

Unsearchable Riches

A Bi-Monthly Magazine
for God and His
Word

VOLUME XII.

from October, 1920, to August, 1921

V. GELESNOFF
A. E. KNOCH
EDITORS

PUBLICATION OFFICE, 2823 EAST SIXTH STREET
LOS ANGELES, CAL.

2

[UNSEARCHABLE RICHES, OCTOBER, 1920]
[BEING THE FIRST NUMBER OF VOLUME TWELVE]

AMOS

AMOS, like Hosea, belongs to the northern kingdom, at least doing his work there. A native Judean of Tekoa (1:1), he was called from his herd, by the Lord's direct command, under the strong, prosperous rule of Jeroboam II, to expose the evils of the land, glossed over with glittering tinsel, and to announce the approaching dissolution of the kingdom. As usual in prophecy, judgment is foremost in Amos. Destruction like a storm-cloud makes the round of the surrounding nations to descend most heavily on Samaria; and only through its last fringe does there appear a ray of hope, in whose light a happy future opens.

The title of Amos is without parallel in prophecy. It bears a specific date. The words *two years before the convulsion*, are not a date of a particular prophecy, of the kind found in Haggai and Zechariah, but the title page to the whole book. The uniqueness of the title gives special point to the unusual circumstances of this ministry: Amos, an obscure herdsman, outside the recognized prophetic guild, rises to prominence by his prediction, two years beforehand, of the downfall of the reigning house of Jeroboam. His prophetic call was validated in the eyes of his contemporaries by the fulfillment of his prophecy.

Starting from the words of Joel (3:16), "Jehovah will roar from Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem" Amos announces the indignation of God, which will dis-

charge itself against Samaria (1:2). The last two lines are a prophetic formula of judgment. They suggest a convulsion spreading from Jerusalem as center to the outskirts of heath and mountain. This announcement of the doom of Samaria as proceeding from Jerusalem is in keeping with the special aspect of Israel's apostasy—rejection of the divine counsel regarding Jerusalem. It reminds rebel Ephraim of the immutability of God's choice. Its kings may ignore Jerusalem, but they cannot escape the divine decrees issuing therefrom.

A contemporary of Hosea and Joel, Amos views from yet another vantage point the chain of Assyrian campaigns against the holy land. Pul's invasion is the event definitely fixed in the title as the starting point of this prophecy. As regards its duration, the title gives no specific information. The subject-matter, however, makes it clear that the range of vision reaches down to Sennacherib's invasion and the years of peace that followed. The historic situation is unmistakably clear. In the closing vision (ch. 9: 1 etc.) Amos sees the sanctuary of the northern kingdom fall to pieces, and the nation buried under its ruins. God intends a complete obliteration of this sinful kingdom; only He will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, viz., kingdom of Judah, v. 8. This limitation of the judgment is founded on the Davidic promise:

“In that day I will raise up the tent of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up its ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old; that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and all the nations to whom my name was proclaimed, saith Jehovah, doer of this.”

Whereas to the northern kingdom, powerful and vigorous as it seemed, the prophet holds out no hope, God's

covenant with David will as little fall to the ground as the patriarchal promise. The house of David is at present in a forlorn state, no longer fit to be called a house, but a mere hut (Isa. 1:8); soon it will tumble down altogether. Not long before Judah had been vanquished by Joash; Assyria would soon bring it on the very verge of annihilation; the fame of the Davidic dynasty seemed faded forever. But despite this appearance of things, the prophet proclaims to Ephraim, that only this despised "hut", viz., the kingdom of David, has a bright future before it, since God will restore its power to as glorious a state as it ever enjoyed. Disobedient Edom must again bend under its sceptre along with the other nations already claimed for the Lord. This promise does not hover in the far distance, but keeps within local limitations, at least as to the sense it must have had for the hearers of Amos. The past greatness of Judah floats before the prophet's eyes as something reappearing in the immediate future. As Jeroboam (II) had just again restored the limits of the northern kingdom according to the prophecy of Jonah (2 Ki. 14:25), so Amos announces a like restoration of power in yet fuller measure was to be granted to the house of Judah. Not merely what David and Solomon actually possessed, but everything already claimed by the Lord as His property was to serve it hereafter.

The deliverance of Judah was to be followed by a state of prosperity and peace. The physical blessing (9:13) points back to the law. The normal state of agriculture, described in Lev. 26:5, according to which threshing-time is to reach to vintage and vintage to sowing time, is surpassed in the happy description of the impending future: the plow overtakes the reaper, etc. One will scarcely be done with plowing when the crop

will be ripe, and with treading of grapes when sowing will have to begin, which bespeaks just as wonderfully rapid growth as an exuberant wine-harvest. Almost all the year round sowing and grape treading will go on. Then strikes the hour, when the exiles, whom we have seen already in Hosea and Joel but who are far more numerous according to the view of Amos, after the whole of Ephraim has been "sifted" among the nations (9:9), shall return at the Lord's instance, to enjoy in their land the fruit of their labor which the Lord has blessed; whereas at present, in consequence of His displeasure, what has been built and planted with bitter sweat falls prey to strangers.

Two distinctive features of Amos claim special notice. One is the prominence of the Davidic covenant. He insists on the truth that the promise to David cannot fall to the ground. He does not, like Isaiah, attach the hope of Israel's restoration to a particular ruler of David's line; but he emphasizes that the promise vouchsafed to this house can as little be abrogated by the sin of the nation and its rulers as those given to the patriarchs. Both together assure the preservation of the nation, at least a remnant, right through the judgment, as well as the future imperial glory amid Davidic splendor.

The second distinctive feature of this prophecy is its emphasis on the moral principle underlying the national apostasy. Ephraim ignores elementary morality in proud reliance on its position as Jehovah's peculiar people. Their election by God, construed as a license to licentiousness, breeds a sense of false security. "The evil shall not overtake us nor meet us". The message of Amos is that its divine election does not secure the sinful nation against the consequence of evil-doing; but

on the contrary the privileged relation calls for stricter discipline. The greater the privilege, the greater the responsibility. "To whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required". The declaration of this startling principle, which forms the starting-point of his address to the whole people (3:1) is sustained throughout the book in a series of animated passages directed against the opponents of prophecy and attains the climax in the image of the Ethiopians (9:7). In repudiating the moral obligation involved in their election, Israel has forfeited its privileged station, and placed itself on a par with the heathen peoples. Divorced from moral fitness the sign of their election becomes a badge of reproach. For degenerate Israel, the exodus from Egypt had no higher significance than the migration of the Philistines and Syrians from their former dwelling places into the lands which they at present inhabited.

The structural arrangement of the subject matter is very simple. The coming judgment on Israel is presented in a series of stages making a logical sequence.

TITLE: The times of the prophet, 1:1.

SUMMARY: The passing of Samaria, 1:1.

1. Samaria among the doomed nations, 1:3-2:16.
2. Apostasy ripe for judgment, 3:1-6:14.
3. Vision of judgment, 7:1-9:15.

1.

First, a series of nations are denounced and threatened in paragraphs compounded or rhythmical formulae expressing the sin and the doom and recitals setting forth actual offenses and details of punishment (1:2-2:16). Every one of these nations is threatened with the destruction of its capital, ruin and exile. The historical situation needs no further defining than the recogni-

tion on the political horizon of Assyria as a rising world-power trampling down the nations. The surprising feature of these tidings is the inclusion of Judah and Israel among the doomed nations. This whole section has an introductory character. It serves the evident purpose of bringing out the truth that every nation is judged according to its attitude toward God. The other nations are mentioned before Israel to impress the fact that if even those peoples who had only sinned indirectly against Jehovah were visited with sore punishment, those to whom God revealed Himself would be visited still more sorely for their apostasy. It is with this design that Judah is mentioned along with Israel, in fact before it. The intention was to impress upon the ten tribes the truth that not even possession of such prerogatives as the temple and throne of David could avert the consequences of wrong-doing.

2.

Next the national corruption is shown to be ripe for judgment (chh. 3-6). The whole of Ephraim is in a state of rebellion. Civil and ecclesiastical authorities are openly antagonistic to God, while the masses, absorbed in empty ritual and selfish pursuits, ignore divine warnings. As soon as the first note of judgment has been sounded, the prophet breaks off to work out, in a progression of pictorial sentences, the hostile attitude which Jehovah has assumed in consequence of the nation's apostasy. The contents of chapter 3: 6-8 are not to be reduced to the general thought, Who that has received a message can fail to prophesy? Their intent is to set forth the hostility of Jehovah to Ephraim. The lion which roars when it has the prey before it is Jehovah (Cf. Hos. 5:14). A lion is certain of his capture when

the prey has approached so near that it cannot possibly escape. God not only has before Him a nation that is ripe for judgment; He has it in His power. God, however, does not cause evil to come unannounced. As an alarm is sounded to arouse the inhabitants of a city to a sense of danger, so prophecy is sent to warn of impending disaster. Whatever calamities burst upon the nation come from God, are sent by Him. But He does not carry out His intention without first making it known to the nation through the prophets.

Amos then proceeds to proclaim without reserve what God has resolved to do upon sinful Israel. He denounces three specific evils: luxury with oppression, empty ritual with oppression, feminine luxury with oppression (chh. 3-4). Then the flow of denunciation is momentarily suspended while the prophet takes up a lamentation. Israel falls to rise no more! Seek the Lord if it be not too late! (5:1-9). When the denunciatory strain is resumed, the prophet goes on to picture the impenitence of his people. Not only is the evil day put off by those who should be the first to suffer; but, so far has callousness advanced, that many actually desire Jehovah's day with its train of attendant terrors (5:10-6:7). The section winds up with the sworn declaration of the Deity of Its unalterable resolve to raise a nation that will wipe the sinful kingdom off the face of the earth (6:8-14).

3.

The actual dissolution of the kingdom is traced from inception to consummation in an elaborate emblem vision (7:1-9:10). This grand finale develops the idea of impending destruction announced in the doom-tidings of the first two chapters. It takes to the imagination the

form of seven symbolic pictures passing one into the other like dissolving views. We have here a vivid pictorial digest of the long struggle of Israel with Assyria. In the first two scenes judgment is only potential, not reaching the point of actual operation. The Fire and the Locusts (7:1-6) represent stages of judgment threatening, yet restrained in its course. Assyria has become a menace to Israel's safety. It is granted authority to act, yet is not at present seen in action.

As the next vision appears there is a commencement of movement in this panorama of judgment. This third scene marks the transition point from the potential to the actual. The emblem of the Plumbline (7:7-9) indicates the exact point at which Assyria's attitude changed from inherent antipathy to active hostility. Here is the crucial point, the fateful moment in Ephraim's career. Jehovah applies the plumbline to ascertain how far misalignment has endangered the stability of the national structure symbolized by the bowing wall.

At this point, just where judgment has advanced to a point from which there is no retreat, we get the interrupting episode of open conflict between Amos and Amaziah the priest of Bethel (7:10-17). The historic incident appears at this point both because in the oral ministry it took place where this particular emblem of judgment was spoken, and because this is its logical connection with the theme. (The *then* has both a temporal and causal force). This antagonism on the part of evil and ecclesiastical authority toward prophecy brings out the fact that the sin which inspired the revolt of the ten tribes has advanced beyond all hope of recovery.

When the vision reopens corruption has performed its deadly work. The emblem of Summer Fruit shows the nation ripe for judgment, ready for the eager eater

(8:1-3). With this fourth vision there is a warning of the horrors of material and spiritual famine to which the nation is abandoned.

In the next emblem of the smiting of the capitals the work of destruction is in full swing. The command goes forth to the advancing nations, "Smite the capitals that they may shake. Break them in pieces on the head of all of them!" The imagery of the bowing wall has developed to actual pulling down (9:1-7).

The emblem of the Ethiopians presents judgment consummated (9:7-10). It is a reversal of the exodus: every vestige of privilege, every token of special favor is withdrawn. Israel is on a par with the other nations.

Still the judgment is not hopeless. It is only a "sifting", no true grain shall perish. It has brought to an end Israel's status under law, but has not invalidated the original promise. Accordingly the final vision is of restored Israel in full possession of the blessings conferred by the Abrahamic and Davidic promises (9:11-15).

V. G.

GOD'S REVEALED PURPOSE

Shewing that in permitting sin and evil to enter the universe, He was giving the greatest possible proof of His wisdom, love and goodness

LET us open this study by stating that we recognize God (or the Godhead) to be the great intelligent Source and Center of infinite wisdom, and infinite knowledge, infinite power, and infinite goodness, and in addition to these unlimited attributes, He is the God of love, of light, and of life. We cannot comprehend infinity, but we can and we do believe and accept it in reference to the Godhead. Our heavenly Father could not be the center of perfect or infinite love, or light, or life, if His attributes were less than the above, for, just as far as these attributes lack infinite perfection, so far would love, light, or life be incomplete.

Having come to this conclusion, let us remember that God's gracious purposes apply to all things in heaven, in the earth, and under the earth, thus including the whole of His universe in its scope, and then let us throw our thoughts backwards to the eternity of the past—"in the beginning"—Genesis 1:1. Nothing has been revealed to us, or next to nothing, concerning this past eternity, but we conclude from the opening words of Scripture, that God Himself existed, and that He was then, as He is now, infinite in all His attributes. We also assume that hosts of heavenly beings surrounded His throne, as now, but we have no reason to believe that sin and

evil then existed, but that the heavenly hosts were entirely actuated by the heavenly principle of love—they knew nothing but love—they were created by love, in love, and for love, and they intuitively served God in the only principle they knew, which was love.

It seems as though a time came, when the wisdom and the goodness, and especially the love of God suggested to Him (if we may use such an expression in connection with the Godhead) that the introduction of sin and evil might result in further satisfying His desire for a more exalted *principle* of love than was then, practically automatically, prevailing in His courts of glory.

We are, however, approaching such exceedingly solemn considerations, that I wish to say that I do so with the utmost reverence, and must impose full responsibility on any reader, only to consider the following lines with an equal sense of reverence, whether the suggestion is fully approved or otherwise.

The origin of evil is very mysterious. It seems impossible to allow that God Himself caused or originated or committed evil, but at the same time it seems impossible to imagine any other source of origination for evil or anything else, than God Himself. Before the introduction of sin and evil into the universe there could have been no evil beings of any kind. Who then, or what could have tempted or caused the fall of heavenly beings who had never known anything but good?

The solution of the problem may possibly be found in the principle involved in the thirtieth chapter of Dueteronomy, summarized in verses 15 to 20 and still further summarized in the one word "choose". There may also have been a substratum of truth in the deadliest of all lies, when Satan induced Eve to believe that in accepting his lie, she and Adam would become as

gods, knowing good and evil, and choosing which they would. Possibly he was passing on to them a truth which he may originally have heard from God Himself, God having possibly explained to His angels, possibly on the principle laid down in the above mentioned texts, what evil was and what it might accomplish, giving them at the same time power to choose between good and evil, but doubtless warning them against it, relating its wages as death and prolonged and acute suffering both for the sinner and for Himself. He would thus originate evil in a sense, yet giving it no manner of approval or support.

Sin and evil were to be permitted. God Himself was to permit their entering into the scheme of things, and, we may be sure, that if infinite wisdom was to permit evil, it was for some infinitely wise purpose.

Can we trace any reasonable solution of the perplexing problem, *why* God acts thus? I think we can, for possessing the attribute of infinite knowledge, He knows "the end from the beginning", (Isaiah 46:9, 10) and He knew, of course, all that the introduction of sin and evil would involve of sorrow and suffering, not only for His creatures, *but also for Himself!* He, however, not only knew of the sorrow and suffering which would result, but, knowing the end from the beginning, He knew of "the glory which should follow" (1 Pet. 1: 11,12) and which prospect, we can well understand "the angels desire to look into".

Let us now briefly consider the "sufferings", and then the "glory", as well as the gracious *principle* which prompted the toleration of sin and evil and the establishment of both the "sufferings" and the "glory".

First the sufferings. Who was to suffer? We all recognize that the human race, individually and collec-

tively, was to suffer, and we know very well by painful experience, that they have suffered and do suffer; but what we are slow to appreciate is, that the Godhead has and does suffer infinitely more seriously. Was not our blessed Lord, when He took upon Him our nature, essentially "The Man of Sorrows"? Did He not have to say in the garden of Gethsemane, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death"? (Matthew 26:28) Was the Father unaware that His purpose would result in this? Did He not persist in His purpose notwithstanding this, yet with full knowledge of it?

How frequently, and in what terrible measure, has not the love of God been continually outraged since sin and evil were permitted, and does not this mean continuous suffering for Him? We human creatures, in our individual experience, are permitted to sin and suffer during the brief term of our own natural lives, but God suffers in His infinite measure, during the whole continuance of sin and evil! The measure and the duration of His suffering infinitely exceeds ours.

What must it have cost the God of love in painful grief, when multitudes of His angelic hosts first embraced evil and betrayed Him? What must have been His further sorrowful suffering when His chosen people, Israel, on whom He had lavished so many favors, rejected Him and had finally to be rejected by Him? Does He suffer any less grief when we, His children, are unfaithful to Him in the present day?

But we may rejoice in the knowledge that this "suffering" is to culminate in such a super-abundance of "glory", that all will eventually gladly acknowledge that the suffering, both for God Himself, and for His creation, consequent on the introduction of sin and evil, was well worth while, when its final result is taken into

due consideration. Well may Paul say, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18).

But to appreciate these wonderful facts more fully, we must realize the great *principle* on which God's mysterious action appears to be founded. I submit that we find this principle laid down, revealed to those who can accept it, in Luke 7:47, where our Lord said of the woman who was a sinner, "Her sins which are many, are forgiven, *for she loved much*, but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little".

The angels who have never sinned, and who consequently have never been forgiven, cannot love as that woman loved! Still less could they love as Paul loved! He was the chief of sinners, because he was the relentless persecutor of the people of the Lord. Yet, when he appreciated his own sin, on his conversion, he became the chief of the saints! Who ever offended more than he? Yet whoever, after forgiveness, loved more than he?

In Romans 12:20, 21 we read "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink", and so "overcome evil with good". To do this, to overcome evil with good, is the same principle, applied to the same purpose, as where much is forgiven, the same love much. In Matthew 5:14, 15 our Lord says "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you . . . that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven". Surely the above texts indicate that God not only commands His children to act on these principles, but does so Himself in an infinitely perfect degree.

We get then, do we not, in this principle, the solution of the problem, *why* God permitted the introduc-

tion of sin and evil? It seems that His loving heart yearned after a more intelligent love than His unoffending and therefore unforgiven angels could render Him. *When we consider what it cost Him to attain this purpose, what greater evidence of His goodness and love, could be granted to us?*

Having considered these important points in the great purpose of God, we will turn our attention, very briefly, to the manner in which He decided to accomplish that purpose. Let us again cast our thoughts back to the time spoken of as "the beginning". It appears that He then definitely marked off a certain period of time, lengthy to us, but probably not so to Him to Whom a thousand years is as one day, and He divided that whole period into a certain number of what are called "ages" in the Bible. Special events were to characterize these ages, but the full purpose seems to have been that He would allow some of His heavenly beings, under the leadership of Satan, at one time the most exalted of His creatures, to lapse from their loyalty to Him, and introduce sin and evil, with all their terrible consequences, into His universe.

This, however, He does, fully recognizing the frightful depths of iniquity into which these beings themselves would fall, and into which they would lead the human race; yet He determined that, however desperately "sin abounded", His grace would "still more abound", until, in due time, He would ensure the "reconciliation of all things", at such a cost to the sinners, and such a still greater cost to Himself, that will "heap coals of fire" eventually upon the heads of all offenders, so that when once they realize, as, sooner or later, after a more or less retributive suffering, in this life or in the life to come, they certainly will, the heinousness of their

guilt, as contrasted with "the exceeding riches of His grace" (Ephesians 2:7) and "the love of Christ which passeth knowledge" (Ephesians 3:19) all will finally be subdued unto Him in heartbroken sorrow, gratitude, eternal love and affection!

Then will He be surrounded with a glorious company of beings, intelligently appreciating the exceeding riches of His grace, in a measure impossible to those who have never gone through the terrible experiences, resulting first from their fall, and subsequently from their undeserved reconciliation. Sin and evil will have accomplished their wonderful purpose, by introducing into the heavenly regions a more exalted, and a more trustworthy quality of love, than could otherwise have so adorned it, and satisfied the infinite love of God.

This sublime subject, the love of God to the members of His true "church", is exceedingly sacred! We have seen in others, or perhaps experienced ourselves, the wonderful power for self-sacrifice and suffering which love to others—wives, children, or friends—can originate. Sometimes this love is expressed in ardent yearning after an erring child. Parents have given their all, and even themselves, to save their offspring. Moreover, how precious to the parent is the knowledge of the reciprocating love of the child! But, if we, being evil, and with all our feebleness and many limitations, know what it is to love even to death, how much more does our heavenly Father, with His infinite capacity for love, suffer, if we may so say with the utmost reverence, when He feels Himself neglected by those He loves, and rejoice when they center their affections upon Him? What a claim He has, together with the Lord Jesus Christ, upon our heartiest and most enthusiastic affection, as a reflection, poor at best, of His own condescending af-

fection for us, His unworthy children? Let us beware of wounding such ineffable tenderness and goodness, and rather do our utmost to render Him every acceptable gratification.

“God’s purpose as revealed in the Bible” will not be accomplished until that time comes when “in the name of Jesus, *every* knee shall bow, and *every* tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:10, 11; Romans 14:11; Isa. 45:23) and inasmuch as no man “can call Jesus Lord except by the Holy Spirit”, we may be quite sure that all these bended knees, and all these confessing tongues, will belong to those who have been reconciled to God, however far away from Him they may once have been, for His faithfulness will be manifested, and the whole universe, and every intelligent creature in it, will acknowledge with ecstatic acclamations (now so woefully withheld), that where sin once most deeply and apparently most hopelessly *abounded*, even there, grace, literally and actually, *did still more abound!*

We will conclude with the eloquent words of Paul in Romans 11:33, where he says “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!”

H. W. FRY

THE DOCTRINES OF DEMONS

THE creed of the demons has been compiled. It calls for careful consideration, for it is the rock on which the church will be wrecked. Let us not be deceived into thinking that the warning against giving heed to seducing spirits and their doctrines is intended for the *world*. God warns His own. *We* are to beware of these doctrines. The church holds most of these doctrines already. Not the nominal church merely, but those who are aggressively evangelical and uphold vital truths. *Many who are loud in their warning against the doctrines of demons hold them, contend for them, and denounce others who refuse to receive them!* As an example, a recent review of the seven items of this creed in an ultra-evangelical magazine claimed that five of the seven doctrines of demons are clearly taught in the Scriptures! Ought not the very statement of these teachings be sufficient guarantee that they are *not* taught in the Scriptures?

The great danger of Spiritism is not apprehended even by those who warn us against it. Indeed, when a teacher upholds five out of the seven cardinal doctrines of this cult, is he not already among those who give heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons? We may deny communication with the dead, we may abhor familiar spirits, and yet, at the same time, we may believe and support the baneful teachings which emanate from them, under the mistaken supposition that they are in accord with divine revelation.

It ought to be axiomatic that the doctrines of demons are *not* in accord with God's word. We make the most valuable use of them when we doubt every point of our own theology which appears to lend them support. There is danger of some of the saints actually being deceived by the pretensions of Spiritism as to communication with the dead, but there is the far more insidious danger of almost all of us becoming tainted by their teachings.

The creed of Spiritism is sevenfold. All the multitudinous mutterings of the spirits may be reduced to these seven statements:

1. The Fatherhood of God.
2. The Brotherhood of Man.
3. Continuous Conscious Existence.
4. The Communion of Spirits.
5. Personal Responsibility.
6. Compensation and Retribution in the Hereafter.
7. Endless Progression.

Perhaps some of us have been expecting some mysterious, lurid, immoral propaganda to emanate from these so-called "devils". But would we need any warning against such plain departures? The demons are far more subtle than that. They do not wish to appear opposed to Scripture. And is it not most significant that they have already succeeded in so perverting so-called evangelical doctrine that the Bible itself is appealed to to show that most of their doctrines are not new but were known long ago? It was the cause of deepest thankfulness on our part when we found that we could agree with *none* of the seven statements of their faith. If one of them had appealed to us, our confidence in it would

have been severely shaken, and nothing but a more thorough search of the Scriptures would have satisfied us of its truthfulness.

