. It is one thing to talk about unity, and another thing altogether to dwell in it. We may profess to hold "the unity of the body" and "the unity of the Spirit"—most precious and glorious truths surely— and all the while be really full of selfish strife, party spirit and sectarian feeling, all of which are entirely destructive of practical unity. If brethren are to dwell together in unity, they must be receiving the ointment from the Head, the refreshing showers from the true Hermon. They must live in the very presence of Christ, so that all their points and angles may be moulded off, all their selfishness judged and subdued, all their own peculiar notions set aside, all their *cues* and crotchets flung to the winds. Thus there will be largeness of heart, breadth of mind and depth of sympathy. Thus we shall learn to bear and forbear. It will not then be loving those who think with us as to some pet theory or other. It will be loving and embracing "all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."

The blessed Head loves all His members, and if we are drinking into His Spirit, if we are learning of Him, we shall love all likewise. No doubt, those who keep His commandments enjoy His special love—the love of complacency; and so we cannot but specially love those in whom we trace most of His blessed Spirit. But this is a totally different thing from loving people because they adopt *our* line of truth, or *our* peculiar views. It is Christ, and not self; and this is what we want, if we are to "*dwell together in unity.*"

Look at that charming picture presented in Philippians ii. There truly we see, first of all, the divine Head Himself, and from Him the ointment descending to the skirts of His garments. Where did Paul get the grace to enable him to be ready to be poured out as a drink-offering upon the sacrifice of his brethren? What was it that made Timothy care for other people? What led Epaphroditus to put his life in his hand to supply his brethren's lack? What is the one grand answer to all these questions? Simply this: these beloved servants of Christ lived so in their Master's presence and drank so deeply into His Spirit, they dwelt so near the Man in the glory, that the fragrant ointment and the re-

refreshing dew fell upon their souls abundantly and made them channels of blessing to others.

This, beloved christian reader, be assured of it, is the grand secret of getting on together. If brethren are to dwell together in unity, they must have the "ointment" and the "dew" dropping continually upon them. They must live close to Christ and be occupied with Him, so that they may shew forth His virtues, and reflect His blessed image.

And then, what joy to be enabled, in any little measure, to refresh the heart of God! He delights to see His children walking in love. It is He who says, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" Surely this ought to stir our hearts to seek in every possible way to promote this lovely unity. It should lead us to sink self and all its belongings, to surrender everything that might tend in any measure to alienate our hearts from one another. The Holy Ghost exhorts us to "*endeavour* to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Let us remember this. It is the unity of the Spirit, not the unity of the body, we are to keep in the uniting bond of peace. This will cost us something. The word "*endeavouring*" shews that it cannot be done without sacrifice. But the One who so graciously exhorts us to service will ever supply the needed grace. The ointment and the dew will flow down from Him in refreshing power, knitting our hearts together in holy love, and enabling us to deny ourselves, and surrender everything which might tend to hinder that true unity which we are imperatively called upon to maintain.

IN CHRIST — a meditation

by JOHN PETERS

'In Christ redeemed, in Christ restored,
We keep the memory adored
And show the death of our dear Lord
Until He come.'

'In Christ' the believer has :

(1) *Redemption.*

We have redemption through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ and the forgiveness of sins (Romans 3 : 24, Ephesians 1 : 7, Colossians 1 : 14, I Peter 1 : 18). The Word of God reminds us that "once in the end of the world did He appear

to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself," (Hebrews 9 : 26).

(2) *Justification.*

To be justified means (1) to be declared/pronounced acquitted from guilt; (2) to be accounted righteous, and again it is because of the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 5 : 9). Something of the thrill of justification is captured by the hymnist in the following words :

"I hear the accuser roar
Of ills that I have done,
I know them well and thousands more,
Jehovah findeth none."

Not only does the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ cleanse us (I John 1 : 7), but we are constituted the Righteousness of God in Him. Thus the believer is viewed before God as if he had never sinned. The results of our justification are glorious : (a) Peace with God. (Romans 5 : 1) (b) Access (Hebrews 10 : 19) (c) Nearness (Ephesians 2 : 13); we have been brought nigh by the blood of Christ.

(3) *A Completely New Life.*

According to 2 Corinthians 5 : 17, "if any man be in Christ he is a new creature : old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." In Christ the believer enters into an entirely new order of existence : not only peace *with* God but the peace *of* God in our everyday lives.

(4) *Ascended to Heavenly Places.*

Recently it has been suggested that to be 'blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places' means, negatively, that the believer is now no longer under the dominion of Satan, nor does he live under the wrath of God. Positively, it means that the believer belongs to God's kingdom, is controlled by the Holy Spirit, is in the realm where he is near to God, and already knows something of the life of heaven in this world.

(5) *Joy.*

In Philippians 1 : 26 the apostle Paul speaks of "our rejoicing" being "more abundant in Jesus Christ." A better translation for rejoicing would be glorying or exultation. As believers we can exult in our position 'in Christ.' We possess a joy that nothing can take away from us.

(6) *Been Made Gracious.*

In Philemon Paul describes how Onesimus, once 'unprofitable' had become 'profitable,' indeed a 'brother be-

loved.' He had been made gracious in Christ, and Paul pleads with Philemon to accept Onesimus back, 'receive him as myself.'

(7) Hope for the future.

The believer's hope 'in Christ' is clearly set forth in the New Testament. In total contrast to the fear that abounds in the world the believer can pray with Paul that he "may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost," (Romans 15 : 13). Our God is the 'God of hope' simply because he is HIMSELF the hope of His people— "Thou art my hope, O Lord God" (Psalm 71 : 5); "The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him" (Lamentations 3 : 24). In I Timothy 1 : 1 Paul refers to the Lord Jesus Christ "which is our hope," and here the Greek word for hope, *elpsis*, conveys the idea of absolute certainty. Indeed, Christ in us is "the hope of glory" (Colossians 1 : 27), whilst Paul also exhorts us to look for "that blessed hope and glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ" (Titus 2 : 13). Finally the apostle John reminds us that "every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (I John 3 : 3).

But what of our responsibilities in the light of our glorious position 'in Christ'? Again the New Testament is quite specific. We are expected to : preach Christ (I Thess. 4, 11-12); be like Christ (I Thess. 4, 11-12); be ambassadors for Christ (2 Cor. 5 : 20); bear the reproach of Christ (Heb. 11 : 26).

In conclusion, let us remember, with gratitude and delight, that one day we shall be WITH CHRIST.

"Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them."—Ephesians 5 : 11.

Whitefield and a Christian companion were much annoyed one night by a set of gamblers at an inn in an adjoining room where they slept. Their noisy clamor and horrid blasphemy so excited Whitefield's abhorrence that he couldn't rest. "I will go to them and reprove their wickedness," he said. And he went. His words of reproof were apparently powerless. Returning, he lay down to sleep. "What did you gain by it?" his companion asked. "A soft pillow," he said, and soon fell asleep. A good conscience gives a soft pillow.

And when the evening stars appear,
And in their train the darkness bring,
May we, O Lord, with conscience clear,
Our praises to Thy glory sing.

QUOTATIONS from John Douglas (Ashgill)

Commendations :

But for the commendation of a Butler
we would never have had a JOSEPH.
But for the commendation of Saul's Servant
we would never have had a DAVID.
But for the commendation of Arioeh
we would never have had a DANIEL.

* * *

Jonathan loved David; his soul was knit unto him. God's love is measured by the gift He gave. "He gave His only begotten Son." Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it"—Jonathan stripped himself of his sword; he delighted in him; he spake good of him, yet he would not bear reproach—He never went to the cave!

* * *

10 spies saw 3 G's : Grapes, Giants, Grasshoppers.
2 spies saw 4 G's : Grapes, Giants, Grasshoppers and God.

ASSEMBLY TESTIMONY

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