One of the most distressing features of the present apostasy is the outcry on all sides against the various defections from the truth, each partly fondly imagining that *they* are the only ones not infected with the prevailing virus! In almost every case the strength of error lies in its semblance to the truth. Let us all acknowledge that, in some degree we, also, are involved in the great apostasy, and then it will be possible for us to purge *ourselves* from the poison which is sapping the very life of the church.

The hold of seducing spirits on the saints does not lie in their unorthodox teachings, but in the teachings of the church which agree with their doctrines. Orthodoxy is the bridge by which the saints cross the chasm from truth to error. It will be of great profit for us to consider the contrastive creeds of Spiritism and the Scriptures and the tenets of the church which hold them in unholy union. We shall give the demons' lie, the church's confession, and the truth of God, and hope that it will help some who still cling to the doctrines of demons imagining they are the teachings of Holy Writ.

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD

This is the cardinal conception which underlies the whole system of demonism. Like every other error, it is simply misplaced truth. In the coming consummation, when the Son hands over the Kingdom to the *Father*, that God may be All in all, God will indeed be the Father of all. Now the real point in this doctrine is not found in its statement, but in the *inference* that He is the Father of *all at the present time*. The effect of

this is to obliterate all the distinction wrought by the advent of Christ and the operation of God's spirit, so that saved and unsaved, believers and unbelievers, reconciled and enemies—all can claim God as their Father, and as a consequence, all the special blessings of God's children are discarded, and His just judgment of His enemies is repudiated. This spurious "Fatherhood of God" robs us of all the essential truth of revelation. The God it presents is an amiable weakling who regards mankind with sufficient indifference to insure them immunity from discipline, and who has no object or purpose in their creation.

THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN

Like the second precept of the decalogue this is but a corollary of the first article of faith in Spiritism. Those who have the same father must be brothers. And, furthermore, they all will receive the same treatment: the same destiny awaits them. God's purpose and predestination, our faith and sufferings—all these are ignored. The Spiritist claims all men as his spiritual brethren. Mark the word *spiritual*. All are not brethren by physical ties, for only those of the same family, having the same father are brothers in the physical sphere.

Now how does orthodoxy meet these twin doctrines of demons? The sermon from which the following quotations are made has been reprinted by a representative journal of advanced evangelicalism, which stands true to many of the great facts of our faith. Yet these doctrines of demons are made to emanate from the holy spirit of God! It reads, "The Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man were revealed in the Scriptures long before Spiritualism arose in modern times to give us a New Revelation. Jesus came to reveal the Father;

and the Apostle Paul declared that God 'hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth' ''.

To whom did Jesus reveal the Father? To the world or to His own disciples? To whom did He say "You are of your father the Slanderer?" True logic would have reasoned that, since our Lord would not allow even the religious Jews the privilege of claiming God as their Father, the Fatherhood of God was a doctrine strenuously denied by Him. And Paul never taught the *spiritual* unity of mankind, but emphasized its division. The fact that we all sprang from one blood does not make us physical brethren. Far less does it make men spiritual brethren. God *created all*. He *made all*. But this is infinitely beneath the filial relationship involved in the Fatherhood of God.

CONTINUOUS EXISTENCE

The third article is "Continuous Existence". We are assured that this is far from a "new revelation", that was taught in the Scriptures long ago. We are told "Paul said, 'Whether absent or present, I do always those things that are pleasing in His sight,'". And again, "The words in Revelation, 'Let him that is holy be holy still, and let him that is filthy be filthy still', are words that tell us when the end comes here, whether by death or the coming of the Lord, the life we have settled to is the life in which we shall continue". In plain words, *there is no resurrection*. What need is there for it? If the Lord comes we will not die, hence cannot be raised. If we die, we will need neither the resurrection nor the Lord's coming, for we have "continuous existence"! And not only is this taught in the Bible but *it is confirmed by the demons!* Of course the phrase "con-

tinuous *existence*” really is intended to convey the idea of uninterrupted *consciousness*. Now, while a few ambiguous passages may be wrenched from their context to support such a thought, the Scriptures certainly do not come out clearly on “continuous existence” like the demons. The demons deny the resurrection, and they have so deluded Christendom, that it is most unorthodox to cling to this fundamental of the faith. You cannot hold “continuous existence” and believe in the resurrection unless you degrade it to an unnecessary excrescence on the body of divine truth. Those who are alive cannot be raised *from the dead*. And how can there be a resurrection of the living?

We are much indebted to the demons for endorsing this doctrine of the church, for their declaration ought to be more than ample to brand it as unscriptural, and to warn us of its *seductive* nature. We must not expect it to *seem* unsound. It must appear right. Let us remember that we have to do with *seducing* spirits, not flagrant offenders against religion or morals or decency.

THE COMMUNION OF SPIRITS

We are assured that “the first three articles of Spiritualism contain nothing new”, but the fourth, “The Communion of Spirits” is “contrary to the word of God”. Yet there is “one case in the Bible of the return of a spirit to this world”. “The only case of the return of a disembodied spirit is that of Samuel”.

Now, if we examine this closely, we will find that the difference between the orthodox view and Spiritism is merely a matter of quantity, not of truth. The demons do not affirm that all do communicate with the dead, *but that they can*. Now since we are told there is one example in the Bible where this was actually done, the

Bible also teaches that "The Communion of Spirits" is possible

As we hope to have a special article on the Witch of Endor, we will not discuss it at length here, except to point out that if Samuel was dead, and, while dead, was in communication with Saul, then this doctrine of the demons is true! In that case, however, it seems a pity that they have only a single instance to appeal to in all the range of Holy Writ. Moreover, all those passages which speak of the dead as asleep, and even perished, should there be no resurrection, must be revised to conform to this declaration of the demons.

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

The fifth Article of the Spiritist's faith ought to lead no one astray who has ever known Christ as his Saviour. Notwithstanding this, the strong insistence on repentance, and works and character, and the prevalence of the probationary idea, has gradually shifted the burden of salvation from the Sin Bearer to the shoulders of the sinner. "Responsibility" is a favorite word in theology and religion but finds no place in the Scriptures. It is interesting to trace back all things to the only One Who is really responsible—God. But the demons, and men whom they have duped, relieve Him of all responsibility in His universe and place it on His creatures.

Personal Responsibility robs us of all the results of Christ's redemption, repudiates righteousness and reconciliation, and eclipses grace. Like the self-righteousness of the maimcision, it is hardly fit to be cast to the dogs. We stand in Christ, having nothing of our own to mar the effulgence of His favor.

COMPENSATION AND RETRIBUTION HEREAFTER

Concerning this and the succeeding Article of Faith we are told, "These are not new. Both things are taught in the Scriptures". Is it not staggering to read a sermon *against* Spiritism calmly commending five out of seven Articles which compose its creed? Where the Scriptural support for "Compensation and Retribution" is found in the Scriptures is difficult to surmise, unless, as usual, we are pointed to the speech of Abraham to the rich man. There, indeed, we have some such doctrine as is here proposed by the demons. In the sixteenth of Luke we have the Spiritist's doctrine of Compensation and Retribution succinctly stated. Lazarus had received his evil things on earth, and in hades he got good things to compensate. The rich man had received his good things on earth and suffered in flames to level his account. According to that the poor, the miserable, the diseased, the filthy, are the only ones who dare to look for ease in the future, and that, not by grace, through Christ, but merely as a matter of Compensation. The rich, on the other hand, have no hope, even in Christ, except at the pitiless hand of Retribution. Does it not look as if the Pharisees, (whose teaching the Lord is presenting in this parable) had imbibed this Article of the doctrine of the demons in their day? But how anyone who has known God's grace in Christ can insist that such a doctrine is taught in the Scriptures passes all comprehension. Suppose we, who believe, receive only what is our due, what would we get? *Nothing!* And what will we get? *All things!*

Retribution is a word which is never used in a general way in the Word. The closer we scan God's judgments the more we are impressed with their salutary nature. They are always the precursor of blessing. The

dull and dreadful idea of retribution without any fruit but bitter memories and remorse is foreign to all God's ways.

So that we are sure that, for the saints, there is infinitely more than Compensation and for the sinner He aims at a result far beyond the meaning of mere Retribution.

PATH OF ENDLESS PROGRESSION

This is the final Article in the creed, and we are assured that it is in perfect harmony with the Bible. No passages are given to support this view. Endless progression sounds much better than ceaseless imperfection, yet the latter is involved in the former, for there can be no progress in perfection. When a man is mature, he ceases to grow. If this is a parable of the growth of the race we can understand something of the goal put before us in the Scriptures. Man peers into the past and dreams of ceaseless progress until the present. He tries to pierce the future and sees nothing but a treadmill where there is "progress" but, as it is endless, it never reaches its goal. He has no commencement and no completion.

God has a definite *beginning* and predestined *consummation*. He has an object. He works according to a purpose. There is progress, indeed, but it is not endless. He does not shoot into the air. His arrow reaches its mark. He does not run aimlessly. He reaches His goal. And mark, that, in human history, there is a two-fold movement, an ebb and a flow. When man is active there is regress, not progress. The "Path of Endless Progression" of the demons is trod only by human strength. Their faces are all set to the rear. Their feet falter and stumble and fall. They should name it the "Road of Endless Retrogression".

It is only when God actively intervenes that there is true progress. He not only recovers man from his backsliding but draws him on toward the goal which He has in view.

The progress of man and the goal of God are as diverse as two things can be. Man aims at being a little god on his own account, irrespective of others. He wants to get. His object is to be self-sufficient. God wants to give. He is concerned about His creatures. His goal is to be their All.

In conclusion, let us press this most important fact: The doctrine taught by the demons is "orthodox" to an alarming extent. In other words, the seducing spirits are not confined to so-called "spiritualism". They have invaded the church and have succeeded in eclipsing the Scriptures. They substitute their own doctrines for the truth. Most of the manifestations parading as gifts of the spirit of God are really due to the obsession of demons. Many of the doctrines set forth in prophetic conferences, as the unadulterated truth are permeated with the teaching of demons. The people of God of all denominations are exhorted to stand by these "great truths" "so rejected in our days", and "to contend earnestly", for "fundamental truths", some of which are the very doctrines of demons against which they desire to shield the saints!

A. E. K.

The Unveiling of Jesus Christ

THE INTRODUCTION AND CONCLUSION

JESUS CHRIST unveiled! Such is the result we may expect from our studies in this scroll. And who would not hail with joy every word that discovers Him? We may linger fondly over the pages that speak of His humiliation, veiled in mortal flesh, obscure, rejected, and cast out, but we long for the day when He receives His reward. The saints shall all receive awards for their feeble and faulty efforts to please Him. Surely He will receive His deserts as well.

Let us never lose sight of this as we pursue the study of this prophecy. Let us not lose ourselves amidst the lightning and the thunder, the trumpets and the bowls. These are nothing in themselves. It is only as they serve to unveil Him to our gaze that we are really able to enjoy such tremendous exhibitions of wrath.

Paul was taught his evangel through the unveiling of Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:12). That was a specimen apocalypse which well illustrates the great principles which must always prevail where He is unveiled. His purpose was one of richest grace. It was fraught with transcendent blessing. Yet what were the immediate effects? Much the same as the judgments which John saw. The men were stricken to the ground and Paul himself was blinded by the brightness of the light. Who would have imagined this tragedy was the prelude to the transcendent grace which Paul preached? So we must view the terrible tribulations which preface the eons of the eons. Short, sharp and swift is God's strange work: long will the blessing it brings linger with Israel and the nations for the eons of the eons.

God gives this unveiling to Him to show to His slaves what must occur swiftly. As we proceed it will be in point to show why we prefer to use the Concordant Version in these studies rather than the so-called Authorized. This version, due to the principles on which it is compiled, is *bound* to give a more accurate and correct rendering than is possible where no fixed law is obeyed but each passage is presented as appears best to the translators.

We may be asked, why prefer *slaves* to *servants*? The common version uses *servant* for six distinct Greek words, which, in the Concordant Version, are assigned distinct expressions, corresponding to their meaning. They are *servant*, *retainer*, *domestic*, *boy* or *page*, *deputy*, and *slave*, the word here used. Later versions have used or suggested *bond-servant*. But what is this but a *slave*? Who speaks of a "bond-servant" in current English? A few of the many occurrences of this word will convince us that it does not mean a hired *servant* but bought *slave*. Let us call the translators themselves into the witness stand. At least six times they found it in contrast with "free". Then they translated it "bond". In 1 Co. 12:13 the members of Christ are one body "whether we be *bond* or free". In Gal. 3:28 we find that in Christ "there is neither *bond* nor free". In Eph. 6:8 two kinds of servants are in view, "*bond* or free". In Col. 3:11 we learn that the new humanity ignores such distinction as "*bond* or free". In this Unveiling the false prophet causes all "rich and poor, free and *bond*" to receive the symbol of the wild beast (13:16) and the birds are invited to feast on "the flesh of all, free and *bond*" (19:18). Once they translate it "bondman" (6:15). Thus we need go no further than the translators were forced to go when they found this word used in an antithesis, where its meaning was sharply and clearly revealed by contrast with its opposite. All that the Concordant Version does is to apply this consistently.

This Unveiling, then, is intended for *slaves*. It is true the Alexandrian Codex has *saints*. And it is also true that the scribe of Codex Sinaiticus wrote *saints*. But the corrector of this valuable text corrected it to *slaves*. So the best evidence is in favor of this term.

It is not uncommon for the writer of an epistle to call himself a slave. Paul does so often, notably in the opening of the letters to Rome, Philippians and Titus. James, Peter and Jude do the same. But it is most unusual to address a communication to such. It is almost always "to the saints". It will help us greatly in opening up this scroll to enter into the significance of this address.

Twice seven times is this term used in this scroll. This suggests the atmosphere in which the prophecy moves. It is concerned with *service*, and weighted with *work*. And this service is performed by slaves. Only once, in the closing scenes is the promise made "he shall be My son". Sonship is practically absent during the judgment period. Those loyal to God in the ecclesias are called "slaves" (2:20). The hundred and forty-four thousand are "slaves" (7:3). The martyrs are "slaves" (19:2). John himself is called a "slave" (1:1). Let us not intrude the thought of son-service into this scroll.

A simple point, yet one of principal importance, is suggested by the phrase "what must occur swiftly", in place of "which must shortly come to pass". An excellent method of discovering the meaning of a disputed expression is to take it off to another scene where its meaning is clearly apparent from the connection. The question at issue here is whether the interval preceding an action is intended or whether the action itself is in view. Was this prophecy to commence its fulfillment within a short time after John wrote or is it to move swiftly once it begins? On the answer to this our whole position depends. Often the word "shortly" or "soon" seems to fit the word well. But a patient ex-

amination of these texts shows that these words always point to the *end* of the action, hence swiftness would involve the thought of "soon".

Perhaps the most picturesque illustration of its meaning is found in the race between Peter and John on the morning of the resurrection (Jn. 20:4). John and Peter *started* together but John ran more *swiftly* than Peter. This simple incident is conclusive evidence that this Unveiling will be swift in its execution, rather than that it was, or is, a short time hence.

As it has been well nigh two millenniums since these words were penned we are forced to acknowledge either that this apocalypse is past, or that it was not intended to take place "soon". If it is past then the coming of Christ is also past, for He uses the very same words of His return.

On the other hand, if we allow that it means *swiftly*, then all is future, for no occurrences which drag through thousands of years can possibly be characterized as swift. This alone disposes of the attempt to fit the prophetic portion to the history of the church. That would be a slow, not a swift fulfillment.

More than this, the character of God Himself and the nature of His dealing during the present economy are involved in the meaning of this word. This is a period of grace—transcendent grace. That will be an era of severe judgment. The two cannot be mixed. Now God smiles. Then His face will be averted. The present period is prolonged. The coming era will be short. It is the glory of God that He lingers in dispensing grace but hastes in executing judgment. The sharper His strokes the swifter they cease.

An exhaustive study of the cumulative judgments of this Unveiling will reveal the fact that, while all is comparatively swift, there is a constant acceleration in its execution. The seals cover years, the trumpets months, but the bowls seem to be poured out in a few

days. Has it not been always thus in God's administration? His judgments are swift and short: His blessings linger a long time.

This also has a vital bearing on His judgment of the race. It should prejudice us against torment long drawn out, except in extraordinary cases. Our God has never acted thus in His dealings. His established character is against such a course. Right glad are we to know that such will be the manner of His judgments. Will they be sharp? Then they will be short. The mild judgments of the millennium are prolonged. The severe session of the great white throne is short. Such a God is worthy of our worship!

Turning now to the conclusion (22:20-21) which corresponds with the opening words, we find the same word—swiftly—describing the coming of the Lord Jesus. How we wish that this were not with speed, merely, but *soon* as well! May it be so! All our prejudices—perhaps we may be permitted to call them our *longings*—plead for a perverted translation at this point. But what would it avail? If the common version had used the same words here that it did in the introduction and rendered it “Surely I come *shortly*”, that would not bring Him any sooner! He waits God's appointed time, but when that time does come, the lightning itself will be slow compared with His epiphany.

How hearty the response, “Yea! come, Lord Jesus!” As we proceed in our study we will learn that this refers not to our gathering together unto Him but to His coming to His people Israel. We shall meet Him much sooner than the advent here spoken of. We shall be with Him when the hearts of His slaves are crying for His coming. But until then our hearts echo the words which He has put into their mouths. We, too, cry *erchou!* Be coming!

One word which is constantly recurring in the Concordant Version is the verb *perceive*. Why, we are

asked, does the version prefer this word to the common term *see*? Why render it "he perceives" rather than "he saw"? The answer is found in the last chapter (22:8): "And I, John, *heard* these things *and* observed them". Perception includes *hearing* as well as sight. Indeed, we perceive by means of all the organs of sensation. The term "saw" is too narrow. Indeed, it stands for a different word which is used in 18:18, "When they *saw* the smoke". While our prejudices may plead for the old, well known terms, let us bear in mind that the consistent renderings we use come closer to the thought of the great Revealer. Throughout the scroll there is an appeal to the ear as well as to the eye.

As a further reason for the rendering *perceive*, it may be noted that it is translated "know" in hundreds of instances, thus intruding into the territory of another Greek word. Perceive is an intermediate expression which usually suits better than either "know" or "see".

One of the most perplexing problems in connection with the Greek text is the repeated difference between the Sinaitic, which is by far the best text, and the other two manuscripts with regard to one form of this word. The Sinaitic almost always puts it "perceived"—in the past. The other two usually unite to put it in an irregular form of the indefinite. While it is known that the editor of the Concordant Text had strong leanings toward the indefinite form, he has yielded to the evidence, which, though nearly evenly balanced, slightly favors the oldest and fuller form. It would be easier for the copyists to leave out the initial "E" in later years, than for the earlier scribe to insert it. It makes but a slight change in the Version and is not at all vital to the sense.

THE BENEDICTION

The notable concord which we have perceived between the Introduction and Conclusion is still more strik-

ingly exhibited in the Benediction and the Curse. The prominent place which these are given at the very commencement and consummation of the scroll bids us lay a heavy emphasis upon their message.

Few, indeed, have found the happiness which ought to be the portion of the reader and of the hearers of this prophecy. In fact, few of the saints give it any serious study. As to any happiness coming out of this judgment scroll (no one even attempts to *keep* what he does not understand)—that seems out of the question. How can such awful visitations and mysterious calamities make anyone happy?

We want to be happy. We want the happiness which comes from the perusal of this prophecy. We do not wish to devote ourselves to this study as a dreary duty.

The reason given why there is happiness here is that *the era is impending*. Let us get the gist of this. Let us first divest ourselves of the idea we may have taken from the phrase "the time is at hand". The word "time" here is not the one which they have rendered thus in the phrase "there shall be *time* no longer", but a special word meaning *season*. As usual they have given us a good rendering of both of these synonymns where they occur together as in Acts 1:7. There we read of "the *times* or the *seasons*". It is greatly to be regretted that they did not register their own distinction in all the other occurrences. Then, in Rev. 6:11, instead of rendering "should rest yet for a little *season*" and 20:3 "must be loosed a little *season*", they would have said *time*, and in 11:18, 12:12, 14 and 22:10, where they say *time*, they should translate *season* or its equivalent. The Concordant Version seeks to avoid this confusion, and yet conform to the niceties of English usage by associating *season*, *era*, *period*, as may best suit, with one word, and *time* (in one case *delay*, for "no longer time" with the others.

But of what use is all this discrimination? Very

much, indeed, if we do not want to miss the happiness which hangs upon it. An era, or season is a segment of time having distinct characteristics which mark it off from adjacent segments. As the seasons of the year each have features which define them, so the era here spoken of, which is the burden of the whole book, must not be merged into the common course of time, but must be marked as a unique and notable departure from ordinary eras, introducing a great change or crisis in human history. How much richer and fuller is this thought than that gathered from the phrase "the *time* is at hand"! The history of the eons is like the story of the year. Each succeeding season is adapted to furnish its share towards the ultimate harvest, but the function of each is distinct. This prophecy presents us with an era or season in which many of the prevailing principles of the present are found in autumnal ripeness. What has been in flower, or has formed into fruit will then be ready to pluck and we may taste its real nature and essence. Here lies the great value of this prophecy to us. Here is the secret of the happiness which it brings. We may enjoy an insight into the heart of things which would be difficult to discern without its aid. We are happy to avoid the subtle snares that beset our path. We are glad to escape the great delusion which is so alluring to all except those who have studied this scroll.

Before pursuing this theme further let us ask, what is meant by "the era is *impending*"? From the sub-linear we learn that it literally reads "the season is *near*". It is the usual word for *near* but does not necessarily convey the certainty of absolute nearness which we might infer from its ordinary English usage. Epaphroditus was near death, yet he recovered and may have lived long afterward (Phil. 2:30). James says that the coming of the Lord is near (Jas. 5:8) yet that was nearly two thousand years ago. The Kingdom

of the heavens was near during the period in which our Lord proclaimed it, but it withdrew when He was rejected (Mt. 3:2). The end of all things is near (1 Pet. 4:7) yet this has been the case ever since Peter wrote. It is evident that the word has the secondary meaning of conditional nearness. If the era had been absolutely near when John wrote then it must have been fulfilled long since. There is ample evidence that it has not so much as started even yet. But the conditions in the world have continually been such as to call for this era of judgment, hence it has been impending ever since the words were first penned.

Men are in the dark, not only as to the future, but as to the present as well. If they knew the future they would be able to interpret the present by it. Satan is the god of this eon. He prefers to work in the dark. It is not until the era of this scroll that he openly claims the worship of mankind.

Men count themselves fortunate if they have enough of this world's goods to live in ease for the rest of their lives. But how often are such expectations false! Riches have wings. The future is all unknown. How much would they give if they only knew what it had in store!

This scroll gives certainty and solidity to the future of the earth. Its greatest benison will rest on those of the favored nation who live in the latter days and are delivered from the dreadful delusions which will abound in the day of His indignation.

THE CURSE

Satan's enmity has been particularly directed against this scroll, for no other part of the Scriptures gives the consummation of his career as plainly as this prophecy. Hence there have been many attempts to exclude it from the canon, and many more efforts to annul its teaching by means of "expositions" and explanations. This pas-

sage he would doubtless have expurged entirely if possible. How far he has succeeded may be seen when we find the very few manuscripts which contain this closing scroll of Divine revelation containing about seven variants in this verse! As the note in the Concordant Version says: "Who would not suppose that these lines would be most anxiously and scrupulously copied by the scribe? Surely no transcriber would dare to add or subtract a single letter! Yet there is not only one transposition, but four additions and three omissions in a passage fearfully denouncing such a practice".

Needless to say that this curse, by its very nature, can have no application now. We have no part in the tree of life or the holy city to lose, for ours is a heavenly allotment. Nor can the calamities written in this scroll fall on us, for there can be no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus. We are beyond the reach of wrath, This will not make us lax in regard to this scroll, but rather more rigid and careful, for we judge that, since He is so solicitous about every part, it is our privilege to guard every letter.

How much happier we should be than those to whom this prophecy is directly addressed! The joy of fellowship with Christ in His Unveiling is ours not as slaves, nor in fear of judgment for ourselves, but as one with Him, above and apart from the terrible tide of indignation which will engulf the earth. And we know that it prepares mankind for a flood of blessing such as has not yet been known, for whatever exalts Christ brings blessing to mankind.

A. E. K.

CHRIST'S SUPREMACY

ON such a sublime subject as this we cannot take less than the whole Bible for our text. Not that we shall do more than lightly touch upon certain portions of it.

So uniquely exclusive are the claims of Christ that to us He is either All in all or nothing at all. The jealousy of divine love is here apparent that it will not be satisfied with a mere percentage of our time, or our thoughts, or a portion of our selves. ALL it demands, and ALL it will ultimately possess. "Eventually, why not *now*?" The place that Christ is given in modern literature is that of an ALSO rather than an ALL. Suppose an allusion is made to the great religious leaders of the world. There you have the catalog: Buddha, Krishna, Confucious, Mahomet, Moses, and somewhere in the middle of the list, or maybe at the tail end, an allusion to Jesus. To the modern literary and religious world He is one of many. Know here and now that you cannot view Christ that way and retain your Christianity, or remain a Christian. You cannot say He is good. He must be BEST or you are not a Christian. You cannot say He is great. He must be GREATEST if you would remain a Christian. It is not sufficient if He be lovely. If He is not the LOVLIEST then you know not what Christianity means.

The supremacy of Christ in the Old Testament is a prophetic one. That supremacy lay enshrined in the promise that Eve's seed would crush the serpent's head. For about a thousand years that one verse was the Bible Prophecy of the race. We have Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, Daniel and a host of others, but for many centuries the human race had just one little verse of prophecy. We have John's great Evangel and Paul's mighty exposition to the Romans, but all the evangel the race had then was contained in a sentence or two. Little do we appreciate the overflowing abundance of revelation with which we are blessed. Those sentences however were pregnant with as yet unuttered truths concerning the Coming One's supremacy. This verse was revelation. All succeeding prophecy and gospel was but added explanation.

The reader is familiar of course with the way Paul brings out the supremacy of Christ's shed blood in contrast to that of murdered Abel. The latter cried aloud for vengeance, but the former petitioned for peace. What marvel is this, that the blood of a murdered man may shield his murderers from the penalty of their crime! History gives us no comparison. Christ is supreme over all analogy!

Again, was not His unique supremacy shown forth in the ark? Ark, mind you, not *arks*. It was not one ark amongst many. You had no choice in the matter. It was the ONE ARK or NONE! Nor did that one ark have two doors—only one. And when Christ Himself was speaking He did not say "I am A door" as if He were one of many, but I am "THE door". He gave His hearers no alternative choice.

When the law was given it made a demand that none

but the Supreme One could comply with. The types in their incompleteness required a sacrifice which none but He could offer. The prophecies are dumb without Him, and the Psalms lack music and meaning.

The New Testament opens with an account of His antecedents. Some of them we would gladly expunge from *our* records. If Rahab were in our family you would not find her name in the family Bible. Nor would we care to perpetuate the remembrance of Uriah's wife. Yet there they are and the remainder of the New Testament shows how gloriously supreme was Christ over all His antecedents.

Herod plots, but He is supreme over the enemies' plotting. Satan himself appears at a later date but He rises supreme over every bribe to leave the pathway of obedience. Again, thru Peter, does the Serpent hiss out his suggestion to avoid the cross, but He rises supreme once more and cries "Get thee behind me Satan!"

And then upon that mount where He was transfigured, we see Moses and Elias and Christ, but the first two dissolve and leave the Master supreme. The disciples, we read, "saw Jesus only". Reverse the words and you describe what He means to a world that sees in Him "only Jesus". Whether He is "Jesus only" or "only Jesus" is the difference between being and not being a Christian.

And now let us look at what seemed the eclipse of His ministry. The cross itself was like a burning glass that focussed a myriad scattering rays into a scorching point. The "fiery darts" of the adversary must have been showered upon Him by His envenomed antagonist. Not a possible weapon in all of Hell's offensive armory but was employed in this the last crushing attack upon

the defences of His soul. Listen now to that word "Father" as it comes from torture-wrung lips commending His spirit to His God. "Father" He cries, and rises in majestic supremacy over DOUBT. "I claim Thee as Father" cries the Suffering One "in spite of this cross, this darkness, and this pain".

Let us listen again. "Father, forgive them." Thus did He rise supreme over MALICE. They had scourged Him, and mocked Him; their spittle smeared His blessed person; and they had nailed Him to the tree. "Now," Satan would suggest, "get even with them!" "Father, forgive" is the Sufferer's reply.

And that mystery of God's silence through it all! The heavens seemed as brass. They had opened before, at Jordan, and upon the mountain. God's voice had come proclaiming the divine Sonship of the man. And now the man needed God as He had never needed Him before. And Heaven was dumb! "Father"—thus does He rise supreme over the silence of God.

If the Gospels reveal to us the story of His personal supremacy, the Epistles continue to reveal its rising tide. In Romans we have the righteousness of God in Christ rising superior to the unrighteousness of man, and the grace of God rising supreme over human sin. The lack of malice displayed upon the cross, and the spirit of forgiveness manifested, was not an unrelated episode. It was TYPICAL of God's redemptive purpose. Consider all the wars and murders, and lies, and uncleanness, and what a vast filthy ocean of sin it is. Yet over all this the justifying grace of God rises supreme. The supremacy of His wrath as revealed in Revelations is but auxiliary to the supremacy of His righteousness as displayed in Romans.

In Colossians the grace of God in Christ rises over the creature's enmity and hatred. He reconciles the universe unto Himself. In 1 Corinthians the life of God in Christ rises supreme over death in its every aspect. The supremacy of His life is such that it will quicken the Universe and expunge death from His domains. Lastly we remind ourselves of Philipians—the heart of the New Testament writings—and there we learn anew of Christ's supremacy. Then, in that scene of universal worship and praise, the Christ of God will not be one amongst many, the Supreme One of Calvary will be recognized as Lord in all His gracious and glorious supremacy "to the glory of God the Father".

He will be supreme THEN.

It is our privilege to recognize His supremacy NOW.

ALAN BURNS

BROTHERLY KINDNESS

To take the mote out of a brother's eye is a tender task. The point is that we are to take the mote out and *not the eye*. How often we do it with red-hot pokers and prescribe and apply carbolic acid and vitriol as an eyewash!

If it is their feet we cleanse we wash them with water—yes! scalding water. We dry them with a towel—yes! but of sand-paper. And if we operate on their spiritual anatomy we employ such delicate surgical instruments as buzz-saws and hydraulic drills and it is against our principles to administer anaesthetics.

The word of God is used as a sword in public ministry, but you cannot use a sword on an injured eye. What you need for such work is the tender sympathy of the finger of God.

The beam in our own eye is too often a magnifying glass that makes our fellows' motes seem as large as mountains.

In 1 Corinthians 8:11 Paul refers to the "weak brother" and immediately adds "for whom Christ died". The best place to bring your brother when you would remove his mote is back to the cross of Calvary. The "weak brother for whom Christ died" acquires new values there. And when you are near the cross you are more apt to follow *His* method of correction.

What sorry oculist we are in the spiritual sphere! Always prescribing something to STING instead of to SOOTHE. And we may well remember that even in a case where sight seemed altogether gone (Rev. 3:18) it is a SALVE that is recommended.

ALAN BURNS

OBADIAH

IN the course of these studies it has been pointed out that the series of prophetic writings known as "Minor Prophets" range themselves around the epochs when the Davidic monarchy struggled successively with the empires of Assyria, Babylon, and Persia. The period of Assyrian aggression is covered by a series of eight books, from Hosea to Habakkuk. The conflict with Babylon is represented by the single brief book of Zephaniah. The books of Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi belong to the time when the fortunes of Palestine were presided over by Persia.

The prophets of the Assyrian period form two distinct, well-defined groups. The first comprises Hosea, Joel, and Amos. These books are complementary, and form an organic, indivisible whole. Hosea and Amos are concerned mainly with the fate of Samaria. Only now and then they take an occasional side-glance at Judah. Joel, on the other hand concerns himself exclusively with Judah. Samaria never enters his field of vision. Hosea, the most comprehensive of the Minor Prophets, lays a foundation upon which the others build. In the opening section (chh. 1-3), under the figure of marriage in its legal and primeval aspects, he sets forth Israel's position as God's special people on the ground of law and of promise. Their status under law was conditional and terminated in the issuance of a bill of divorce—"not my people!" Their position under the

original promise is unconditional and therefore inviolable. Notwithstanding the legal sentence of repudiation, they are nevertheless "beloved of the father's sake", a fact which assures their ultimate reception into God's favor.

Founding themselves on this immutable foundation, Hosea, Joel, and Amos—three contemporaries—taking as their starting point the first clash between Israel and Assyria, view the successive stages of the conflict and the varied outcome of the mighty contest for the two houses of Israel. Looking back at those books, we see that they developed one basic idea: Through the collapse of Samaria and the downfall of surrounding nations the path will lead to a reviving of the divine rule in Judah, whereas Samaria succumbs to the terrific force of the Assyrian impact. Judah, shaken to its foundations, emerges from the unequal combat into an era of national greatness which rivals the splendor attained under David and Solomon.

The writings of the second group, with the single exception of Micah, are concerned with foreign nations. If the books of the first group indicate the career mapped out for Israel and Judah, those of the second point out the part which the nations were to play in it. We see that the national movements of the world are designed to carry out, and timed to coincide with, the accomplishment of His designs for Israel. From *Obadiah* we learn that the opposition of Edom and the nations whose dictates it obeyed were the means ordained to bring to fruition the primacy of Zion. *Jonah* explains how the Assyrian empire became the instrument for both the overthrow of Samaria and the elevation of Judah, and an object for the display of Jehovah's mercy. *Micah*, a

contemporary of Hosea and Joel and Amos, sweeps once more over the stretch of time from Uzziah to Hezekiah. But his survey is no mere repetition. He makes a decidedly new contribution to the outline of the times furnished by antecedent prophets. He shows that Judah's deliverance from Assyria was effected through a unique scion of David's house whom Jehovah was pledged to uphold—who, in a time of unusual trial, was trustful and faithful, and who, moreover, in recognition of his righteousness, was given a new life of undisturbed peace as a ruler, and became exalted in the sight of all nations, receiving the homage and gifts from distant potentates. *Nahum* celebrates the fall of Nineveh. His book is a counterpart of *Jonah's*. The two prophets unfold the story of Nineveh in two realistic acts: (1) her rise to a position of commanding influence by submission to Jehovah's call to repentance; (2) her sinking into oblivion by defiance of Jehovah's counsel. Lastly, *Habakkuk* dramatizes the star event around which this constellation of prophetic writings, which rivals Orion in its brilliancy, revolves as the planets around the sun—the invasion and defeat of Sennacherib's army. His majestic "prayer" commemorating the fall of the Assyrian and the rescue of God's anointed forms a fitting finale to this splendid series of writings.

We now proceed to study the second group of books belonging to the Assyrian period.

The contents of *Obadiah*, the briefest of the prophetic books, are readily summarised. A calamity falling upon Judah has been aggravated by the participation of her neighbor foe, Edom. Judah is comforted in the thought of a future in which Edom will be subjugated and ruled by commissioners from mount Zion.

Obadiah beholds, in the first place (1-9), the destruction of Edom, to whose execution the nations are summoned by an ambassador. Its pride is humbled, its riches plundered, its wisdom baffled, its defences utterly broken. Thus the hate it showed toward Judah in its day of misfortune, when Edom took active part in the desecration of Jerusalem, is avenged (10-14). But from verse 15 the seer's gaze expands into a view of a catastrophe that will involve all nations. A day of retribution draws nigh for all the foes of Israel. It is a day of requital for the indignities committed on Zion. As they have drunk there to excess, disregarding the sanctity of the place, so in the same place they shall drink to excess until they lose their senses. This is a well-understood euphemism for the bloody end awaiting them.

In contrast with this destruction of the nations an escaped community stands on mount Zion as a positive result of this day of reckoning. Zion figures as the centre of the divine kingdom, impregnable, because defended by God. No vengeful foe, no unclean foot shall again tread it. The divine sway will extend itself over the possessions belonging by right and promise to Israel. These are the possessions mentioned in verses 18-20, which were but partially ruled by David and Solomon.

Then, when the old divine energy revives in every part of Judah, the subjugation of Edom comes. The survivors of Ephraim aid Judah in the work of conquest. The expansion of David's kingdom will start from Zion, extend first over the ancestral possessions of Canaan, and then also beyond the limits of the promised land, where hostile peoples, who have no part in the kingdom, are wiped out.

Expositors have suggested a contradiction between

verse 1 and verse 18, all nations being summoned there against Edom, here Jacob and Joseph appearing as avengers. The alleged contradiction is purely imaginary. It roots itself, first, in failure to perceive that a mobile, vivid account necessarily unifies the outstanding features of an event; and, second, in utter disregard of the situation as a whole. Edom is not the originator of the calamity that has overtaken Judah, but a participant abetting the instigator. The defeat of the leading nation lays Edom open to attack, and Judah, flushed with success, takes advantage of the situation to reassert the old time suzerainty and subdue Edom to its sway.

The work of subjugation is carried on by stages:—

(1) The Negeb, or south of Judah, conquers the adjacent mountains of Edom; (2) The Shephelo, or lowlands of Judah, conquers the adjacent territory of Philistia; (3) Together they regain the territory of Ephraim and Samaria; (4) Benjamin occupies Gilead, viz., the east-Jordan territory generally; (5) The captive host of Israel conquers the Canaanite country as far as Zaphath; (6) Finally, the captives of Jerusalem in Shephared conquer the cities of the south. Thus the Davidic kingdom rounds itself on every side, even those in exile contributing to bring the alien territory into subjection to Him. God so ordered the events that every evil inflicted on His people proves a stepping stone in restoring His rule. What form this rule will take is hinted in verse 21. The phraseology reminds us of the era of the judges, who with divine energy freed the land from oppression, thereby proving themselves God's organs, further judicial authority being given them on that account. They established their seat in Zion. For

there is the centre of the divine rule, whence Edom also is judged.

The close relationship of Obadiah to Amos and Joel is beyond doubt. Obadiah begins his book by reference to a previous oracle against Edom. "Thus said Adonai Jehovah concerning Edom: . . ." His book gives coherent form to the isolated utterances of antecedent prophets (Joel 3:5, 6; Amos 1:6, 9, 11). The catastrophe related by Obadiah is the same that Joel has in view, where Philistines and Canaanites are accused of having plundered Jerusalem and sold its inhabitants to the distant "sons of Javan", and Edom (v. 19) is specially marked out for judgment. Insolent carousing of the victors took place in Jerusalem according to Joel 3:3, and according to Obadiah 15. The close relation of the two books appears also from Joel's citing Obadiah 17 in chapter 2:32.

If the catastrophe described by Obadiah is the same which Joel has in view, the subjugation of Edom with other hostile nations and rehabilitation of the Davidic kingdom in pristine splendor is the same spoken by Amos (ch. 9:11, etc.). This restoration of the Davidic kingdom to as glorious a state as it ever enjoyed was realized in the latter part of the reign of Hezekiah where the glory of Davidic victory and the prosperity of Solomonic peace was temporarily regained by Judah. Contemporary records show the conquest of Philistia, the subjugation of other hostile nations, and the recapture of lost territory to have actually occurred under Hezekiah (2 Ki. 18:8; 2 Chr. 30:8, 9; 32:22). The explicit declaration by Amos of the rebuilding of David's tent as taking place at the time of the fall of Samaria and the deportation of its inhabitants is conclusive proof of

its fulfilment. The added fact that the historic records express the outcome of the deliverance from Sennacherib in language identical to the one employed by the prophets establishes this point beyond all possibility of dispute (2 Ki. 19:30-31; Joel 2:32; Obad. 17).

Several incidental touches in our prophecy confirm the fact of its having had an initial fulfilment in the reign of Hezekiah. According to verse 18, the house of Joseph (kingdom of Ephraim) aids the house of Jacob (kingdom of Judah) in the conquest of Edom. This statement must not be contrued to mean a restoration of Samaria as an independent kingdom. The language implies no more than cooperation on the part of such of Joseph's house as had cast their lot with Judah. As a fact, such cooperation is mentioned in the actual records of the kingdom (2 Chr. 30:10-12, 18-20, 25).

Again, verse 20 recognizes two distinct companies of captives: (1) the "dormant host" of the sons of Israel; and (2) the captives of Jerusalem. The "dormant host" of Israel most likely refers to the Simeonites who, in the early part of Hezekiah's reign, migrated to mount Seir (1 Chr. 4:41-42), and who therefore could not take part in defending their country against the Assyrians. We take *hazah*, not as a demonstrative pronoun, but as a participle, dormant, in the sense of "inactive". For this use of *hazah* see Isa. 56:10, "*sleeping dogs*".

The "captives of Jerusalem" are captured citizens of the metropolis and soldiers of the Judean army. These have already been referred to in verses 11 and 13, where our versions obscure the fact by rendering the same Hebrew word "substance". These prisoners of war had been sold into slavery by their captors (Joel 3:6; Amos 1:6, 9; Obad. 14). These captive hosts of the two

houses of Israel seize upon the defeat of their conquerors as a welcome opportunity to regain freedom. "Stirred" by divine energy (Joel 3:7), they take up arms against their captors and push their conquest northward as far as Zarephath, and southward to the border cities of Judah. This reconquest of territory is contemplated in Joel 2:25, where Jehovah promises His people a full restoration of the territory which the Assyrian devourers had conquered in their aggressions against the holy land.

V. G.

GRACE

THE LONG LOST ANSWER TO THE SEVENTH OF ROMANS

THE gracious providence of God has seldom been more signally evident than in the discovery of the Sinaitic manuscript by Constantine Tischendorf about the middle of the last century. The story how he found some of its leaves in a waste basket, and how he tried nearly ten years later to recover the rest of it but failed, and how he finally stumbled on it six years later, is full of interest. The eagerness with which scholars have heralded its readings and incorporated them into their texts gave promise of a speedy realization of the fruits of this great find.

But the results, so far, have hardly come up to our expectations. They have lacked the vital touch, they have failed to add living energy to the body of revelation. Like every gift from above, however, the failure is found in its use rather than in the gift itself. There is one reading found in this manuscript which, in itself, ought to make us profoundly thankful to God for its recovery in these last degenerate days. It alone contains the answer to the heart breaking cry of the miserable man in the seventh of Romans. So far as we are aware, this has never been made known. The reason for this lies in the fact that the printed editions issued by Tischendorf did not follow the manuscript, but were "edited". Sometimes he included the corrections in his text, yet he often omitted them. What

we need is the whole manuscript, corrections and all. This will be given in the CONCORDANT VERSION.

Salvation, in all of its aspects, is of God. Deliverance, past, present and future is through His grace. Why is justification by faith? That it may accord with grace (Rom. 4:16). And He who spares not His own Son, but gives Him up for us all, how shall He not, together with Him, also, *grace* us with all things? (Rom. 8:32). Indeed, it is God's purpose, in the oncoming eons, to display to the celestial spheres the transcendent riches of His grace by his kindness to us in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:6-7)

Being, then, the objects of His grace in the past, and the exponents of its overwhelming redundancy in the future, the question arises, why have we so meager an enjoyment of it in the present? Is it withheld in the interim? Are we indeed "in the seventh of Romans" now? Shall we go about bemoaning our own misery? It is a sad fact that there are many whose experience has never led them beyond the wretchedness detailed in this chapter. If there is a way out they have not found it. And the significant fact remains that *in our Bibles the vital question at the close of the seventh of Romans is unanswered*. "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. 7:25 R. V.) *There is no reply*. We are left in the dark!

It is evident that the Adversary has done his utmost to adulterate and destroy the grace of God. Witness his attacks on justification by faith as recorded in the Galatian epistle. Our blessed expectation was also made a matter of works, so the apostle reminds the Thessalonian saints that future salvation is also founded on grace. It is because Christ *died* that we shall live

together with Him, whether we *watch* or are *drowsy* (1 Thess. 5:10). Here the translators have allowed themselves to become adversaries of grace (perhaps through inadvertence) for they render the word *watch* by *wake*, and *drowsy* by *sleep*. There is no reference to death. In a similar way, we believe, the vital word of the seventh of Romans, which is the answer to its appeal and the stepping stone into the eighth chapter, has been taken from us. This word is *Grace*.

The seventh of Romans is one of the most unsatisfactory passages in our Bibles. Some declare boldly that it is the experience of the believer. And, as to fact, they are right! Are not the great majority of the saints in this slough where they do what they condemn? Are not many having their divine aspirations dampened by their inability to carry out the desires of the spirit which has been given them? Some have emerged with a shout of victory, but even they are not at all clear how the victory was won, and hardly know how to impart the permanent blessing to others.

As the CONCORDANT VERSION is the only translation (so far as we are aware) that has seized this precious gem and set it in its place, we take the following from the unpublished manuscript.

“A wretched man am I! What will rescue me out of this body of death? *Grace!* Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

GRACE! This is the key to deliverance from the law and from self and from sin! It is not struggling: it is standing still to see the salvation of God. It is not fighting the flesh, but, putting it in the place of death, finding ourselves alive beyond its sphere in resurrection.

Those who enter into conflict with the flesh will not find victory but defeat. In Romans we die to sin, to the law, and seek deliverance from the body of death. Nothing will avail us but the undiluted, unadulterated grace of God.

Grace is the door that leads us out of Romans seven into Romans eight. It ushers us out of misery into the realm of pure delight. It transfers us from unsatisfactory, distressing self-inspection, where we are harassed with doubts and condemned by ourselves, into that marvellous realm which greets us in the opening of the eighth chapter. "*Nothing*, consequently, is condemnation now . . ." Instead of continual condemnation, grace absolutely defies all condemnation. Even where sin abounds, grace superabounds, so that sin itself is submerged in the redundancy and superfluity of grace.

All sorts of remedies have been suggested to cure the wretched man but none of them compare with this divine prescription. The eighth chapter is based on this reply and cannot be comprehended apart from it. The wretched man is continually condemned by an inward weakness and waywardness with which he has no sympathy. Grace steps in, and, as a consequence, *nothing is condemnation to those in Christ Jesus*, for the spirit's law of life in Christ Jesus frees us from the law of sin and death. God's *grace-gift* is eonian life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 6:23). The life abides on the same terms on which it was received—nothing down, nothing forever.

But some will ask, how do we know that such is the true reading? What right have we to add to the Bible? This opens up a most interesting and profitable line of evidence which is of tremendous importance to all who

value God's truth today. The word which we have added to the seventh of Romans is a correction found in the Codex Sinaiticus, one of the most ancient copies of the Greek scriptures in our possession. Its discovery by Tischendorf reads like a successful hunt for buried treasure, with gold enough for us all.

The three most ancient manuscripts which have come down to us vary considerably in regard to the matter of corrections. Alexandrinus and Vaticanus are quite free from changes, but Sinaiticus is full of them. At first sight the presence of so many corrections lowers our confidence in the text, and it certainly seems just to say that the original scribe was not as careful as his compeers. A closer study of the corrections, however, has convinced us that this manuscript, *as corrected*, is probably the most valuable witness which God has providentially preserved for us.

In collating the text for the CONCORDANT VERSION, which is founded on the three most ancient witnesses, the question arose whether to follow the primary text of Sinaiticus, as is usually done, or to give the correctors the preference. Many of the corrections seem to have been made almost as soon as the vellum was written, hence, they are practically as ancient as the underlying text. An extended comparison with the companion texts developed the fact that the corrector's readings are often sustained by the best evidence, especially Codex Vaticanus. Tischendorf at one time thought that the scribe who wrote Vaticanus corrected Sinaiticus, because the readings so often agreed and the handwriting seemed the same. There are, however, sufficient points of difference to make them independent witnesses. It is possible that both Vaticanus and the first corrector of Sinaiticus

had copies which were taken from one ancient manuscript in some cases. The result of a comparison with other manuscripts gives the correctors of Sinaiticus a higher place than the basic text. The later corrector seems, indeed, to have been more than a mere corrector. He was an *editor* of the ancient text, endeavoring not merely to correct the mechanical slips of the scribe, but to conform the text to the best ancient evidence. It is supposed that this editorial work was done at Caesarea by comparison with Pamphilius' manuscript which in turn had been compared with Origen's Hexapla. If this be true, it is of the utmost importance that we recognize it and accord their readings the place they deserve.

The readings of Sinaiticus are of two classes. First there are the corrections made at the time the manuscript was written or soon afterwards. These are sometimes called the A or B readings. They are shown in the CONCORDANT VERSION as s^* . The second class of corrections are editorial in nature and were made some centuries later. They are sometimes called the C readings. The CONCORDANT superlinear gives them as s^2 , s^3 , s^4 , and s^5 . A very few alterations were made much later and are known as F readings (s^6).

It is important to note that the early corrections, like the addition to Romans seven which we are studying, were subjected to the scrutiny of the later editors. Thus they are not only the deliberate additions of the early scribe, but are confirmed by the later editorial revision.

Another point is of principal importance. Many of the mistakes in the ancient manuscript are *omissions*. Only those actually engaged in transcribing will realize how easy it is to leave out a few words or a line. A

compositor on the CONCORDANT VERSION, recently skipped from one line of his copy to the next, because the same word occurred in each. The principle hitherto followed that the ancient scribes were anxious to add to the text and thus gave rise to spurious additions must be abandoned. Just as an ancient sculpture does not gain, but rather loses in the course of time, and must be restored, so with the writing which is copied many times. There can be no doubt that the scribe of Sinaiticus skipped many words which were restored by the corrector. The Alexandrian manuscript has thus lost quite a few whole sentences and almost always the reason is apparent from the text itself.

As the corrector of Sinaiticus restores many omissions, in which it is supported by the other manuscripts, the question arises whether it may not be the sole remaining source of some readings which have fallen out of *all* the other manuscripts? This can be determined only by internal evidence. As the particular passage in which we are interested, Romans 7:25, is in this class, we shall enlarge on this point and leave it to our readers' candid judgment. We feel sure all who investigate will come to the conclusion that, in the providence of God, the corrector, and later editor, of Sinaiticus have preserved for us the true reading in this notable text, and that *grace* (which has been largely absent from the lives of God's saints as well from this passage) may now be restored to its place in the seventh of Romans and in our hearts and lives.

In an exhaustive survey of the various readings occurring in the first epistle to the Corinthians it was found that there are about three dozen places where the later editor of Sinaiticus supplies something absent not only

from the first draft of Sinaiticus but from Vaticanus and Alexandrinus as well. We will examine these to see what motive prompted their addition. Did this editor try to force some of his own teachings into the text? Are the additions as good or better than the text without them? Is there any apparent reason why they might have been dropped in the transcription? We have sorted the passages into five classes. The first fourteen additions are all alike in character, in that they make no change in the *sense* of the passage, but are more precise and accurate—points which are highly commendable in the Scriptures. In each of the subjoined passages the word added by the editor is in italics. It is omitted by the other evidence. The renderings are from the manuscript of the CONCORDANT VERSION, as other translations are not sufficiently exact to show some of the distinctions.

- 1 Cor. 1:20 the wisdom of *this* world
 2:10 through *His* Spirit
 3:12 *this* foundation
 4: 6 not to be *disposed* above what is written
 4: 9 for I suppose *that* God demonstrates
 5: 7 *then* clean out the old leaven
 7:21 and those using *this* world
 9:22 I became to the weak *as* weak
 10:13 To enable *you* to undergo it
 10:23 All is allowed *me* (twice)
 11:26 and drinking *this* cup
 12:12 yet all the members of the *one* body
 being many
 12:26 or *one* member is being esteemed
 14:26 each *of you* has a psalm

Try the experiment of going over each of these, leaving out the italicized word. The sense remains but its point

is blunted. In fact, it is not strictly true that God makes the wisdom of the world stupid. The wisdom of the world to come will be in harmony with His wisdom. It applies only to the wisdom of *this* world. And God reveals it to us not merely through the spirit, but it is through *His* spirit. And so, in almost every case there is a distinct gain in accuracy and emphasis. In no case can we charge the editor with the introduction of his own ideas.

We next present a list of fifteen more passages in which the editor of Sinaiticus adds to the sense yet never alters it. In almost every case the addition is not only undoubtedly true, but is demanded by the context. How lacking is the statement "This is My body which is for you", spoken as the Lord is *breaking* the bread for His disciples! Is it not much more likely that the true reading is "Which is *broken for you?*" True no *bone* of Him was broken but not so His body.

The three other additions to this passage all appeal to our spiritual perception of the fitness of things. "Let him be testing himself *first*," adds point to the exhortation, "He who is eating and drinking *unworthily*" is surely demanded by the words which follow. Eating and drinking do not in themselves call for judgment. "Not discriminating the body *of the Lord*" gives definiteness to an otherwise vague expression. So with "Is anyone planting a vineyard and not eating *of* its fruit?" The planter could hardly eat all of its fruit himself. Rather he ate *of* it and supplied his household as well. Love never falls is a usage of the word "falls" unknown elsewhere. It is weak. "Love never falls *out*, or *lapses*" is eminently fitting.

- 1 Cor. 5: 1 such prostitution which is not *being named* among the nations
 5: 7 Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for *our sakes*
 7: 5 have leisure for *fasting and prayer*
 7:38 giving in marriage (*out-marrying*)
 7:39 A wife is bound *by law* for
 8: 4 that there is no *other (different)* God except One
 9: 7 is any one planting a vineyard and not eating *of* its fruit
 9:10 he who is threshing in expectation of sharing *in the expectation*
 11:24 this is My body which is *broken* for you
 11:28 let him be testing himself *first*
 11:29 for he who is eating and drinking *unworthily*
 11:29 not discriminating the body *of the Lord*
 13: 8 love never *lapses* (or falls out) for "falls"
 16:15 Stephanas *and Fortunatus*
 16:23 fond of the Lord *Jesus-Christ*

That Christ our Passover was sacrificed *for our sakes*, none will deny, and it is far from trite to introduce it into the apostle's argument. So with the bonds of wedlock. They are *legal* bonds. It is likely that the sin spoken of in this epistle *was* committed among the nations though they probably refrained from mentioning it. The addition of Fortunatus' name was done deliberately and must have been based on earlier evidence. So also with the name and title of our Lord. The character of these additions impresses us as genuine attempts to restore the text to its original completeness and vigor.

Our next group of passages is such as only one can appreciate who is acquainted with Greek or has an exact

sublinear such as is given in the CONCORDANT VERSION. Greek is very rich in participles and connectives which appear redundant to English ears.

- 1 Cor. 5:10 *And* not absolutely, as to the
6:19 from *the* God
8:11 is being destroyed *also*
11:34 *Now* if anyone is hungry
13:11 *Yet* when I have become a man
14:13 Wherefore let *even* him who is talk-
 ing languages
15:38 its own *the* body

“*Yet* when I have become a man” shows a disjunctive turn of thought better than if it were omitted. The same is true of “*Now* if anyone is hungry.”

We next present two cases in which the particle *AN* is added by the editor of Sinaiticus. This interesting little word is seldom translated in our versions. It is the sign of indefiniteness, represented by *EVER* in the sublinear of the CONCORDANT SCRIPTURES. In the Version its presence is usually acknowledged by changing *may* to *should*. It is the key to that passage which has caused so much controversy (Matt. 24:34): “Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled”. All difficulties are removed if we render it concordantly, “Verily, I am saying to you, ‘This generation may by no means pass by till all these things *should* occur.’ ” It is not merely subjunctive *may*, but “*may ever*,” which, in English, is *should*. Our Lord was careful to qualify His statement which shows that, far from being positive that these things would be fulfilled, He evidently knew they would not. The two passages follow:

1 Cor. 11:26 till He *should* (for *may*) be coming
 11:25 until He *should* (for *may*) be placing

Except the strengthening of the word *not* (9:12), but one passage remains, the only one which seems to mar the text and quarrel with its context. Nevertheless we give it so that *all* the evidence will be before us and nothing hid.

1 Cor. 14:10 not one *of them* is soundless (for
 "nothing is soundless")

The apostle seems to be speaking of voices or sounds. To say that no sounds are without sound seems senseless. To say that nothing is without sound is doubtless true though rather trite. Perhaps the root of the difficulty lies in the word "soundless". Our Common Version renders it "without signification", which the Revisers modernize to "without significance". While there is no external evidence for this rendering, it certainly responds to the context, for the apostle has been speaking of a variety of natural sounds, and he is pleading against senseless speaking in the ecclesia. Now if we insert a letter, P, which is the equivalent of our R, and read *aphroonos* for *aphoonos*, then the whole difficulty is solved and the corrector of Sinaiticus is right even in this passage. It would then read, "many voices in the world and not one of them is senseless." But there no documentary evidence for this, so we cannot stake anything on it.

We trust that the proof we have presented will convince all that we are justified in treating the readings of the editor of Sinaiticus with a grave measure of respect. There is not the slightest reason to impugn his motives, for in no case could he gain any doctrinal ad-

vantage by his additions. Most of his contributions strengthen or develop the sense already present and are supported by the context. As he very often agrees with the best manuscripts such as Vaticanus or Alexandrinus (where internal evidence is not needed to confirm his changes), we may readily come to the conclusion that the edited Sinaiticus is far superior to its first draft. Furthermore, even when the editor of Sinaiticus seems alone, his *additions* to the text are of such a solid, unbiased and helpful character, that they demand recognition far beyond what has been accorded them in the past.

When we remember, then, that the word "grace" added in the margin of Romans seven, is not only the correction of the contemporary scribe, but was passed as correct by the later editor, we have ample grounds for including it in the text without appealing to the strong prejudice created by the demands of the context.

Every ancient work of art comes to us mutilated by the hand of time. When we find one in which there was an ancient attempt to restore it to its pristine perfectness we do not rid it of the restorer's work but rather rejoice that one has been before us, and carefully preserve and guard his efforts. So with the Scriptures. The many corrections which *seem* to deface the Sinaitic text are its greatest glory. Speaking generally, they probably give us the *best evidence as to the original scriptures which we possess*.

We shall now return to the Seventh of Romans and the reading of which prompted this digression. Without an acquaintance with the facts we have presented we would probably pass over the added word *grace*, as the answer to that chapter, as it is based almost en-

tirely on this manuscript. It will be of more than ordinary interest to note the various ways in which this text has appeared in Greek manuscripts and other ancient sources as well as modern editors. "I am thanking the God" is the reading of one set of witnesses, which includes Sinaiticus uncorrected, Alexandrinus, two Syriac versions, the Peshitto and the Harkleian, the Gothic version of Ulfilas, and most other Codices. Origen has it so twice out of three instances and Chrysostom quotes it so once. "Thanks (or *grace*) to the God" is the reading of Vaticanus and is followed by the Coptic Sahidic version, Origen one out of three instances, Methodius, a Bishop of Olympus, and Hieronymus, once out of two occurrences. "Yet thanks (or *grace*) to the God" is the reading of c² (*Codex Ephraemi*), a few other Codices, a few of the Boharic and the Armenian versions, and is so quoted by Cyril of Alexandria. "The grace of God" is found in D (*Codex Claromontanus*), 32, a twelfth century manuscript in Paris, the latin version, Hieronymus, once in two instances, and Origen's latin in both of its occurrences. Weymouth gives the concensus of modern editors as favoring "Thanks (or *grace*) to the God", but most of them put "I am thanking" in the margin. Alexander Souter's recent edition reverses this, putting, "I am thanking" in the text, and "Thanks to" in the margin. The CONCORDANT Greek text will combine these reading. Once this is done the solution of the whole matter appear as clear as noonday. Probably a very early scribe, in copying this passage, came to the word *grace*, XAPIC (*charis*) and lifted his eyes from the copy. Then turning to it again, his eyes fell on the same combination of letters XAPIC in "I am thanking", a little further on. In this

way, his copy skipped the word *grace*, for he had lost it in the word "thanking". This shifting from *grace* to *thanks*, in English, will be clearer if we explain that *thanks, gratitude, grace, rejoice* and *bounty* are all from the same element $\chi\alpha\rho$, in Greek, which means *JOY*. Sometimes we must translate *grace* *gratitude* (1 Cor. 10:30). *Thanks* is *WELL-JOY*. Surely all who are acquainted with the grace of God can see that there is a much deeper connection than a mere etymological one, for grace is the purest and most inexhaustible source of joy and thanksgiving.

The habit of skipping words found between recurring combinations of letters accounts for many of the omissions found in our modern texts. They should be restored. The compositor of the Greek text of the Unveiling had an experience of this kind in setting up the repetition "out of the tribe of . . . twelve thousand," and, he, like the scribe of Sinaiticus, omitted two tribes by skipping, but was able to correct it, as it was in moveable type.

The key to the sixth and seventh chapters of Romans lies in the fact that they are an expansion of the conclusion of the fifth chapter. "For even as through the disobedience of one man the many were constituted sinners, thus also, through the obedience of one, the many shall be constituted just. Yet law crept in that the offense may increase. Yet where sin increases, grace superexceeds, that, even as Sin reigns in death, thus grace, too, may reign, through righteousness, for eonian life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Then comes that superlative insistence on grace which is rejected by almost everyone today. "What, then, shall we assert? That we may be persisting in sin that grace may in-

crease?" It is evident from this that, even under such a supposition, *grace would exceed*. Who believes this today?

Next comes the question of sin. We are not satisfied to sin and allow grace to exceed in that way. We desire deliverance from sin. How can it be obtained? In our loose, unscriptural phraseology we talk of *victory* over sin. Scripture speaks of victory over the world (John 16:33 and 1 John 5:4) and over the wicked one (1 John 2:13). Yet even this is for the Circumcision. It is not ours to wrestle with blood and flesh, but with the sovereignties, with the authorities, with the world might of this darkness, with the spiritual forces of wickedness among the celestials. Our panoply includes the readiness of the evangel of *peace* where we have contact with the world. There is no conflict, hence no victory. But, you will say, are we to have no victory over sin? Accurately speaking, No. We are to die to Sin, and this is more like defeat than victory. Ours is to be resurrection life. By death to sin we are justified or acquitted from sin. If we allow ourselves to come under law, as Paul does in the seventh of Romans, we will soon find that ours is far from a victorious life, for the law changes the character of sin into *offense*. I cannot put my will into practice. I do things that I hate to do. Sin takes control. Law puts Sin in control. "A wretched man am I! What will rescue me out of this body of death? *Grace!*" Death to Sin and death to Law is the only escape from their clutches. They can never be conquered by us. But if we, through death to them, escape from their jurisdiction, their power over us is gone and we are free.

Law and grace are opposites in their effects. All

failures and short-comings as well as flagrant misdeeds are sin. The Law tells me that God is against all such things, but law does not help me to avoid them. Grace tells me that God, in Christ, has fully provided for all, and gives me power over the flesh so that this very body of death must obey my will. The Law said, "Do or be condemned!" but I could not. Grace says, "There is no condemnation possible now whatever you do." And lo! I am endued with power to fulfil the just requirements of the law by ignoring it altogether!

O, the potency of grace! In material things men do not despise God's gifts but grasp them eagerly though thanklessly. The power He has deposited in the coal stratas and which flows in the streams is seized by man for his comfort and blessing. The mellifluous influence of the sun furnishes all the physical energy on which our very lives depend. God gives it freely with unstinted measure and we take it because we must. This is but a parable of the spiritual forces which are ours as freely as the sunlight. Occupation with ourselves or our sin is futile. Attempts at self reformation are fallacious. We are not simply forgiven our past sins: we are justified. Those whom He justifies He glorifies also. And in between our justification and glorification, our path is illuminated and resplendent with that supreme expression of God's love, His undiluted, unbounded, transcendent, undeserved, overwhelming grace.

A. E. K.

The Unveiling of Jesus Christ

THE PROPHETIC PORTIONS

WE now confront the prophetic portions of the Apocalypse, consisting of one long section near the beginning of the scroll (1:4-3:22) and a short section near its end (22:6-17). Before making a minute examination of its details it will help us to take a general survey of its character and scope, its application and object, with special reference to the time and people to whom it is addressed.

In calling these the Prophetic sections, or in dividing the rest of the scroll into Political and Religious sections, we do not wish to be understood as doing more than to point out the general character of each. When we say that Matthew's account sets forth Christ as King, no one supposes that this is the only title used of Him by Matthew. The main divisions of the narrative are made by the acknowledgment that He is Son of God. Neither is John's account without any record of His regal claim. Yet all will acknowledge the helpfulness of investing Matthew with royal robes, of seeing the Servant in Mark, the Man in Luke and the divine Son in John. It is the introduction which fixes His character in each. The genealogy to David and Abraham in Matthew, to Adam in Luke, its absence in Mark, and His precarnate session in John—these alone fix the dominant character of the succeeding account, however much all His glories may be blended as occasion arises. He serves in all, yet He is the Servant in Mark. He is human in all, yet He

is the Man in Luke. He is divine in all, yet He is the Son of God in John.

So in the Apocalypse. The introductions to the sections can hardly be misundertsood. The magnificent throne scene of the fourth chapter must introduce us to the political side of earth's deliverance, though not excluding worship. The opening of the temple must reveal the religious aspect of redemption, though not debarring power. Rule and religion run throughout the scroll, but rule rises to prominence at one time and religion at another. We should look to the introduction of each section to guide us in our apprehension of its character. Once determined, this will give us a clue to its contents.

The prophet is the sign of apostacy. So long as the priesthood was true and the king ruled in the fear of God, there was no need of any prophet. But when these fail then God raises up a man to be His spokesman to the people. The primary function of prophecy is to interpret the times so that the people may know the mind of God and the conduct which will accord with His will. Prediction is but a part of the prophetic office. The prophetic sections of this scroll are in perfect accord with this conception of prophecy.

When we remember that the great emphasis in this scroll is on judgment we are prepared to see why these ecclesias are not in Palestine, where they ought to be, but far from the land, in the precincts of apostacy. The people as a whole are distant from God, and He finds their representative ecclesias outside the land beyond the sphere of blessing. The one hundred and forty four thousand are in their true place, on mount Zion, hence their pre-eminent portion. They need no prophet. But the nation as a whole is at such a distance, spiritually, from their rightful place, as these ecclesias are removed, physically from Jerusalem.

The CONCORDANT VERSION uses the word *ecclesia* rather "church". The word "church" has acquired a meaning quite foreign to that which the etymology of this word demands. Any company CALLED-OUT, as the sublinear has it, is an *ecclesia*. The tribal council in the wilderness wanderings (Acts 7:38), the mob at Ephesus (Acts 19:32, 41), the synagogue worshipers (Mt. 18:17)—all these are really a "church" but would be wholly misunderstood if referred to by that term. So it is here. The very name given to these *ecclesias* has prejudiced us in favor of an interpretation which they will not bear. In the message to the Philadelphian *ecclesia* we read of those who are claiming to be Jews and are not, who are of Satan's synagogue. This lacks all pith and point if the Philadelphians were not themselves Jews and members of a synagogue. Hence we are compelled to consider these "churches" as synagogues such as those referred to by our Lord, in which no tax gatherer or man of another nation could have any place (Mt. 18:17).

As the word "assembly" does not suggest the principal point of an *out-called* company, and is well suited to translate another word, it is not a good substitute for "church". So we are forced to find a new term, uncontaminated, yet not unfamiliar, with which to clothe this idea. "*Ecclesia*" from its associations with "ecclesiastic", etc., is suggested, with the hope that it will never be applied to a building, or restricted to a particular company or economy, but applied to any assembly consisting of members *called out* of a larger number.

This suggests the real reason why these companies are called "*ecclesias*" rather than synagogues. They are not in the land where almost everyone would belong to the local synagogue, but among the nations. Hence only the Jews in these cities were called out

from among the mass of the population to become members of these ecclesias. To call them "churches" would practically exclude the Jews; to call them "ecclesias" allows them to be synagogues, which they undoubtedly will be.

This suggests an important point in reference to their location. They are not found in Jerusalem or Judea, but at a distance in proconsular Asia, a province in Asia Minor, which has since given its name to the whole continent of which it was but a very small part. They belong to the dispersion in the day of the Lord, corresponding to the "sojourners of the dispersion of . . . Asia" to whom the first epistle of Peter was addressed (1 Pet. 1:1).

Indeed, while we limit John's apocalyptic epistles to the Lord's day, Peter's had an immediate application in the past and will be most suitable to the future. The constant emphasis upon suffering and affliction in Peter's letter suits the situation found in these epistles perfectly.

A single consideration should keep us from applying these epistles to the ecclesias of the apostle's day. Two of the early Fathers, Tertullian and Epiphanius say that there was no ecclesia in Thyatira when John wrote these letters. Doubtless this had much to do with the suspicion with which this whole Unveiling was viewed in the early times. Many rejected it altogether. The application to the ecclesias of that day was not at all possible.

Most of the early sects who refused to give this prophecy a place in the canon did so on the ground that John would not write to an ecclesia which had never been heard of. This was the principle argument of Cerdon and Marcion, who repudiated it. The Alogi pointedly asked "How . . . could he write to an ecclesia which was not in existence?"

We have purposely avoided any explanation of the word "messenger" because of the unusual interest which attaches to the messengers of the seven ecclesias. The rendering "angel" is certainly startling here. None of the ecclesias of scripture had angels among them. And certain it is that the churches of today are not in charge of angels. Yet, neither are they in charge of messengers.

Before attempting the solution of this problem let us discover the true significance of the word. It is a members of a notable family of words, some of which have found a place in English. We protest that we are not "changing" the common version by our rendering "messenger". The translators always render it so when it refers to human beings, and surely it refers to such in these seven ecclesias. What would be the use of sending these letters to *angels*? The spies sent to search out the land were *messengers* (Ja. 2:25), John the Baptist is thrice called an angel or *messenger* (Mt. 11:10; Mk. 1:2; Lu. 7:27); John sent *messengers* to the Lord (Lu. 7:24); and He sent *messengers* before His face (Lu. 9:52). In all these passages the Authorized translates correctly, "messengers". It is evident, therefore, that this is the true meaning of the word. It has to do with service, not nature. Whether a messenger be a spirit or a human being must be left to the context and the discernment of the reader. We are of the opinion that the "angels" to whom these epistles are sent are nothing more or less than the messengers of these ecclesias.

There is no such officer in the churches of today. There was none in the churches established by Paul. Where are they to be found?

Only in the synagogue do we find any officer who has any claim to this title. The chief of the synagogue (Mk. 5:22; Acts 18:17) ranked first, but below him was the

sheliach tsibbur, the legate or messenger of the ecclesia, who was the mouthpiece of the congregation. This is the one represented by the stars, to whom these letters were addressed. It seems certain, from the opening benediction, that in each case there would be but *one* reader but *many* hearers. The *sheliach* who received this message would transmit it by reading it publicly to the congregation in the synagogue.

The symbol of the stars reminds us of the two seeds of Abraham. Some are to be like the sea shore sands: others like the stars of heaven. The messengers are evidently God's light-bearers in the world at its darkest hour, just before the dawn.

Having found that the recipients of these epistles are Jews assembled in synagogues, we are reminded of the fact that John was a minister of the Circumcision like His Master. He never was sent to the nations as Paul was. He and Peter made an arrangement with Paul that they should devote themselves to the Circumcision (Gal. 2:7-19). It is evident that he does so in writing this Unveiling.

Between the writings of the Circumcision and Paul's letters there is a vast chasm. Luther was so impressed with this that he had no use for James' epistle, for it seemed to him to contradict the doctrine of Romans. Faith and grace has no place there. It is replaced by faith and *acts*. The gospel for the Circumcision never even approximated the grace reached in Paul's epistles. The doctrine of Romans, "therefore it is of faith that it might be by grace", and the transcendent teaching of the so-called Ephesian epistle, "saved through faith for grace", sheds no radiance upon these ecclesias.

No one who has basked in the beams of such beneficence can enter the cloudy atmosphere of these letters without experiencing a chill. The nearest approach to it is found in James' epistle. Grace and faith are

eclipsed by a strong insistence on acts, on endurance, on repentance. Threats are freely offered for failure to live up to the requirements. It is an atmosphere not only darker than the seven letters of Paul but even those of the Circumcision. To apply them to the present economy of grace is subversion of the truth, destructive of the faith and a crime against grace. Grace mingled with acts is no longer grace. What then shall we call acts without any admixture of grace? Let us leave these epistles where they belong, for they are well suited to the day of wrath. Judgment, says Peter (1 Pet. 4:17), must begin at God's house. This is what we have here. How can we confound this with grace going out to aliens, as it is today?

Confirmatory evidence abounds. We will trace it briefly in the allusions and promises in each letter and in the references to the same period which occupies us in the succeeding sections.

It is not simply that these epistles refer us to incidents in Israel's history, but there seems to be a systematic endeavor in these successive references to cover their whole history from the deliverance from Egypt to the period of Minor Prophets. The declension in the ecclesias corresponds closely with the national declension. Their sins and failure will be the sins and failures of their forefathers.

The allusion in the epistle to Ephesus recalls the day of Israel's espousals (Jer. 2:2). In the fervency of her first love there was much glorying in Jehovah and little likelihood of straying from Him. Had they kept this, no apostasy would have appeared. Leaving His love led to the decline which is here traced to its end in being spued out of His mouth.

In the Smyrnan letter we have a parallel to the wilderness wanderings. Israel was tried forty years. They will be tried ten days.

The reference to Balaam, in the letter to Pergamos, takes us on to an incident in the wilderness. Peter speaks of these same people when he warns against those "following in the way of Balaam the son of Bosor" (2 Pet. 2:15). Jude, writing of those days, also refers to Balaam's error (10-13).

The next four allusions are to the kingdom, the first two to Israel and the last two to Judah. In each case there is one allusion to defection and another to rejection.

Jezebel, who is referred to in the letter to Thyatira, made the advice of Balaam the basis of state religion. A sensual religion will be one of the outstanding features of the end time. The church today is fast drifting in that direction. But the full development of this fearful plague awaits that day.

Sardis engages us with the removal of Israel. Their name is practically blotted out, so that no one knows where they are today. Another instance of this "blotting out" occurs in the sealing of the one hundred and forty four thousand. Jehovah threatened to blot out the tribe which would introduce idolatry in Israel (Deut. 29:18-20). Their names do not appear in the list of the tribes of those who are sealed.

In the Philadelphian letter we turn to Judah. The defection had been great. Uzziah was stricken with leprosy for his presumption in the house of God (2 Chr. 26:19). Jotham did not enter it at all (2 Chr. 27:2). Ahaz shut up its doors (2 Chr. 28:24). Hezekiah opened its doors again, but Shebna, the treasurer, had to be deposed. Eliakim is given this trust. The treasures of the temple were at his command.

The Laodicean letter leads us to the end of the long line of declension. Its message savors strongly of the divine expostulations in the Minor Prophets. Their wretched condition reminds us of Hosea's description (Hos. 2:5-9).

Far more conclusive of the character of these ecclesias are the promises held out to those who are victors. While they allude to the period from Eden to Solomon, their future fulfillment is always found in the earthly sphere where the blessings of Israel are located—never in the celestial realms which are our portion.

As is ever the case, human declension does not hinder God's blessing. While the condition of these ecclesias corresponded with the apostasy of the nation, the promises ascend from blessing to blessing. The conqueror in the first ecclesia has the promise of life while in the last, Laodicea, a place on the throne is prepared for the victorious one.

In Ephesus the allusion takes us back to Eden and the tree of life in its midst. But the promise reaches forward to the new earth and the tree of life in the center of that paradise. What part can we have in that garden? Shall we descend from our place with Christ on His celestial throne?

In Sardis the allusion is to the entrance of death when Adam sinned. The promise reaches out to the second death, from which the conqueror is promised immunity (20:14). Our life is hid with Christ in God. We may not all be conquerors, but all who believe in this day of grace have all that is promised to this conqueror and far more.

The manna recalls the wilderness journey of Israel. It provides for the sustenance of the conqueror of Pergamos. The white pebble was probably one of those used in the casting of lots. Hence this pebble would entitle the conqueror to an allotment in the kingdom. Is that our hope?

In Thyatira this thought rises higher. The conqueror is promised authority over the other nations. Here we are reminded how they left the wilderness and conquered the nations in the land. In the kingdom to come the conqueror of this ecclesia will be given the

morning star. Before Christ arises as the sun, He will crush the nations and rule them with an iron club. In this will the Thyatiran conqueror have a share. This could never be our work.

We are reminded of David's last words in the promise to the conqueror in Sardis. He confesses the names of the conquerors of his host and blots out the names of those who are vanquished (2 Sam. 23). So will the "mighty man" who conquers in Sardis be rewarded. His name will not be blotted out but confessed before the Father and the messengers. Our names are not in the book of life, hence they cannot be blotted out. Christ Himself is our life.

The promise to the Philadelphian conqueror brings to mind the magnificent temple built by Solomon with its wonderful columns, "Jachin and Boaz". A place in millennial worship seems to be their reward, as well as a title to the New Jerusalem. Neither of these would be any inducement to one who knows the place which has become ours in Christ.

The Laodicean conqueror having most to meet, will reap the richest reward. The allusion to Israel's kings leads on to the future King of kings. A seat on His throne, association with Him in the administration of that kingdom is the desert of those who dare to stem the tide of Laodicean apostasy.

All of these promise, from life to a place of privilege in the Kingdom, are confined to the conquerors. They are not promised to any of the unfaithful members of the synagogue. *Not one of them can be realized by a member of the body of Christ*, for they are all in a sphere foreign to our expectations. All are fulfilled on earth. Most of them have to do with that kingdom which is the chief subject of this scroll. A place of rule in that kingdom can never be the portion of the nations, for it is the time of Israel's rule over the nations.

THE SECOND PROPHETIC PORTION

The twenty-second chapter of this scroll should have commenced at the sixth verse. There the visions end, and the prophetic strain is resumed. "The God of the spirits of the prophets" takes up the subject of the whole scroll and its relation to His slaves.

The time element in this final chapter is important to its proper understanding. At first John is represented as being present and beholding the holy city. Then, in the third verse, there is a change in the tense: all is *future*. The vision has ended and John reverts to Patmos. From this point he views the far off future.

But when we enter the prophetic section the future is no longer before us. All is present. His coming cannot be postponed to that far off day. The whole course of events recorded in the scroll is in review.

The spirit of this concluding section is the same as its counterpart. Even the prospect of His return is associated with service, for He says, "*My wage is with Me, to pay each one as his work is*". *They* rinse their robes to gain the right to enter the city. Those whose *conduct* unfits them for it, will find no place in the city. The water of life alone is free. Yet even those who have a part in that future bliss may lose it by tampering with this scroll. It is as their Lord that they look for His coming.

All this will be very precious to those of the Circumcision for whom it is intended. It may appeal to the legal church goer of today, but it falls far short of the favor which is ours in Christ Jesus.

A. E. K.

[**UNSEARCHABLE RICHES, FEBRUARY, 1921**]
[**BEING THE THIRD NUMBER OF VOLUME TWELVE**]

EDITORIAL

ONCE more we are constrained to thank God for bringing back our beloved brother Gelesnoff from the brink of the grave. For some weeks his condition has been very critical, and the doctors gave up all hope of his recovery. But the Lord has spared him for us once more, and we trust will restore him to such health and strength as will be needed to carry on his studies.

He has gone through a terrible siege of suffering. There seems to be no immediate danger, but he is still in a very serious condition.

At last accounts he had suffered several severe spells, but has come safely through them.

WE have a purchaser for Dr. Bullinger's "Figures of Speech Used in the Bible" and "Key to the Psalms". Anyone knowing where these works can be obtained will confer a favor by letting us know.

To accommodate our friends in England, an account has been opened with Barclay's Bank, Ltd., 54 Lombard St., E. C., 3, London, in the name of A. E. Knoch. The credit thus established will be used until the rate of exchange has become normal again.

A FEW copies of the article on the seventh of Romans, entitled "Grace", reprinted from the December issue, will be supplied at 10 cents each.

MAY we ask our readers to unite with us in thanksgiving that, by His grace, the second instalment of the CONCORDANT VERSION has been printed and is ready for delivery. It consists of Paul's epistles, from Ephesians to Philemon. Space would fail us to tell of the toil and the trials which have paved every step of the way. At times they have seemed beyond human endurance. Yet His grace has been sufficient and He has overruled the opposition of the enemy.

The notes contain an introduction to each epistle as well as to each group. The literary framework of each letter will help to get a grasp of its contents. This instalment is, in some ways, the most important of all, as it contains those epistles which are especially for us to-day. The next instalment, Romans to Galatians, is well under way. We request special prayer that the heavy burden and multiplying difficulties may be met in God's own way and in His own time.

May we have the earnest co-operation of all who love His word in its purity in making this work known to His saints? We desire to hasten its publication, but this necessarily depends on the support which is accorded it.

Two editions of the Version have been discontinued, as there was not enough call for them to warrant their issue. These are the Version only and the Version with Notes. Subscribers to these have been sent the complete edition, which we hope will be acceptable.

OUR readers will rejoice with us at the publication of "Is Hell Eternal? or, Will God's Plan Fail" by Charles H. Pridgeon, President of the Pittsburgh Bible Institute. (Funk & Wagnalls Co., New York. 333 pages. \$1.75 net). A firm stand is taken for the salvation of all,

based on the doctrine of the eons as revealed in the scriptures. We earnestly hope that, with the wide publicity accorded it by the publishers, it will be used by God to bring this glorious truth to many hearts. It would be a great blessing even if it provokes discussion or opposition. Many other books on this subject, lacking the light which the doctrine of the eons brings, have never seemed sufficiently conclusive to carry conviction to those who wish a scriptural basis for their belief. Texts could be given, but there were always counter texts which nullified them. Our present translations are woefully contradictory on this most important theme.

The following criticism is given because it is of special interest to our readers who have become familiar with the five fold division of the eonian times.

A point of special interest to us is the addition of another eon. The new one is prefixed to the five to which we are accustomed. The evidence adduced to support this is that the word for “beginning”, both in the first of Genesis and in Hebrews 1:10, is in the *plural*.

It is usually conceded that *b'reshith*, the first word in Gen. 1:1, as it now stands in our Hebrew texts, is singular in form. It is so translated by the Septuagint, though they used the plural for the same word in Amos 6:1. It comes from the Hebrew word meaning *head*. Whenever it is used of time it is always singular. It may, perhaps, have the collective sense of a period of time, but never of two or more distinct sections of time. In Deut. 11:12 we have “the *beginning* of the year”. In Jer. 26:1; 27:1; 28:1 and 49:34, “In the *beginning* of the reign of”. Job 42:12 speaks of the *beginning* of Job in contrast with his end. In none of these instances are we confined to an instant of time, yet neither may

we think of them as more than one epoch or division of time.

This, however, is not vital. The great truth that the eons as a whole have both a beginning and an end is the important point. Once this is apprehended the way is open for the final victory of our Lord over the forces of evil and the ultimate salvation of all.

Hebrew 1:10, however, has the plural form. But the word *archee* is not confined to one idea. It means "beginning" only when it refers to time. The common version translates it *magistrates* (Lu. 12:11), *principalities* (Ro. 8:38). Its root thought is ORIGIN. In time it denotes *origin* or *beginning*. In rule it stands for *sovereignty* or *suzerainty*. Hebrews 1:10 is a parallelism, so we ought to be able to decide from the context, which ought to be used. The *earth* corresponds with the *heavens*. *Founding* corresponds with *works*. His *hands* corresponds with *sovereignities*, not with *beginning*. The means He used, not the time, is demanded by the context. The form of the plural occurs in three other passages, Lu. 12:11, Eph. 6:12, and Col. 2:15, in each of which it is associated with the word *authorities*, hence must mean *sovereignities*, not *beginnings*. Heb. 1:10 ought to be rendered, consistently with the other occurrences of the word and in harmony with its own context,

"Thou, Lord in accord with sovereignities, dost
found the earth,

And the heavens are the works of Thy hands.

This is further confirmed in that the subject of the passage is the superiority of God's Son over the other messengers or angels, who are here spoken of as sovereignities.

We are glad to learn from the Author that letters are coming in from all directions regarding the book. May God use it for His glory!

WE have been requested to announce the publication of a book on "The Ethic Value and Divine Sonship of Jesus the Messiah" by Phil Wilson, 163 Holm St., Glasgow, Scotland (one shilling), so that our readers "may have opportunity, as advanced saints of God, to examine, test, prove for themselves the truth of its contents." We do not, as a rule, deem it wise to review what does not appeal to us, for we do not wish to give needless offense. The main line of teaching in this book is a denial of the virgin birth of our Lord Jesus. Those passages which give a detailed account of it are discarded as being spurious. The reasoning that, as He was the Son of *Man*, He must have been the Son of Joseph fails before the fact that the word for *Man* is not *Aneer*, a man as distinct from a woman, but *Anthroopos*, human, as distinct from animal or spirit beings. It should be rendered Son of Mankind, as in the CONCORDANT VERSION. And the further reasoning that, as He was the Son of Joseph, He must have had Joseph for His father in fact, is not borne out by the usage of the word son. He was the Son of David, because He is the heir of David. Sonship does not necessarily imply birth. We are sons of God by creation, not by birth. So was Adam. In Luke, where He is called the Son of Joseph, the term so frequently used in Matthew is absent. The same wording is used of Adam's relation to God. The phrase "Son of Joseph" is carefully qualified by a parenthetical phrase, *oos enomizeto*, which shows that it was based on law or custom, rather than nature.

Some years ago an article was promised on this subject. It was based on a preferred reading of John 1: 13: "*Who* was begotten, not of bloods, neither of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God". This, we believe, refers to our Lord Jesus, and not to the believer. There is much evidence for this and the context demands it also. The manuscript was, however, lost in the mails, and has never been rewritten.

Let us avoid the natural tendency to go to extremes regarding the Christ of God, remembering that He is unique, being the One *Mediator* between God and mankind, a Man, Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5).

Readings in Romans

READINGS IN ROMANS

WE have a misunderstood Christ in the Gospels, and a misunderstood Apostle in the Epistles. The meaning and intent of their ministries have long been lost to the professing church.

In some respects the New Testament is understood better by the enemies than by the friends of Christianity. The former at least recognize, though they do not understand, the differences and contradictions between Paul's ministry and that of his Master. The latter neither recognize nor understand them.

To radical theorists Christ, of course, was merely a Jewish reformer, a humble peasant whose lofty ideals clashed with the base conditions of his day. If to them Christ was a political reformer, Paul was merely a philosophical dreamer who grafted his philosophical dreaming upon the political cult of Christ. And even in Protestant circles the cry may be heard "Back to Jesus", which being interpreted, means the repudiation of Paul.

To extreme radical theory the conversion of Paul was nothing more than an epileptic fit. To which the reply is obvious: If epileptic fits can transform men's lives as one did Paul's, then epilepsy is labelled wrong when men call it a disease. And if it were insanity, may God make us mad!

But supposing that we accept pro. tem. the idea that Paul had no ground for posing as an apostle, and eliminate all his letters from the New Testament library, what will be the result? In one very important particular

a paralysis of New Testament theology. The Master's prophecies in the Gospels appear chronologically consecutive, and He always spoke as if the events He foretold were but a step or two ahead; certainly within the life-time of the then existing generation. He gave no intimation of a two thousand year pause in prophetic history. In Acts, likewise, Peter seems to promise the immediate return of the murdered Messiah if Messiah's people would only repent. Now when we come to the end of the history contained in that book of Acts, if we have no Pauline epistles to round out and complete and explain that history and the way it ends, we feel like stepping over the edge of a monstrous cliff into a yawning space, and whirling down through inky darkness for two thousand years with never a ray of light to lessen the horror of our flight.

If we eliminate Paul's epistles from the New Testament then we find a void—an aching void—in the continuity of Scripture truth, for apart from Paul's letters we know absolutely nothing of God's program for these Gentile years. Without his letters we lack the bridge that crosses the gap between the kingdom that was and the kingdom that is to be.

If we understand the kingdom character of "Christ after the flesh", and the kingdom character of the Gospels and Acts, we see that when the preaching of that kingdom tapers into a temporary eclipse a logical demand for just such a ministry as Paul's is created; and as both Nature and Revelation abhor a vacuum, when the need existed for a Paul, a Paul was created or converted to meet the need. God was about to introduce a new movement into human history, and He created a new apostolate to introduce it. There is no "evolu-

tion" seen in the calling and equipment of Paul, and this alone is a stumbling-block to the idolators who worship that doctrinal deity.

The reader has perhaps travelled on a train which, owing to the engineer's carelessness, moved in jerks—stopping and starting suddenly, to the discomfort of the passengers, especially at night. God's train of prophetic fulfilment *runs smoothly*, the dispensations do not stop with a jerk, nor do they start that way. The Acts records how God used Paul as an engineer to bring the train of kingdom preaching to a gradual close, and just as gradually inaugurate the new gospel leading up eventually to the Secret of the prison epistles. This transitional period is covered by Acts 13 to Acts 28, and as during this period the epistle to the Romans was written, it is marked by the transitional character of that period.

"The Gospel of Christ," cries Paul, "is God's power to the Jew first". In Ephesians we are informed that *now* the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile has been abolished. But here we see the wall still separating the two, and preserving the distinction which caused the Jew to differ from the Gentile. At that this is an advance over the kingdom as preached in the Gospels. There it was not to "Jews first" but "Jews ONLY". Here it is Jews FIRST but not alone. Expanding grace changes the "only" into an "also". During the Acts Israel was God's prime concern, the Gentiles were an afterthought to Israel. That afterthought is embodied in the "also". How different all this is today? We do not receive our blessings through a nation of earthly priests; we do not look to Israel for mediated grace; for being no longer Gentiles we are no longer dependent upon the Jew.

In many respects the Jew of today is dependent upon the Gentile. If he would know what God is doing while Israel is set aside, he has to go to Gentiles to find out, and if he goes to the inspired literature for himself, while he goes to epistles written by a Jew, he will read these epistles as written to Gentiles. A contrast in this may also be seen in Peter's words to Jewish hearers in Acts 3:26: "Unto you *first* God . . . sent Him to bless you". and Paul's words in Eph. 2:17: "And came and preached peace to you who were afar off, AND to them that were nigh". In the latter quotation peace was preached "to the Gentile first, and ALSO to the Jew".

ALAN BURNS.

TO BE CONTINUED

•

•

LIFE AND PEACE

AGAIN and again in the divine literature we see phrases of power and beauty which breathe contentment and repose. It is as though coming from the fret and jar of city commotion, we enter an old-world garden, rich with fragrant quietude. Immediately the spirit feels the lull of repose, the charm of silence. It is an interlude of calm for the tired or fevered spirit.

In like manner these words of rare intent call us apart from the whirl of life, and bid us rest awhile. And should we luxuriate in the language of Paul, how blessed is the ease of heart and mind! For there is such a wealth of spiritual expression which continually rings true to experience as we open our minds to its power. Truly, "the way of life is above to the wise," and "to be spiritually minded is life and peace".

Amid the surge of city life the brain is crowded with many thoughts, and God is easily forgotten. The hum of commerce and its ant-like concern for the visible and tangible things of earth, tends to submerge the spiritual, so that we ever require the "one thing needful" as our happy portion. Therefore we would fain think often of God, and of the Son of His love, that life and peace may be truly ours.

Life which is life indeed, and peace which is God's own calm! For the people of God this life and peace has ever existed, and is perpetuated in the spiritually minded. It was the exultant portion of the Psalmist. "Thou wilt shew me the path of life! With Thee is

the fountain of life!" And again, "How precious are Thy thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them!"

These thoughts of the infinite One for the children of His choice, are spread as a banquet in the grand area of His Word. There they lie, extending as it were, from valley to mountain, from the mists of early, formative revelation, to the unclouded splendour of the highest peaks of truth. Things spiritual, vibrant with life and peace, and devotion to them an "open sesame" to the mind of God. And the more we are taken up with them the deeper is our joy.

There is a beautiful expression of this desire for God in the sixty-third Psalm. Note the fine sequence:

My soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh longeth for Thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is.

My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise Thee with joyful lips.

My soul followeth hard after Thee. Thy right hand upholdeth me.

Thirst is followed by satisfaction which inspires keener quest. And so, as we find refreshment of spirit, we see beauties unnoticed before, all of which flood our hearts with the consciousness of God. And as we love them for their own sake, just because they reflect the divine, we are truly taught of God. Thus we read with an ever-deepening discernment and appreciation, reveling in the things which make for life and peace.

God alone can soothe the overcharged heart and His quietness expel trouble. "Be still, and know!" Stillness is requisite for knowledge. It is indeed the "one thing needful", so finely chosen by Mary of old. And to be a student of things divine is to cherish the best kind of knowledge, for the choice carries with it a fore-

taste of the life of the ages. Other knowledge may be desirable, and of some value, but it does not impart life and peace.

Things of earth please for the moment, break as a bubble, and pass. But the life of God is deep and strong. Its endless flow is shrined in calm. Paul knew its grand repose when he penned his fine testimony. "I have learned, whatever be my outward experiences, to be content. I know both how to live in humble circumstances, and how to live amid abundance. I am fully initiated into all the mysteries both of fulness and of hunger, of abundance and of want". We comprehend the apostle's attitude as we note another declaration: "For all the promises of God, whatever their number, have their confirmation in Him; and for this reason through Him also 'Amen' acknowledges their truth and promotes the glory of God through our faith."

What enrichment is ours in the beloved One, for who but He can ensure the peace of earth, and the final calm of the wide universe. Limitless wealth and ability is His. Therefore, in this present evil age we should endure, "as seeing Him Who is invisible". And as we mature in faith we restfully fall in with divine appointments. We find it easier to forego cherished plans, largely leaving the shaping of our course to Him.

Our spiritual blessings in the heavenlies constitute our highest call to life and peace. Yet even so, "godliness with contentment is great gain", and there are many humble souls who prove this, to whom higher knowledge has not come. Pure in heart, they see God in so many ways, that their hearts truly sense His rare repose. It is good to know such people of God, for they are life oases in the desert wilds. They just exhale life and peace.

However, apart from such refreshment, we must prove for ourselves the blessedness of God's will. He has revealed so much for head and heart, that we may well be taken up with the unfoldings of His mind. Therein lies our peace as we ascend faith's mountain. And the life of the ages gilds its crest. The foretaste of glory may be ours, however toilsome the ascent. It was so with Paul. See how he pierces the filaments of sense and space. His pen depicts no earthly potentate as holding him in thrall, but gives the higher view that makes for life and peace.

Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus! He looked beyond the passing moves of men to the prime Mover of all things. He kept his vision clear.

O that we might lift our eyes to the great Invisible, that such poise may be ours as to ensure a light regard for things of earth, and a more deeply-rooted affection for things above. For, to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace.

WILLIAM MEALAND

JONAH

THE Book of Jonah resembles, in contents and form, the narratives of the prophets Elijah and Elisha in Kings, rather than the writings of the minor prophets. It contains no denunciatory outburst against Nineveh such as are found in prophetic utterances against the nations. The significant thing in him is his relation to the Assyrian capital. God sends His word to Nineveh. He carries out the enterprise with the utmost energy, and it has an unheard of result. In the centre of the world-empire the message of the true God is heard and believed.

Palestine was situated between two powerful rival empires—Egypt on the west, Assyria on the east. The fortunes of Israel, past and future, are closely identified with these great empires. When the Hebrew people was still in the loins of its progenitor, God said: "Know of a surety that thy seed shall be sojourners in a land that is not theirs" (Gen. 15:13). At the proper time a prophet was sent Egypt to prepare the way. Joseph was that man (Psa. 105:17). At the time Egypt was facing ruin through an impending famine. But God's message to Pharaoh, interpreted by Joseph, averted the danger, and furnished for Israel a nursery and a home. In the course of time Israel was led out of Egypt, crossed the Red Sea, and took its place in the family of nations.

After the lapse of centuries, when the ten tribes revolted against the house of David and set up the worship of the calves, it was revealed that they would be carried away to Assyria (1 Kings 14:15-16). When the time

for Ephraim's denationalization drew near, an ambassador was sent to Assyria to prepare a shelter for the exiles. That ambassador was Jonah. The acceptance of his message by Nineveh averted Assyria's doom and prepared a shelter for the future exiles. As surely as Israel was preserved in Egypt, so surely is she preserved in Assyria. As certainly as she came out of Egypt, so certainly will she come out of Assyria. At the appointed hour Israel will cross the Euphrates (Rev. 16: 12), and resume her station among the nations of the earth.

The Book of Jonah belongs to a transition period. His mission to Nineveh inaugurated a new departure in God's dealings with Israel and the nations. It heralds the advent of a change. It stands at the converging point of two eras—the old and the new. The old order of things was passing away. The new order of things was casting its shadow before it. The nature of the impending changes is conveyed in a parenthetical sentence. "Now Nineveh became a city great unto God" (3:3). The intention of this note is to explain the relation of Jonah's commission to the supreme purpose which controls the destinies of men and nations. The errand to Nineveh was a promulgation of a divine decree ordering a readjustment in the status of the nations. The political equilibrium of the world was to be disturbed. The balance of power was to be altered. Ephraim was to forfeit its preeminence to Assyria. The time had come for the transfer of headship contemplated in the law (Deut. 28:13) to take immediate effect. The fateful hour had struck. Henceforth Ephraim's star must decline. Its fading light was soon to be encompassed and eclipsed by Assyria's rising might.

The foregoing consideration has a vital bearing to an understanding of Jonah's conduct. Failure to see this has thrown a false color over the interpretation of the book and obscured the finest point of its message. It is generally assumed that Jonah fled to the far west because he shared the fatuous popular conception of Jehovah as a *local* power and a *tribal* deity. The truth is, if you accept this popular assumption, you are on a track leading in the opposite direction to the right one. As a fact, Jonah fled, not because he entertained narrow views of Jehovah's power and mercy, but for the very opposite reason—he fled because he believed in the universality of Jehovah's presence and knew the boundlessness of His compassion (4:2).

Why, then, did he flee to the far west? The reason back of his flight was of a temporal rather than doctrinal character. It was a case of moral rather than intellectual aberration. We have seen that Jonah lived in a transition period—an era of political readjustment. The supremacy was passing from Ephraim into the hands of Assyria. Now Jonah was to be the prophet of the new order as he had been of the old. He was to be God's representative at the court of Nineveh as he had been at the court of Samaria. His former ministry won for him fame and fortune. We gather from 2 Kings 14: 25, that Jonah had been the prophet of Ephraim's restoration. He foretold the success of Jeroboam's arms over the Syrians and the restoration of the kingdom to its original power. He had been the apostle of national glory, the guiding genius in the rehabilitation of the country. A revival of the nationalist spirit, of which he was chief instigator, made him a popular idol. When the call to go to Nineveh came to him he appears in high

circles—a man of position, a man of reputation. But now a reaction reversing the tide of national fortunes had set in. The new order came in as a disturbing factor, bringing far-reaching consequences with it. Former conditions were upset, established relations disturbed, social, political, and economic conditions revolutionized. Jonah, the foreteller of royal triumphs and inspirer of royal counsels, was to play the leading part in the enactment of the sad episode in human history which gave over to savages in thought and in action the leadership of the Semitic race, and took it away from the Hebrews. He was to sever all former associations and go to Nineveh, the capital of a hostile nation which menaced the stability of his country, and there perform a mission which he knew would be the first step in the elevation of a rival whose task was to reduce the glorious and powerful kingdom of Israel to an insignificant Assyrian province. Such a mission offended his patriotic feeling; it wounded his national pride. Besides, it involved the loss of social advantage; it ruined his temporal prospects; it broke up the sacred ties of home and country.

The spirit of the times was characterized by bigotry and extreme narrowness. Two capital absurdities—the limitation of divine power to one land and of divine favor to one nation—had become the cardinal tenets of Jewish orthodoxy. Israel believed in the limitation of divine care to her own work and her own border. She looked upon herself as the only child of the human family on whom the Father could gaze with favor. Thus Jonah's new commission was, in the eyes of his contemporaries, a social and religious heresy. It was something which, if disclosed, would ostracize him. It would shake

his prophetic glory; it would destroy his prestige; it would expose him to the charge of inconsistency; it would class him as a pervert, a traitor, a renegade. Was he prepared to proclaim publicly the commission which had been whispered to him privately? As he stands midway between two eras, two forces strive in his breast—the voice of duty and the voice of expediency. On the one hand was the favor of God; on the other was the respect of man. On the one was divine truth; on the other ancient custom. On the one was the vision of a future offensive to his racial pride; on the other was the memory of the past flattering his personal vanity. It was a choice which, on either side, entailed a sacrifice.

Was there a way of avoiding both alternatives? Could not a way be found, a condition created, in which he might at once be true to his call and acceptable to his people? He would like, if possible, to retain the old order of things—to see Ephraim in continued possession of supremacy. But, as time goes on, the new regime becomes more and more evident. It is demonstrated by the logic of events. He surveys the situation from every standpoint. But, from whichever point he beholds it, the same conclusion stares at him from every quarter—the political sun of Ephraim is sinking below the horizon. Ever as he gazes, the star of Assyria grows clearer and clearer. Ever as he ponders, the destiny of this rugged people shines forth with greater splendor. Ever as he meditates, the influences which this empire would wield in world affairs seems more evident, more certain, more irresistible. More and more it assumes the appearance of a fixed law of Providence.

A mode of escape was suggested to him by the very law of God. Did not the national covenants limit the

visible tokens of God's presence to the holy land? The God of Israel never lets His voice be heard, nor His glory seen among the nations. Might not he, once away from the symbols of God's presence, cease to hear His call and eventually forget it? Jonah reflects on this point, and it affords to him a solution of his problem. Might not he avoid both the voice of conscience and the voice of contumely by a flight to heathendom's remotest border? If he could leave every association behind him, if he could toss aside every vestige of Israel, if he could plunge into the very heart of heathendom, would not he interpose a barrier between himself and that Voice Whose call was at once so imperative and so persistent!

So Jonah goes down to Joppa and embarks on a ship bound for Tarshish which is now called Gibraltar. He chose the ship bound for the extreme west—the point most remote from Samaria and Nineveh. He is seeking to forget his former environment; he is endeavoring to drown a Voice by the inpouring of new associations—associations novel and unfamiliar. He launches himself into another world.

But now something happens—something which immeasurably enlarges Jonah's conception of God's providential dealings. That revelation comes to him through the very element through which he was seeking to prevent it—the heathen world.

A furious storm breaks forth. All the winds of heaven concentrate their forces on this ship bound for Tarshish; all the waves of the Mediterranean beat upon her hull. That storm gives rise to a combination of circumstances which prove to demonstration that all the forces of nature are ministers of His pleasure—visible vehicles for the accomplishment of the divine will. The

sea, the winds, the waves, the storm are visible tokens of His presence as truly as the ark of the covenant or the mercy seat. More than this: Jonah perceives that the divine will is not bound by conventional fetters—its designs are carried out as effectively through heathen practices as through the sacred rites of Mosaism. He presides over the lots cast by the heathen sailors as much as over those cast into the bag of the high priest at Jerusalem. The one proves as effective an instrument as the other. He is the Disposer of them both.

And the heathen sailors—how susceptible to divine influence they show themselves! These men without law, untutored in the word of God, actuated by mere natural instincts, living in rough surroundings, show more concern for the safety of God's truant prophet than God's prophet has shown in their welfare. They do all they can to save him. At the risk of their life they make a desperate effort to take him ashore, even after his delinquency became known. How quickly they turn to Jehovah; how earnestly they call upon His name; how eagerly they offer Him presents; how submissively they bow to His decree! Their readiness to serve Jehovah stands out in strange contrast with Jonah's reluctance to obey His voice. It is a mute rebuke to Jonah's pretension, a standing refutation of Jewish claims to superiority.

Jonah is deeply touched. The logic of the situation breaks upon him with irresistible, overwhelming force. He experiences a sudden transformation. He sees a great light. Are these innocent sailors to die for an offense of the prophet of the true God? Is not he the cause of their plight! Has not he brought the storm upon them! Is not this foreign ship spotted on his ac-

count! He wants to reciprocate their magnanimity—to make amends for his misdeeds. By his flight he has endangered their lives. By the sacrifice of himself he will secure their ransom. He will purchase their well-being by an immersion in the waves—an immersion at his own request. This request marks his spiritual expansion—the recognition by his Jewish nature of the common need of man.

Here closes the first scene in the life of Jonah. When the second scene opens we are in a new atmosphere, spiritually as well as geographically. Jonah has learned a great truth—that God is no respecter of persons, that the Spirit of God broods over the heathen world and works out His will among the nations as effectively as in Israel. He has learned the worth of man as man—he has seen that out there, beyond the covenant, in the darkness of pagandom, there live, not vessels of wrath fitted for destruction, but men with consciences and hearts, able to believe in God's word and to hope in God's mercy. He has become convinced that Nineveh is just as precious to God as Samaria. Accordingly, he betakes himself to Nineveh. He stands in her streets and proclaims her danger. He calls her citizens to repentance. He warns them to flee from the wrath to come.

Jonah's proclamation has been, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" It has been entirely effective. A wave of spiritual awakening has swept over the city. All classes have been startled out of the even tenor of their ways, from the king to the beggar. A thorough movement of moral cleansing has been set afoot, from the throne downwards. A fast is proclaimed in the hope of averting the wrath of Heaven. A royal

proclamation calls upon all ranks of society to amend their ways and resolve to lead for the future a better life to receive the mercy of God.

But this moral awakening was essentially heathen. It wore a heathen garb. The fast was a purely Assyrian fast. It had no resemblance whatever to Israel's fasts. It took a heathen form, a Gentile form, a decidedly grotesque form. The rules given were such as betokened a benighted people. Can God accept this heathen fast? Will He accept the natural remorse of conscience? Will He have regard to a heathen ceremony? Can a Ninevite, as a Ninevite, win the heart of God? Jonah has learned that God desired the salvation of Nineveh from an impending doom. But he thinks that Nineveh's deliverance must be accomplished through the established forms of Jewish worship. Surely Nineveh cannot hope to escape destruction while she *remains* heathen. It must become a proselyte. It must offer at a Jewish altar. It must keep the Sabbath. It must receive circumcision. It must accept the laws of Sinai. It must proclaim allegiance to Moses. Surely God will not regard a mere natural religion! He will not accept as an offering the fruits grown on heathen soil. If God pardons Nineveh at all, it must be for Moses' sake, not because Nineveh has heard the voice of secular conscience.

During his sojourn in Nineveh Jonah dwelt in a booth outside the city. The cooling shade of a shrub of wide-spreading leaves afforded him protection from the sultry heat. From this delightful arbor he kept close watch over the city, secretly hoping that somehow it would be wiped out. But forty days pass, and destruction comes not. Jonah is indignant. He complains of God's compassion. He finds fault with the ways of

Providence. He needs a second revelation. The first stage of his deliverance had been accomplished by the storm. From that storm he had emerged enlarged—emancipated from racial pride. There remains one more barrier between him and freedom—he has to be freed from *religious* pride. He has yet to learn that there is one common ground of acceptance with God. He needs deliverance from formalism. He needs to be ushered into the presence of a God without fences, without barriers, without limits. He needs to learn that divine love is self-sufficient—that it can travel by its own wings and reach a heathen city without the aid of Jewish wheels.

That second revelation comes to Jonah through the medium of the gourd. The first revelation had been characterized by an imposing display of grandeur. It had come in the rolling of the waves, the shrieking of the winds, the darkening of the sky. It was witnessed by a crowd of amazed spectators. But this second revelation is marked by quietude and simplicity. It manifests itself in a trifling incident, in trite, commonplace experience. It unfolds itself in the solitude of the desert. We pass from the sublime to the simple. We make a transition from the environment where man feels his insignificance to the environment where man realizes his superiority—from the swelling ocean to the quiet meadow.

While Jonah was waiting to see the fate of the city, a plant of the desert had grown and spread its protective foliage over his booth. One day the heat was particularly oppressive. The sunbeams were converging their fiery shafts on Jonah's head; he felt weary and discontented. He is dissatisfied with the order of things, and wants to die. Suddenly he remembers the gourd

with it cooling shadow. It had engaged his attention and relieved the stress of oppressive thoughts. He will go to that spot and rest under its shadow. But on reaching the spot he finds the gourd is gone; it has faded in the past night; it has been smitten by a worm. Jonah is in a rage. This is the last straw. Everything has conspired to irritate him, to ruffle his feelings. Everything has turned out in bitter disappointment—even this little bit of a desert plant. He feels unable to survive the disappointment. He prays for death.

All at once Jonah hears a voice. It said: "Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd?" Jonah rejoins, "I do well to be angry, even unto death". The voice continues to expostulate. "Are you not in your anger refuting the grounds of your own discontent? You have taken an interest in a plant grown on heathen soil. You accepted the ministration of a plant which was a plant of Nineveh. You did not disdain its shadow because it grew on heathen soil. You did not insist on transplanting it on Jewish soil before accepting its service. No! You eagerly sought its shade because it met your need, because it gratified your craving for refreshment. And shall not God accept the service of Nineveh? Though its fast be a heathen fast, though its cry be a cry of nature, though its repentance be the repentance of an untutored conscience, though its voice be the voice, not of intelligent knowledge, but of dire presentiment, it refreshes My heart, it satisfies My longing for responsive love. By your anger you have vindicated the ways of God".

"Should I not have regard for Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons

that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?" (4:11).

There is no mistaking the grand aim of this book. Its lesson is spelled in letters of fire. Though there be many tongues in the flesh, there is one language of the spirit. There are innumerable creeds, but one common craving of the heart. Weary mortals, creatures of habit and environment, may gaze each on a different star, but through them all, men shall see one golden light. God is the God of all things. He quickens all things. He has a desire for the work of His hands. He claims all prayers as prayers to Him. The unspoken cry of the infant, even the inarticulate cry of the cattle, has to Him the import of prayer. Thus ends the story of Jonah. As we close the book there lingers with us the vision of a great city with its imperial splendor, its toil-worn multitudes, its swarms of neglected children, its multitude of weary cattle, and God's mercy brooding over all!

V. G.

The Unveiling of Jesus Christ

THE PROPHETIC SECTION

INTRODUCTION

FIRST things are important. The introduction to the Prophetic Section is as much a key to its understanding as the general introduction was found to be to the whole scroll.

Before the vision which precedes the seven letters we have a rich prelude, including an invocation, an ascription and a divine response. As these describe to us the characters which God and Christ, as well as His messengers, assume, and define for us the people to whom they are addressed, it will repay us to linger here for a little.

The source of the grace and peace which John invokes upon them is threefold: Jehovah, the seven spirits, and Jesus Christ. A similar grouping is found in 1 Tim. 5:21, where the elect messengers are associated with God and the Lord Jesus Christ. Each one of the three Who are invoked are presented with new and striking appellations. Jehovah is expanded into its Greek equivalent. Jesus Christ is brought before us in His humiliation, His resurrection, and His glorification on the earth.

The two great titles of God which dominate the Hebrew Scriptures are Elohim and Jehovah. The very first sentence of Genesis defines Elohim for us as the One connected with the heavens and the earth. He is the God of *space*.

The universe may be analyzed into two elements: time and space. As it was created out of God we may reasonably expect God Himself to appear in some definite relation to these two essential principles.

This is just what we find in the divine records. Space is associated with Elohim, time with Jehovah. But there is a vast difference between these two elements. Space is stable; time is fleeting, evanescent. What was future yesterday may be past today. The present itself is but the meeting point of the past and the future. This is reflected in the title which stands for time. Too often Jehovah is used as a synonym of Absolute Deity. This is not so in the Scriptures. It is one of God's assumptions which eventually vanishes.

Jehovah is the God of the eons. He is especially associated with the eonian nation, Israel. Throughout the Hebrew Scriptures He is never acknowledged as the God of any other nation. Outside of the Unveiling the Greek Scriptures make no effort to express the significance of the Hebrew name. The title "Lord" is used quite indiscriminately for Jehovah or Adonai. Now, however, there is a systematic effort made to reestablish the old relation between Jehovah and the people with whom He had made the covenant, and this begins by proclaiming His name.

There is considerable divergence in the more modern views as to the pronunciation and derivation of the title Jehovah. As the Jews never pronounced it, and the Massoretic vowels with which it is usually furnished belong either to Adonai or Elohim (which were substituted for it in the oral reading) no one really knows how it was anciently spoken. Names which have probably been derived from it, as Jove, seem to indicate that "Jehovah" may be quite as correct as the modern "Yahweh".

Some take the name as a simple statement of absolute existence from the Hebrew verb *being*. Others derive it from two forms of the verb *to be*, the so-called *future* and *past*. Another explanation, however, just as agreeable to the Hebrew, is in closest accord with the interpretation of the Spirit of God in the Unveiling. This

makes it a compound of three forms of *to be*: *future*, *present* and *past*, or, rather, the nearest approach to this which is possible in Hebrew.

In three passages (Un. 1:4, 8; 4:8) we have all three elements of time brought before us in the effort to render the incommunicable name into Greek. This may appear cumbersome, but it has the great advantage of setting forth each element distinctly and, what is still more important, allows for variation in their order. The following shows the Hebrew components and the variations in the Unveiling.

Hebrew: *He will be—Being—He was*

Un. 1:4, 8: *Being—Who was—Who is coming*

Un. 4:8: *Who was—Being—Who is coming*

Un. 11:17; 16:5: *Being—Who was*

Why this change? Why does a part of the name actually drop off? Are there no critical readings which suggest a restoration to uniformity and conformity to the Hebrew?

There is no reason to believe that these alterations are human errors. Rather, as we examine them, we will find them full of divine truth. Jehovah varies His title to accord with the revelation. In the past all the stress has been laid on His future coming. Hence this element is put first in His name. This continues so long as His advent is viewed from a distance. But when it is imminent the stress is shifted to the great fact that He *is*. When we enter the Unveiling, it is no longer His distant coming, but His powerful presence which the title urges on our attention. To give prominence to this fact, the present tense is rescued from its obscure place in the middle of the title to a forceful position at its front. Thus we have it twice in the introduction to the Prophetic Section.

It is most interesting and illuminating to note how this title is used *after* He *has* come, either in judgment

or blessing. Then the last part of the title is most appropriately omitted. His name becomes simply "Who art and Who wast" (11:17;16:5).

How marvellous is the great incommunicable name of Jehovah! Its preciousness lies, not in an absolute and unyielding tyranny over time, but in its flexible adaptation to the times so that a part of it actually retires when its function has been performed. Who would have Him eternally coming, but never arriving? Would not that be the torture of Tantalus? He is the Coming One only during His absence. That part of His name glorifies Him most by being laid aside. In the eons of the eons the sacred name will be shortened by the fulfillment of its promise. When the times of the eons are past the remainder will doubtless have been fulfilled and give place to the closer and more cordial conception of God which it is calculated to introduce into the hearts of His creatures. One name will then be His, and that name is *Father*.

The association of the seven spirits with Jehovah and Christ has been vigorously contested by almost everyone who seeks to unfold this scroll. As these seven spirits are mentioned in between Christ and Jehovah there is no way of dissociating them. The usual plan is to make them figurative emblems of God's spirit. But such an artifice will not work in the other passages where these spirits are mentioned, nor does it account for the facts. We know that seven spirits, or seven messengers *are* associated with Christ in the execution of these judgments. The seven trumpets and seven bowls are in the hands of messengers. In fact, much more of the ministry of messengers is evident in this scroll than of Christ Himself. Why, then, should they not enter into the introduction and wish grace and peace upon the ecclesias? In the throne scene these seven spirits appear as torches of fire (4:5). On the Lambkin they are seven horns and

seven eyes (5:6). It would be most unfortunate for us to rid the introduction of these seven spirits. Gabriel was probably one of them (Lu. 1:19).

We are told that they are commissioned for the entire earth (5:6). The serpent and the wild beast distribute their world-wide sovereignty to seven heads. They doubtless copy this from the divine administration. In the tenth of Daniel the curtain is withdrawn for a moment and we are allowed a glimpse behind the scenes. We find that even Israel has a "prince" (Dan. 10:21). That this is not Christ is evident, for he is called "one of the chief princes" (Dan. 10:13). God's Anointed could take no such subordinate place (Heb. 1:9).

Then there are the princes of Persia and Javan, or Greece (Dan. 10:20). It is evident that there *are* seven spirits commissioned for the entire earth and these take a most prominent part in this Unveiling. All attempts to ignore or expunge them are unavailing. They are not given the administration of the world to come (Heb. 2:5) but they are the executors of Christ during this judgment era, before Israel is placed at the helm.

Our Lord, Jesus Christ, is here presented, as He usually is in the writings of the Circumcision, with reference to His humiliation, as the Faithful Witness; His resurrection, as the Firstborn of the dead; and His coming glory, as the Suzerain of the kings of the earth. These are earthly honors. His heavenly dignities (with which we are so vitally concerned) have little or no place in this description of Him.

Little is said of the Lord's witness until we come to the writings of John, the same one who received this Unveiling. He speaks of it more than all the other writers. But why, we may ask, is this aspect of His ministry suggested here? Because this is the one great need of the era which is covered by this prophecy. He was a *faithful* Witness—even to death. What better Example

could be set before them? They too, are called upon to bear faithful testimony and, in countless cases, it will cost them their lives.

The *Firstborn* of the dead is another suggestive and comforting title. Death will be robbed of its terrors to a large extent for those who know Him as the Firstborn of the dead. They, too, may look forward to a blessed resurrection if they should lose their lives on account of their testimony.

Indeed, this title goes much further than resurrection. It includes vivification beyond the reach of death. Our Lord was not the first to be raised from the dead. He Himself raised others such as Lazarus. But theirs was but a recall to the life they had before. They were subject to death as before. He and those who are His in His presence will be made alive, or vivified.

And more than this, those who bear faithful witness in that day will not only partake of His life but will share His throne when He becomes the Suzerain of the kings of the earth. "Happy and holy are those having part in the former resurrection: over these the second death has no jurisdiction, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and they will be reigning with Him the thousand years" (20:6).

How precious in their response to the heart of the Lord! "To Him Who is loving us and looses us from our sins by His blood". We are almost tempted to "apply" these to ourselves, for He *does* love us. To prove it, however, He has done far more than release us from our sins. But the next statement we cannot "apply" without serious injury to ourselves as well as the Circumcision for whom it is intended. He "makes us a kingdom and priests to His God and Father". This can be true of Israel *only*. We are no kingdom. We are not priests. If we reign, where are our subjects? Paul could say to the Corinthians, "would that ye *did*

reign!" And if we are priests, for whom do we approach? Thank God, we *all* have access to the Father now and need no priest to hinder our immediate approach to the Father. But in the days of the promised kingdom Israel alone will rule and Israel alone will serve Him in His temple. The other nations will be subordinate and approach through them.

This was His primeval purpose for them, when He called them out of Egypt to Himself. In the wilderness of Sinai Moses was instructed to speak to them as follows: "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto Myself. Now, therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine: And ye shall be unto Me *a kingdom of priests* and a holy nation" (Ex. 19 :4-6).

Though we are not that holy nation, we cannot but echo their ascription, though, perhaps we would change it slightly. "To Him be glory and might for the eons of the eons! *Amen!*"

In view of the consummation (which is not within the scope of this Unveiling) when the Son subordinates Himself and might is no longer needed, we cannot (as current Versions would have us) wish these to be His "forever and ever". They are limited to the eonian times. Beyond them might is not only unnecessary but hints at opposition such as will never mar that ultimate perfection.

"Lo! He is coming with clouds"! What an inspiration this will be to the sorely tried saints in the period which precedes that coming! Upon the same Mount of Olives to which He will come, our Lord gave them a brief account of the very events which are detailed in this scroll (Mt. 24:3-31). "Immediately after the great affliction . . . shall appear the sign of the Son

of Man in heaven, and then shall all the tribes of the land mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory”.

What a sight this will be to the nation which has rejected Him for so many centuries! When they see the marks of His passion, the spirit of grace and supplication will overwhelm them and they will mourn over the past and be in bitterness because of their rejection of Messiah. It will be national—all the tribes of the land will beat their breasts because of Him. Zechariah tells us that, in the day when Jehovah seeks to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem, the whole land shall mourn (Zech. 12:9-14).

Jehovah Elohim interposes at this point to add still other titles which are peculiarly in point in this prophecy. “I am the A and the Z”, (or, as the Greek has it, the Alpha and the Omega, the first and last letters of the alphabet) connects this, the last scroll, with the earliest Hebrew scriptures and all previous revelation. In the Greek the first letter, Alpha, is spelled in full, the last is a single character. Unless this suggests a lingering period of promise with a short, sharp fulfillment it is difficult to account for it.

This appellation is most apt in this connection, for now He proceeds to fulfill the promises given so long before. He will complete what He has started. He will accomplish what He has commenced. He is the Originator and Consummator of His own revelation just as He is the source and goal of the universe.

The introduction to the Prophetic Section has been reviewed. Every detail confirms us in the position that these ecclesias are composed of the sons of Israel. The title, Jehovah, the kingdom of priests, the grieving tribes—all appeals to them but has no point for us.

A. E. K.

THE SCHOOL OF SUFFERING

“THOUGH He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered”. These words form one of the gems of sacred literature, and to the spiritual mind portray the greatness of the Word of Life. They are so phrased as to bring out a wonderful depth of meaning.

“*Though* He were a Son”. Here we have an expression suggesting the supposition that suffering could have taught Him nothing which as a Son He did not know already. The writer had been setting forth the filial relation of our Lord to the Father as an evidence of His exalted dignity. He had contrasted with it the lower claims of prophets, priests, and even angels. His summing up seemed to put Christ at some lofty remove from the conditions of our humanity—to show His essential participation of the infinite, the unchangeable, and the Divine. Then, with bold abruptness, he shows the incarnate Son of God in a state of struggle, endurance, and discipline, that His pure human spirit may thereby be moulded into perfect oneness with the mind of God. Therefore are the words inscribed:

“*Though* He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered”. And the grandeur of it all is, that to the believer, every “*though*” has its “*yet*”. “*Though* our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day”. “*Though* He slay me, yet will I trust in Him”. In the same strain, the prophet Habakkuk exults with Paul and Job: “*Though*

the fig tree shall not blossom, nor fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and fields shall yield no meat; even flock and herd shall be wanting. *Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation!*"

What learning was His! Foreknowing, choosing, feeling all. Yet He came. Knowing as God, He came to know as man. He not only looked down from heaven, but came that He might, as man, look up. Well might the centurion exclaim, "Truly, this man was the Son of God!"

How near He came to the human spirit, sounding all its springs and depths. There was no Eden for Him. It was in the wilderness that He realized the attack of the adversary, when it seemed as if disobedience would relieve hunger, attract admiration, and secure the kingdoms and glory of this world, while obedience held no reward but oppression, obscurity, suffering and shame.

"In that He Himself suffered, being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted". There was no aloofness in the sympathy of Christ. He came near with touch of love and look of compassion. And there was virtue in touch and look. How He displayed the true dignity of man when "He took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town". And what expressiveness there must have been in His look, when, beholding the rich young man, He loved him. Think, too, of that impressive scene at the gate of Nain, where, with look of compassion, "He came and touched the bier". There indeed was sympathy, and power to help.

The things which He suffered called for the school of Nazareth. And so, in village obscurity, without miracle or sign, He patiently waited, and learned in quiet

obedience. Lost to the sight of the great world, willing to be forgotten, He bore with all the stigma of such a life. Yet Nazareth was the best school for Jerusalem.

Do we complain of lack of recognition? Do we yearn for an audience of interested listeners to the whole truth of God? Think of Nazareth, and learn the lesson of contented forbearance. Through all the discipline we may hear, though faintly, the distant throb of God's triumphal music. And so we wait, even for His Son from heaven.

All the way through, from Nazareth onward, our Saviour learned in a sphere of suffering.

"Cold mountains, and the midnight air
Witnessed the fervour of His prayer."

Days of toil and weariness, shadowed often by scorn and ingratitude, yet He held on His way, for to Him the will of God was best.

And for all who would have the mind of Christ, such discipline is necessary. Only thus can we advance in heaven's school. Unbroken pleasure and prosperity would leave us in ignorance of the highest and best in God's sight. And because we are sons, we must thus learn. Not for us the purple, and sumptuous fare, if we would be like Him. Our God will give us joy, but we should let it come from Him. It is sweeter and better that way. Even Christ pleased not Himself. And, "though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich".

Here was obedience, indeed. Love impelled, and grace effected, the great transition from riches to poverty, that we might be lifted to those high, celestial courts, so royally graced by His presence. And since it became Him, so to stoop and learn, it becomes us in

lower measure to learn the needful lessons of obedience. To obey is not easy. It is difficult to keep the demands and claims of our lower nature in subordination to the great purpose of our spiritual being. The wiles of the Adversary, too, are so many and so subtle, that were it not for suffering in some form, we would fall an easy prey to his devices.

It is the privilege of our position to be learners in the school of God, where all the lessons are adapted to individual requirement. And there is always point and purpose in such tuition. What is called for in the learner is the perception of divine purpose in the ordeals of life. Detachment from the merely human in all its phases, with thought and sense alive to God, is the desirable lesson of all our days of discipline.

It was thus with men of old. With Joseph in the prison, and with Job beside his ruined home. John, the exile in Patmos, and Paul, prisoner at Rome, were lonely souls whom the fires of suffering tempered to noble purpose, to an appreciation at close range of the things of God.

Above all, think of Christ's utter detachment from the foibles of humanity. Yet how real His sympathy and understanding, how grand His self-renouncing love, "that cared alone for needs of others, never for its own". And how near He came to the plain man. The man himself was always His great objective. External trappings held no charm for Him. His powers were used for human need in all its urge and stress. See how, at Bethesda, He breaks in on the selfishness of the world. The cripple had just declared his friendless state: "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool, for while I am coming, another steppeth down before me". Then, with-

out any display or palaver, the great Physician says, "Rise, . . . and walk!" Here was sympathy and power in perfect union.

Well may Paul entreat us by the gentleness and self-forgetfulness of Christ. And, even as He learned in the school of suffering, the blessedness of perfect obedience to the will of God, so may we, in humbler measure, be instructed by the arrows of adversity. "Whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth". Such a thought takes the sharpness from the dart, and imparts the insight which discerns through all, a purpose tinged with triumph.

Now, the school of many stages,
Toilsome, tedious, strange and long;
Then, the joy of glorious ages,
Crowned with Love's own victory song.

WILLIAM MEALAND

THE DISRUPTION

THERE are many methods of determining the meaning of a word. The safe and satisfactory course is to use as many as can be brought to bear upon any given expression, avoiding those which are obscure or open to question. The verb *kataballo* may be approached from many angles. Let us consult some of them.

The usage of the word in the Scriptures is based on its meaning in the Septuagint. In this Greek version it is used to translate nine different Hebrews words. These are

1. *Dingah*, tears (Isa. 16:9).
2. *Hippil*, cast down (2 Sam. 20:15; 2 Ki. 3:19, frequently).
3. *Hahras*, pull down (Job 12:14; Ezek. 26:4).
4. *Hishpeel*, humble, lay low (Isa. 26:5).
5. *Nahdash*, desert, (Ezek. 29:5; 31:12).
6. *Nahthatz*, tear down (Ezek. 26:9).
7. *Palnatz* break (Job 16:14; Prov. 25:28).
8. *Shahghath*, corrupt, destroy (Ezek. 26:4).
9. *Sahgam*, hate (Job 16:9).

A study of these Hebrew words and the passages in which they are rendered by *kataballo* shows clearly that the etymological meaning—DOWN-CASTING is borne out by the usage in the Scriptures which were used by our Lord and His disciples. This is the meaning they would attach to it. Hence they would understand Him as speaking of the CASTING DOWN of the world.

The one passage which is thought to contradict this idea is Heb. 11:11. Now this is precisely that character of an occurrence which should *not* be given a decisive voice in this matter. The general lack of knowledge of the subject involved, and its delicacy has deterred us from a definite statement as to its bearing on this

subject. Since it is used, however, to annul all the other evidence we may be pardoned for speaking briefly of its significance.

In the first place it does *not* speak of birth. Sarah was enabled for the CASTING-DOWN of *seed*, and this at a time of life when nothing but a miracle would account for it. The physiologists speak of this casting down of seed from the ovaries as a DISRUPTION. We must refer the reader to them for the particulars. It is in perfect accord with the usual meaning of the term.

As a matter of fact, it was while studying this passage in its physiological aspect, and finding the word *disruption* used as its physiological equivalent, that the word disruption was first associated with *katabolee* in those discussions concerning it which have since arisen.

If, then, the etymology, the usage in the Septuagint, the usage in ten out of eleven passages in the Scriptures are agreeable to the idea of a disruption, and the eleventh passage refers to an event which is actually so called by a writer on physiology who describes it, why should we hesitate to acknowledge this meaning?

To this we might add the instructive use made of it in the introduction to the second book of the Maccabees (2 Mac. 2:23-29). He speaks of his *unorganized* notes by this term, comparing them to the material for a house before it is put together.

But the crowning proof lies in the application of this meaning to the passages in which it occurs. As has been previously said (Unsearchable Riches, Vol. 1, page 266):

In Heb. 9:26 we read in our version; "For then must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world, but now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself". But it is manifest that He did not appear "in the end of the world". And likewise it is manifest that there was no necessity for His suffering consequent upon the "foundation" of the world. What was there in *that* which demanded His sacrifice?

But if we read, "Since then He must often suffer

from the *disruption* of the the world, i.e., since sin's entrance, we can trace the connection which the word "for" leads us to expect.

It borders on blasphemy to argue that God's work in founding this world was of such a nature as to demand the suffering and sacrifice of Christ. But it is a most solemn and wholesome truth that sin wrought disaster that it not only brought suffering, but called for the suffering of Christ to heal its mortal wound. In closest accord with this we read that the Lamb was foreordained *before* and was slain *from* this disruption (1 Pet. 1:20; Rev. 13:8).

Now the Lamb speaks of Christ as a sacrifice. Again we ask, what sacrifice was needed to atone for God's perfect work? But how grand it is to know that even *before* this disruption God had appointed a Lamb to suffer; and that, in His sight the Lamb was slain the moment sin appeared. May we not see this pictured in the lamb He slew in Eden's garden to clothe our guilty parents?

Hebrew 4:3 furnishes us with another notable occurrence. We read "... though the works have been taking place from the disruption of the world ...". What works are here spoken of? The very next verse tells us: "For He spoke in a certain place concerning the seventh day on this wise: 'And God did rest in the seventh day from all His works' ". This undoubted reference to Gen. 2:2 tells us that the works referred to are those of the seven days of the first chapter of Genesis. But if this be true, how can it be that they were finished "from the foundation of the world"? The foundation of the world occurs in Gen. 1:1, and the works were not undertaken until after the disruption of the original creation as recorded in the second verse, where we are told that it *became* (not "was") waste and void.

It is strange English (and just as strange Greek) to speak of works being "finished *from*". If it were said that they were finished *at* that date we would grasp the sense. "Finished from" is not intelligible. But

if we say that they were taking place from the disruption of this world's system, we are not only assigning each term a definite meaning, but we are strictly in harmony with the facts of the case.

It is clear that the works from which God rested were not the works of creation in the beginning, but those of restoration, after this perfect creation had been overthrown. The foundation of the world was not laid in any of the seven days. It is, therefore, impossible that these works took place or were finished previous to this time.

On the other hand it is clear that they began to take place dating *from* the disruption which destroyed the original creation. In fact there was no occasion for these works until the disruption had marred all.

But the grandest occurrence of our word is in Eph. 1:4. We were selected in Christ before the disruption of this world's system *when we were* holy and without a blemish in His very presence. The A. V. rendering "that we should be" is without any warrant whatever. Literally it reads "to be", but with no thought of contingency whatever. So then, before sin came on the scene to play its horrid part, God selected us, that is, chose us *for Himself*. And this selection was entirely uninfluenced by sin, and ever since, in Christ, He sees us thus.

How marvelous is this thought! His plans and counsels for the earth seem all to date *from* the disruption which sin wrought (Matt. 13:35; 25:34; Rev. 17:8). But two things find their place *before* that catastrophe: the love God bears His Son (John 17:24) and the selection of the members of the body of His Christ. These members are indeed last and lowest as to time and rank on earth, but they were first of all mankind in His purpose and will be first again when He begins to reveal His glory; yes, and will be highest in the final consummation.

A. E. K.

[UNSEARCHABLE RICHES, APRIL, 1921]
[BEING THE FOURTH NUMBER OF VOLUME TWELVE]

MICAH

MICAH, according to the heading, was at work contemporaneously with Hosea, Joel, and Amos. These three prophets have pictured the Assyrian expeditions against the holy land. We have learned from them that Samaria would fall in the conflict; that Judah would carry on the struggle; and that eventually Assyrian ascendancy comes to an end before Jerusalem's walls. These prophets are conscious of the complete superiority and future of the Davidic house in conflict with this world power; they see the Davidic kingdom rehabilitated in its pristine glory. They affirm that the path to the exalting and glorifying of Judah lay right through the scourge of Assyrian domination.

In Micah the Assyrian crisis tends toward a personal consummation. The central figure of his prophecy is a *man*. Judah's fondest hopes—victory in war, peace and good government, protection for the poor, sympathy with the suffering of the people, but especially the righteous among them, fidelity to the truth, a conscience for the people's sin, a bearing of the people's misdeeds and a travail for their spiritual renewal—all these are focused upon a scion of the house of David—a victor, a ruler, a prophet, a martyr.

The history of nations, as read by students, is a story of slow movements and mighty upheavals. Long periods, marked by the slow decay of once useful institutions through failure to adjust themselves to changing conditions, are upheaved by revolutionary shocks. The old order is swept away in outbreaks of violence, and, out of

the bloody cataclysm, emerges a new order, more pliant and equitable, more suited to the conditions and needs of the time.

The Book of Micah presents just such a transition period in the career of Judah. It is a drama of a revolution in three acts. There is first a glimpse of the old, decrept order on the eve of its disruption. It is a period of criticism and vision. There is a feeling of general discontent; loud protests against the corruption of religious and ecclesiastical institutions are heard. Uncertainty in regard to the future and dim presentiment of disaster mingles with vague dreams of new things. It looks as if the transition from the old order to the new might come of itself. Then a sudden catastrophe, in the form of an Assyrian invasion, gives a new turn to the situation. The vision pales before a vast conflagration. The prophet disappears before a mad mob of wreckers. Panic, excitement and lawlessness prevail. But in this fracas a strong character is forming and men, by the very anarchy, are being taught, in preparation for him, the necessity of law and order. Then ensues the crowning act—the appearance of the *man* who evolves order out of chaos. He drives away the invaders, reclaims his people to the faith of their fathers, restores peace and harmony at home and becomes renowned abroad “unto the ends of the earth”.

We have seen in Jōnah that, by divine appointment, the leadership has been given over to Assyria. Micah delineates the times of Assyrian supremacy, from the first passage of arms which established its leadership, down to the time of its collapse before Jerusalem’s walls. The working out of the theme is best conveyed by detailed analysis.

Title: The historic period covered—1:1.

1. The Assyrian campaign that wipes out Samaria and humiliates Judah—1:2-3:8.

2. The Conflict of Assyria with Judah: political—
3:9-5:15.

3. The Conflict of Assyria with Judah: religious—
6:1-7:20.

First we get a general view of the whole period of Assyrian supremacy in its relation to the two houses of Israel. The invading tide, set in motion by God Himself, rolls on from nation to nation; gains impetus in its advance toward the holy land; carries off Samaria; and reaches up to the very gate of Jerusalem (1:2-3:8).

Then, in a special and more extended review, Judah's contest with Assyria is presented in its two aspects—the political and the religious. In its political aspect the crisis takes the form of a contest between two rival powers. Trooping enemies are about to strike the final blow, but one from little Bethlehem proves a mighty power against the Assyrian. The invading tide is repelled, and recedes back to its source. The former dominion returns to the daughter of Zion. The diminished nation is as irresistible as the dew, as mighty as the lion (3:9-5:15).

The religious aspect of the crisis takes on a forensic form. Jehovah has a contention with His sinful people. The mountains—Ebal and Gerizim, where Israel, as a nation, assumed the obligations of the law—are appealed to as witnesses. God Himself arraigns: He recites His acts of mercy from the exodus to the crossing of the Jordan. The defendant people tremblingly ask what reparation can be made. Their answer brings out the cause of defection—zeal for law. In divorcing the form of the law from its essence they lapsed into a barren routinism of ceremonial performance. And now, as Jehovah arraigns, their only thought of making amends is by redoubling ceremonial zeal. The mountains as judges pronounced the essence of the law: "He showed thee, O man, what is good; and what does Je-

hovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God''? (6:1-8).

The trial is over. The nation is convicted. The sentence is about to be pronounced. But, in this crisis, one is found who, having met the law's requirement, is a fit instrument for the carrying out of the divine pleasure. When Jehovah's voice calls to the city, he willingly responds. The stroke of God falls upon him; he is stricken with a serious illness. But his faith remains unshaken. By his righteousness he averts threatened destruction. By his submissive suffering in trial he wins for himself a position of peculiar honor in the sight of all nations and brings about the spiritual renaissance of his people.

1.

The opening sentence calls upon all the peoples to hear, and enjoins the inhabitants of the land to take to heart Jehovah's testimony concerning the evil which has been decreed (1:2). The impending calamity is represented as a descent of God from heaven. The whole earth is convulsed at His presence. The great commotion which agitates the nations has its origin in Israel (1:5). In fact, the apostasy of the two sister kingdoms Judah and Ephraim is the cause of the upheaval. The capitals of the two kingdoms are centers of idolatry and their influence has corrupted the people. The provinces have taken their morals from the capitals. Samaria, with its idolatrous worship, is particularly guilty, and its downfall is announced (1:2-7).

The evil pictured in vision as a descent of God from heaven is realized in experience as a foreign invasion. The invading foe like a tidal wave, sweeps irresistibly forward. Samaria is engulfed; her kings are fallen; her population is carried into exile. The tide rolls onward and overflows Judah. One after another the for-

tified cities fall to the invader; the heathen hosts encamp at the very walls of Jerusalem (1:8-16). Here the prophet breaks off to denounce social corruption and prick the bubble of delusive hopes. In two sets of addresses he attacks alternately the two classes directly responsible for the fall of the once glorious and powerful kingdom of Israel—its unjust rulers and time-serving prophets. The oppressing rulers are evicted from their lands; the people forfeits its position as Jehovah's people; a night of no vision descends on the false prophets. But Micah is strengthened by God to declare the sin of Israel (2:8-3:8).

Between the two sets of addresses directed against civil and ecclesiastical authorities there is an interruption (2:12, 13). The sombre tone of denunciatory threats is momentarily suspended to make room for a brighter vein. A bright vision of restoration breaks upon the seer's gaze. He sees Judah, restored in its entirety, joined by the survivors of Ephraim, the two feeding together as one flock. A commotion among the nations whither they have been carried, furnishes an opportunity of escape, and they march out with Jehovah as king at their head.

2.

Samaria has disappeared in the mist of exile. Micah now returns to trace the vicissitudes of Judah. He denounces national corruption. The whole social fabric is gangrened with dishonesty and violence. The judges are unjust; the priests are mercenary; the prophets are venal. Yet all alike are confident of God's presence and scout the very idea of danger, even though the kingdom is on the very verge of dissolution. Judah is unfit for divine service. Judgment must first refine it. An enemy will grievously afflict it, but out of the deepest

humiliation the light of a new day will dawn. Beyond the pending judgment lies a glorious future. Zion, at present oppressed and despised in its abasement will be exalted, and the nations will flow unto her. From Jerusalem the decrees will issue to the nations. Strong and powerful nations will send delegations to mount Zion to inquire of Jehovah's pleasure. In particular, their quarrels will be settled by His judicial decisions; they will acquiesce to His verdicts, instead of asserting their right by force. Thus a season of undisturbed peace will prevail. The prosperity and peace of former days will return to the daughter of Zion (Mic. 3:9-4:8).

Micah has outlined the divine method of procedure. On the strength of it he makes an appeal for hopefulness in trouble. He draws two companion pictures of the path lying before Judah. Both pictures rest on the common figure of child-birth (4:10; 5:3). Judah's agony is not hopeless—out of its travail a new future will be born. Zion in its present time of anguish is like a travailing woman—full to the brim, awaiting the future to be born, but in travail and pain, until it is born. Before her lies the anguish of exile. Her sons will be deported as far as distant Babylon, but they will be rescued thence. The armies of the nations are assembled against Zion, only as sheaves are brought to the threshing floor to be trodden. Suddenly the daughter of Zion will arise. The stress of adversity awakes in her a latent martial prowess—she pounces upon the attacking nations and breaks them in pieces. In this hour of triumph the voice of the king, who all but perished in the crisis, resounds over the vast, spoil-laden battle-field—"I will devote their gain unto Jehovah, and their substance to the Lord of the whole earth!" (4:9, 10).

Assured of victory, the prophet hurls defiance at the enemy. "Bring up all available troops! Press closer the siege! Take courage from the illtreatment which my people heap upon their king!" Our deliverer

is at hand. Out of little Bethlehem one destined by God to be ruler in Israel will arise. His coming has been foretold from the foretime; his advent has been in view since the days of the age, viz., the time when the promise of the throne was made to David. Therefore, because the hour for the elevation of this ruler has not yet come, the downtreading of this people can only be temporary, continuing up to the definite point of time when its grievous sufferings issue in a blissful birth.

Divine power and gentleness unite in this ruler. Thus in him the Lord reveals Himself in His essence. The captives found among the nations return and dwell securely under his sceptre. His greatness is then acknowledged over all the earth.

The position of commanding influence which he has won for himself enables him to secure and maintain peace. This divinely appointed ruler, the one whom God upholds, will vanquish the Assyrian when he invades Judah. Besides, help will arise from another quarter. While the Assyrian is tied down in the west, seven, nay, eight princes of nomadic peoples will raid Assyrian territory, and attack the empire in its vital part. The power of feeble Judah will thus be sevenfold superior, and is compared on the one hand, to fruitful dew, and on the other, to the most terrible beast of prey. Under both aspects the nations will come to know God's people.

"The posterity of Jacob shall be among many peoples as dew from Jehovah . . . as a lion among the beasts of the forest" (5:7-8). The dew suggests not only the idea of countless numbers, but also, as in the second figure, the beneficent effect produced, and at the same time the idea of higher origin. As the dew falls from heaven without being dependent on any man, so Judah will come on the nations as a blessing of unworldly origin, and also, with the irresistible power peculiar to the kingly lion among all beasts. With this prospect

of certain victory, the king is urged to advance against the enemy. "Let thy hand be lifted up above thine adversaries, and let all thine enemies be cut off!" (5:1-9).

This irresistible power to be displayed through Judah is wholly spiritual. Its prestige among the nations is not to be upheld by force. Martial power is abolished in the holy land. The fortified cities, in which confidence had hitherto been placed, are razed. A purging process goes hand in hand with the abolition of military force. Witchcraft and idolatrous practices are weeded out. No noxious influences are allowed to remain in the land. Through the exercise of this superior, peaceful energy Judah's enemies are reduced to submission, and the ravages of the invasion undone (5:10-15).

3.

In the foregoing delineation of Zion's ordeal our attention is drawn to a distinctive feature—the part played by the king. In the crisis precipitated by the Assyrian invasion he figures in the double role of sufferer and deliverer. His experience is unusual, unique, distinctive. As a sufferer, he is the target for friend and foe. His predicament occasion perplexity in the city (4:9); his maltreatment at the hands of the people encourages the aggressions of the foe (5:1). As a deliverer, he is a benefactor of both his people and the nations. He drives off the Assyrian, rescues the captives of his people, and secures peace to the nations. The separate features of abasement and exaltation are exhibited at greater length, and in a more perfect combination, in the concluding section.

Like the martial contest, the religious contention issues in a personal consummation. Jehovah's contention with Judah narrows itself down to God's dealing with one man. The forensic scene enacted before the mountains, shifts to the city (6:9), and is there carried for-

ward between Jehovah and the man of resolve; the guilty people and its recreant princes recede to the background. In the course of the contention the man of resolve is smitten with sickness; the stroke of God falls upon him. Meanwhile the city is reduced to the last extremity (6:14-16). This is the day of Zion's perplexity (7:4). In this hour of suspense the man of resolve appears as a mourner grieving over the waywardness of the people. There is a cleavage between him and the masses. Like a solitary cluster of grapes remaining on the vine after vintage, he alone stands for right. He appears as one who is denied his liberty by underlings, who in some acts made him their unwilling agent. Despised by the people, taunted by the foe, smitten of God, stricken with a grievous sickness, he sits in a solitary chamber like an outcast. Nevertheless, he is a prisoner of hope. He awaits the passing of the indignation, the vindication of his righteousness, and the defeat of the foe (7:1-10).

At last the darkness is over. Light dispels the gloom. The dawn of the new morn ushers the day of Zion's rebuilding (7:11). The whole situation is reversed. The decree which elevated the enemy is repealed. His former oppressors—Assyria and Egypt—send deputations to entreat his favor. The princes of Judah make their obeisance, and bid him extend his protecting rule over the ravaged territory of Samaria. The nations are reduced to submission and entreat the favor of Israel's God. Those who had traduced him owe their acceptance before God to his intercession. God responds with a deliverance as complete as that from Egypt. The man of resolve exults in the glorious deliverance, and celebrates the pardoning, covenant-keeping God.

In Micah's representation of Judah's trial we meet with a startling paradox. The nation is at first represented as frightened, trembling, panic-struck (4:9). The next moment it appears full of energy, bold as a

lion (5:8). This striking contrast is a stroke of prophetic art. Judah is an instrument to display God's glory, whose strength is in God alone, and it must be shown that it has no natural strength. The object is to show a vessel timid by nature made brave by grace. We see at the outset Judah as nature made her—a weak, abject, trembling figure. We see a people paralyzed with terror in the presence of the foe, speechless and prostrate before a danger it is powerless to avert and impotent to face. But as we gaze upon the humiliating spectacle we feel that it is to be but the background of a great glory. We feel that it is meant to intensify an effect which is about to be produced. That effect is the power of unaided grace.

Have you seen a conjurer offering to put articles into an empty box through magic? The first thing he does is to show that the box is empty. He removes the lid and passes the box around to convince the audience that there is nothing in it. So is it with the prophet. His purpose is to show that God can put treasures into a vacant mind, that He can fill an empty vessel. He shows Judah in its native weakness—barren, weak, useless. See what a poor, cowardly people by nature—how unable to look resolutely into the face of a foe! Truly the box is empty!

By and by the box is shut, and, when next it is opened, a startling spectacle presents itself—the vacant space has been filled! We see nothing to account for the change. No hand has been visible at work, no process of replenishment has been observed. When last we saw the cavity, it was void; it is now entirely occupied. To drop the metaphor: In a short time after the manifestation of her perplexity, Judah appears before us full of power, instinct with vigor. When last we saw her she was prostrate in the dust; when next we meet her she is erect with the bearing of a warrior—a warrior confident of victory. And the strange thing is that,

so far as eye can see, there is nothing to account for the change.

Whence, then, came this transformation of Judah? From within. It was a strengthening of the heart, a renewing of the mind wrought by the example of a man who had been struck and paralyzed with fear, but who had sought a place of prayer, and that place made a man of him. The whole effect of the picture is made to centre in the Spirit of God. The life of Hezekiah furnished the material for this prophetic portrayal. Like Judah, he is nothing in himself; he is only strong in the presence of God. The triumph of divine grace does not lie in the destruction of Sennacherib's host. It lies in the transformation of Hezekiah and Judah. It lies in the fact that the Spirit of God can make a weakling brave, a craven bold, a croucher kingly: That was the real victory over the power of Sennacherib.

The prophet's last message (6:9-7:20) presents the central figure of this crisis under specific aspects; and this we exhibit in dramatic form in the light of the situation provided by Sennacherib's invasion and the experiences of Hezekiah. In this contention there rises clearly the one great essential figure—the deliverer from Assyria and the restorer of Israel's faith. There stands forth the majestic figure of the king bearing all the secular woes of the nation upon him; the sufferer teaching the lesson of humility and resignation. He stands out as the embodiment of poise and patience teaching with what conscience and hope Judah should bear national adversity and wait upon God. He appears, not less lovable, but more human, when for a moment he desiderates the fall of the tyrant who was crushing the spirit of liberty out of the earth. But this desire for redress is soon gone, for he feels his unworthiness to be greater; and, seeking forgiveness, his last word is what Judah's should ever be—trust in the covenant mercy of God.

TITLE: *The Voice of Jehovah, to the city it calls, and (the man of) resolve* shows His name.*

THE MAN OF RESOLVE (*to the people*)

Hear ye the rod (Assyrian), and who appoints it!

JEHOVAH (*to the people*)

Are there yet evil treasures in the house of the evil and a scant, abominable ephah?

THE MAN OF RESOLVE (*to the people*)

Shall I be pure with evil balances, and a bag of false weights? For the rich thereof are full of violence, and the inhabitants thereof speak lies and their tongue is deceitful in their mouth.

JEHOVAH (*to the man of resolve*)

Therefore also I have made thee sick†; I have smitten, annoyed thee because of thy sins.

JEHOVAH (*to Zion*)

Thou eatest, yet art not satisfied; but thy resolving is for the sword: yea, thou storest, yet savest not; and that which thou savest I give up to the sword. Thou sowest, yet reapest not; thou treadest the olives, yet anointest thee not with oil; and the vintage, yet drinkest not the wine. For the statutes of Omri are kept, and all the works of the house of Ahab, and ye walk in their counsels, that I may make thee a desolation, and the inhabitants a hissing: and ye bear the reproach of my people.

* *Tosheyah, resolve* (Job 26:3), formed by prefixing *t* to *yashah, to be firm*. The abstract idea of resolve exhibited in a concrete individual experience. Ch. 7:7-10 furnishes the actual experience. In ch. 6:14 we have the verbal form "resolving" (R. V. "humiliation"). The reading *yashah* (for *yashagh*) gives form and cogency to the passage by sustaining the antithesis between the responsive king and the obdurate masses. The contrast of conduct had its root in a contrast of motives, and issued in a contrast of outward results. The king's desire was realized (7:15), the people's was frustrated by the sword (6:14).

† Same word as in 2 Ki. 20:1; Isa. 38:9 and 53:10, where it is used of Hezekiah.

THE MAN OF RESOLVE (*Soliloquizing*)

Woe is me! for I am as when they have gathered the summer fruits, as the gleanings of the vintage: there is no cluster to eat; nor first ripe fig which my soul desires. The godly is perished out of the land, yea, there is none upright among them: they all lie in wait for blood: they hunt every one his brother with a net. Their hands are upon evil to make it good. The prince asks, and the judge—for a reward; and the great utters the evil desire of his soul; thus they weave it together. The best of them is a brier; the most upright is a thorn hedge.

THE VOICE OF PROPHECY (*interrupting*)

The day of thy watchmen, thy visitation is come!

THE MAN OF RESOLVE (*to the people*)

Now is their perplexity! Trust ye not in a neighbor; put ye no confidence in a friend; keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom. For the son dishonoreth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; one's enemies are those of his own house

(*resuming the soliloquy*)

But as for me, I will look unto Jehovah: I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me. Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, Jehovah will be a light unto me. I will bear the indignation of Jehovah, because I have sinned against Him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me: he will bring me forth to the light, I shall behold his righteousness. Then mine enemy shall see it, yea shame shall cover her who said unto me "Where is Jehovah thy God?" Mine eye shall see my desire upon her: now shall she be trodden down as the mire of the streets.

THE VOICE OF PROPHECY

A day for building thy walls! in that day the decree is far removed!

THE PROPHET (*to the man of resolve*)

In that day shall they come unto thee from Assyria and the cities of Egypt, and from Egypt even unto the River, and from sea to sea, and from mountain to mountain.

THE PRINCES OF JUDAH (*to the man of resolve*)

Though the land be desolate because of them that dwell therein, for the fruit of their doings. Rule thy people with the rod, the flock of thy heritage, which dwell solitarily in the forest in the midst of Carmel: let them feed in Bashan and Gilead, as from the days of the age.

JEHOVAH (*to the people*)

As in the days of thy coming forth out of Egypt will I show unto thee marvellous things. The nations shall see it and be ashamed of all their might; they shall lay their hand upon their mouth; their ears shall be deaf. They shall lick the dust like a serpent; like reptiles shall they come trembling out of their close places.

THE ASSEMBLY OF THE PEOPLE (*to the man of resolve*) ..

They shall come with fear unto Jehovah our God, and shall be afraid because of thee.

THE MAN OF RESOLVE (*leading the assembly in prayer*)

Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth over the transgression of the posterity of his heritage? He retaineth not His anger constantly, because He delighteth in loving-kindness. He will again have compassion upon us; He will tread our iniquities under foot; and Thou wilt cast all their cries into the depth of the sea. Thou wilt perform Thy truth to Jacob, Thy loving kindness to Abraham, which Thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of the foretime.

V. G.

“CHRIST'S EXPOSURE OF THE ‘LARGER HOPE’ ”

A REPLY

THE following is an editorial in the March, 1921, number of “*Our Hope*”.

Advertising matter is being sent to many believers throughout our country. It comes from Los Angeles. Whatever comes from Los Angeles should be treated with suspicion, unless it has the imprint of the “Los Angeles Bible Institute” or the “Los Angeles Bible House”. These two institutions are safe and sound.

The advertising matter we mean concerns a new translation of the New Testament in an inter-linear way. It comes assuming great learning, etc. Who is behind the movement is secreted. We know who the people are. They belong to the class which teach some of the errors mentioned in the preceding paragraph. We owe it to our readers to warn them against this “new” translation. Why do they shun the light? Why do they not come out into the open and say we do this work to make propaganda for *our views* as to the non-eternity of punishment? Why this secrecy?

A letter was sent to the editor, A. C. Gaebelin, protesting against its insinuations and showing how impossible the charge was. The version was begun long before its editor believed in the universal reconciliation and the principles on which it is based make it a practical impossibility for him to use it as propaganda. It is not by any means the first translation to change the rendering of *aion*. The revisers have *age* in their margin part of the time, Rotherham and Young's literal translation render it so most of the time. The editor of *Our Hope* himself commends the change. Speaking of Matt. 13:39, he says “The harvest is the completion of the age. Our authorized version has it

"world". This has misled many readers of the Word". (Gospel of Matthew, page 279).

The CONCORDANT VERSION is the first, however, to render it consistently *all of the time*, and to use a rendering which allows of an adjective, *eonian*. This is the only course which will *not* mislead readers of the Word. It is the only method of translation which does *not* admit of propaganda.

Let us give one example. Though rightly condemning the rendering "world" instead of "age", he insists on the word "never" instead of "not for the age" (Mk. 3:29). The only apparent reason is, that the rendering "never" strengthens his position on the doctrine of eternal torment. Does the CONCORDANT VERSION render it "not for the age" to suit any doctrine held by the editor, or is it compelled to translate thus, whatever the editors believe? Its principles are such that it *cannot* correct an error in one passage and leave it stand in another—not even if it should conflict with the editor's views. In other words, the editor of *Our Hope* has done the very thing which he charges against the Version. He renders *aioon* by "age" *when it suits* him, but leaves it stand for an infinitely longer period of time when it supports one of his beliefs. The Version *always* renders it *eon*, hence *cannot* advance any cause but the truth.

In response to our letter we were sent an article on "Christ's Exposure of the 'Larger Hope'", with the notation: "Read this carefully it will just show you your blunders and evil teaching". The main portion of the article consists of a series of passages and arguments purporting to show how our Lord dealt with this doctrine.

Practically all of the arguments advanced have been fully dealt with before in our pages, but we will reprint them all, giving a brief reply, showing in practically every instance, that the scriptures quoted have been perverted and distorted, and that our Lord never on any occasion said aught against the universal reconciliation.

AN OPEN LETTER

My Dear Bro. Gaebelein:

I thank you for your letter and the article on "Christ's Exposure of the 'Larger Hope'", by Archibald E. Glover, M. A. I take it that you would like me to publish the arguments of the article in our magazine, so all our readers may consider carefully what you deem such a complete refutation of the universal reconciliation. We will do this, giving each argument as it stands, followed by our answer to it. We will do more than this. We will also publish your rejoinder so that you will have every possible advantage.

We suggest that you publish the same in your magazine, and thus refute the charge constantly made against you that you hesitate giving your readers both sides, lest they see how little real basis there is for your position.

But the main issue before us is not what I believe, but what effect that belief has had on the translation of the CONCORDANT VERSION. Practically, it resolves itself into the question, how have I rendered the words *aion* and *aionios*? The Authorized Version translates them by *age*, *course*, *world*, *eternal*, *everlasting*, etc. It uses these same expressions to translate a dozen other Greek words. Is this exact? Is this safe? Is this right? The Revisers have given *age* in the margin in about half the occurrences, leading the reader to infer that the remaining occurrences are not the same Greek word. Is this fair?

Rotherham uses *age* and *age abiding* nine tenths of the time. His witness will confirm ours at almost every point. He did not believe in the universal reconciliation.

We would like to have used "*age*", but one of the foundation principles of the CONCORDANT VERSION is never to use the same English word for two Greek words if it can possibly be avoided. "*Age*" was absolutely necessary for another Greek word of a different signification.

Besides, it has a variety of usages not in line with the scriptures. Moreover it does not make a good ad-

jective. "Age abiding" or "age lasting" have not won their way into good English. Therefore we decided on *eon* and *eonian*. These are good dictionary English which, if used uniformly for the corresponding Greek words, are bound to take on their true scriptural significance from their contexts.

This course is absolutely impartial. It does not create a prejudice for my opinion or your opinion, but leaves it open for each one to get God's mind on the matter apart from any man's opinion.

A version which translates each Greek word uniformly, when it is possible, and confines each rendering to only one Greek word, when that is possible, leaves practically no chance for the operation of the translator's prejudices on any vital point. Anyone who opposes such a version must necessarily arouse the suspicion of all who want God's word in its purity.

It would take me less than a year to make a translation which would embody my own opinions. But the CONCORDANT VERSION has been under way for over twenty years, more than a dozen assistants have spent much time in its preparation and years of labor are still required to complete it. Does it look as if we wanted to exploit *our* doctrines, when practically all this labor is not only unnecessary for that end, but, in many instances, has compelled us to change our opinion? This has been the case with the doctrine before us.

Trusting that we shall have the favor of your rejoinder in due time, I remain,

Yours in Christ Jesus,

A. E. KNOCH

THE ARGUMENT

Matt. 12:31, 32; Mark 3:29.

Christ says there is a sin beyond the reach of the pardoning mercy of God. "It shall not be forgiven him"—"never"—"neither in this age, nor in that which is to come".

The Restorationist gives an open denial to the statement.

Our Lord is careful to limit the time in which no pardon can be given to *this eon* and the *coming one*.

As the universal reconciliation does not occur in this eon, or in the coming one, or even in the one which follows these, but at the consummation after the eonian times have run their course, it is evident that He deliberately limited the time, so that no one could honestly draw the inference that it was "beyond the pardoning mercy of God".

There is no conflict between this scripture and the declaration of the apostle, "God locks all up together in obstinacy, *that He may be merciful to all*". (Rom. 11:32).

Matt. 7:14.

Christ says that few there be that find "the narrow gate and straitened way" to life.

The Restorationist says that, sooner or later, all without exception will find it.

This is a part of the sermon on the mount. The immediate subject is the law: "this is the law and the prophets". Then He said, "Be entering through the cramped gate, seeing that wide is the gate, and spacious is the path which leads off into destruction, and many there are who are entering through it, seeing that cramped is the gate and narrow the path which is leading off into life, and few there are who are finding it".

Is our evangel a cramped gate? Does the path we tread *lead to life*? This is true of the law, but not of the gospel. Those under law depended on their walk for life. We depend on Christ. We *have life*, we are not on the path that leads to it. Of those who seek life by the law few, very few, (if indeed any) will find it. All the others are on the spacious path that leads to destruction. This word, destruction, in its verbal form, is usually translated "lost". The Son of Mankind came to save those who had been destroyed (Mt. 18:11). He came to the destroyed sheep of the house of Israel (Mt. 10:6). In fact, the sacrifice He made on Calvary would not be needed by those who could get life by keeping on the narrow path. But shall we deny that many of the lost (or destroyed) did not find life through His death? And shall we allow such a passage to deny

the inspired assurance that "As in Adam *all* are dying, thus in Christ *all* shall be made alive?" (1 Cor. 15:22). Let us freely acknowledge that few (or none) find the way to life by the law. Only those who believe will be vivified at the presence of Christ. But at the consummation, when death itself is abolished, *all* will be made alive. (1 Cor. 15:23-26).

Luke 13:23-28.

Christ says that "many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able".

The Restorationist says that every one of them shall be able.

Entrance into the kingdom is the subject of this scripture. Many, indeed, will be seeking to enter by means of the law and will not have the strength. If *salvation* depends upon our *strength*, who will be saved? Salvation today is the portion of those who are *without strength* (Rom. 5:6). It is not of works, but of grace. Only those who believe will have a portion in the kingdom of God. Salvation during the eons, is limited to those who believe. But after that will be fulfilled the faithful saying for which we are being reproached, that "We rely on the living God, Who is the Saviour of *all mankind*, especially of those who believe". We are commanded to charge and teach this truth (1 Tim. 4:9-11).

Luke 20:18.

Christ says that the doom of those upon whom the Stone falls is irremediable; or language has no meaning. The brokenness of those who fall upon the Stone is remediable; but not so the brokenness of those upon whom the Stone falls.

The Restorationist contradicts the statement, and asserts that the one is as remediable as the other.

The meaning of language must be decided by usage, not by prejudice. The word here used, *likmaoo*, occurs several times in the Greek version of the Hebrew Scriptures. Its primary meaning is to *winnow* (Ruth 3:2). The Hebrew word which it most frequently represents is *zahrah*, DISPERSE. It is used of the scattering of Israel beyond the Euphrates (1 Ki. 14:15). We know that

this was "remediable", for they afterwards returned. It is used again in the quotation so often used by those who believe in the restoration of Israel, "He that scattered Israel will gather him" (Jer. 31:10). If this scattering was irremediable, they will never return! All the promises to Israel are void!

There is no escape from this dilemma. If the doom of those on whom the Stone falls keeps them from having any part in the benefits flowing from the efficacy of the blood of Christ at the consummation (Col. 1:20) then Israel did not return to the land in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah and they will never again be gathered back to their lost heritage.

Mark 14:21.

Christ says to Judas—"Good were it for that man if he had not been born".

The Restorationist says it would have been an incalculable misfortune for him; for, however long and heavily his miseries hereafter might lie upon him, the endlessness of bliss in which they are ultimately to terminate would immeasurably outweigh them all; and the blessedness of his existence in the condition to which he is to be finally introduced would be infinitely in favor of the fact that he *had* been born.

The true translation is, "woe to that man through whom the Son of Mankind has been betrayed! Ideal were it for Him if that man were not born!" "That man" in Greek, as in English, is a special expression used to distinguish "that man" from the Son of Mankind, who is referred to as "Him". We could say, "Ideal were it for him (Judas) if *he* were not born", but we cannot say "Ideal were it for him if *that man* were not born". The Him must refer to the Son of Mankind. So Christ did *not* say of Judas, "Good were it for that man if he had not been born". It is only when we corrupt the text by transposing "Him" and "that man", as the authorized version has done, that we have any reason to think that Judas will be excepted from the purpose that God has formed of reconciling the entire universe to Himself (Col. 1:20).

John 6:70

If Judas is ultimately to be saved so also is the devil; for Judas "is a devil"; and the possibility of salvation in the case of one devil argues the possibility of the salvation of all devils.

Judas is called a "devil" or slanderer (Jn. 6:70). The Jews, also, were of their father the devil (Jn. 8:44). Those in the ecclesia, whose wives were devils (or slanderers) were debarred from being servants of the ecclesia (1 Tim. 3:11). Paul did not wish the aged women to be devils (Tit. 2:3). In the last days men will be devils (2 Tim. 3:3). According to the argument there is no salvation for any of these. The same word is applied to all.

The same sort of reasoning may be applied to Peter. He was called "Satan" by our Lord (Mt. 16:23). We know that Peter will be saved. Adopting exactly the same mode of argument, "the possibility of salvation in the case of one 'Satan' argues the possibility of the salvation of all 'Satans'". Satan is the Devil. Hence all devils can be saved. Hence Judas can be saved. But what avail are such reasonings when we have God's sure word? The blood of Christ is the basis for the reconciliation, not only of all mankind, but the entire universe (Col. 1:20). This is not reasoning from false premises. It is God's word that will stand when all human appeals to prejudice have vanished.

Acts 20:21.

"Repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" are essential conditions of salvation. But "*repentance unto salvation*" is only wrought by "godly sorrow" for sin (2 Cor. 7:10) and is always directed "toward God". And *the faith that saves* is that which carries its subject into actual union with our Lord Jesus Christ, making him partaker of the divine nature, in newness of life—the faith which worketh by love, producing an obedience in holiness inspired by the Spirit of God.

The Restorationist has to prove from the Word of God that a devil is capable to such repentance and such faith. If not, then Judas can never be saved (John 6:70). And if one man may be endlessly lost, the whole fabric of "Final Restoration" is shattered.

During the eons or ages, there are various "essentials" for salvation. Abraham believed God. No repentance or baptism were required in his case, as it is for those who receive the evangel of the kingdom. The time is coming when those who endure to the end shall be saved. Now salvation is purely a matter of faith, as it was with Abraham. But at the consummation, when the eons come to a close, salvation will be effected as it is now, by the will of God. He wills that all mankind should be saved and come to a realization of the truth. The real "essentials" are a Mediator and a Ransom. Christ Jesus is both (1 Tim. 2:4-6). Nothing in the creature can balk the will of the Creator.

There is no provision made by God for the salvation of demons (Heb. 2:16; 2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6); nor yet for the salvation of those who, in this life, have "wilfully sinned" in a final rejection of God's grace and love in Christ Jesus (John 8:21, 24; Heb. 6:4-6; 10:26-29).

Heb. 2:16 is not concerned with the subject in hand and makes no reference whatever to demons. Neither has 2 Pet. 2:4, or Jude 6. They are all concerned with messengers or "angels".

John 8:21 reads "Where *I* am going, *you* cannot come". This is interpreted as indicating their hopeless doom. No one of whom such words could be spoken would ever be saved! But the Lord repeats *these very* words, a little later, to the eleven apostles (not including Judas, who had just gone out). He told them "According as I said to the Jews that 'Where *I* am going *you* cannot come,' at present I am saying it to you, too." Are the eleven apostles among the hopelessly lost?

The sixth and tenth of Hebrews are cases of eonian judgment (Heb. 6:2). This can have no bearing on post-eonian salvation. Vengeance belongs to God, He will repay. But, as judgment is limited to the eons in the immediate context, it is clear that His eonian vengeance does not conflict with His great purpose to become All in *all*. Rather it is one of the means to that end, for, through Christ He will subject the universe to Himself (Phil. 3:21).

John 17:12; Rom. 2:5-11; Rev. 22:11.

Christ says, "None of them is lost, but the son of perdition".

The Restorationist affirms that the son of perdition is not so hopelessly lost as *Christ* would have us believe—an affirmation which amounts to this, that, if *Christ's* word is not final in the one case, neither is it in the other. If I am to believe that the son of perdition is not finally lost what security have I for believing that the rest of whom *Christ* speaks are finally saved?

Indeed, it is not a whit more unscriptural to say that a saved soul in glory can be finally lost, than it is say that a lost soul in hell can be finally saved (Rom. 2:5-11).

Our Lord said of Judas, "not one of them was destroyed but the son of destruction". It is an unwarranted addition to the Scripture to use the word *final* either of salvation or destruction. Salvation is *eonian*, and so is judgment. Beyond the eons there is no sin, hence no salvation is needed and judgment is unknown. Just as human science persists in beginning with chaos where God begins with creation, so human theology persists in a final state far worse than chaos for all except a few, while God reveals a final state of universal and boundless bliss in which He is All in all. This false assumption is the stronghold of eternal torment. Appealing to our ignorance and prejudice, we are continually reminded that salvation and judgment are of the same duration. This is true. Both are *eonian*. But just as salvation from thirst ends when we reach a river so salvation from sin ends when we reach the consummation. The danger is past. The object has been attained. There is no need to worry further about our salvation, for *Christ* has fully succeeded in undoing the work of the devil. For this the Son of God was manifested, that He might annul the acts of the Slanderer (1 Jn. 3:8).

The salvation of the saved is in virtue of their final choice of good in *Christ*, as "made unto them from God righteousness and sanctification and redemption"; and it is a state in which the will can never again determine towards evil. The damnation of the lost is in virtue of their final choice of evil in a wilful rejection of *Christ* so revealed; and

is a state in which the will can never again determine towards good. The judicial mercy of God is seen in the one case; the judicial hardening of God in the other (Rom. 9:18).

For all who harden their hearts, and will not to hear His voice, there remains nothing but the just correspondence—the hardening of the heart by God Himself. The one follows the other as necessarily as effect follows cause. The power to hear and turn which he once had is taken away from the obstinate refuser of God's long-suffering grace; the eyes which he deliberately closed are at last judicially sealed by God Himself, and the power to see again is for ever "taken from him" Matt. 13:12-15; 25:29, 30; Mark 4:24,25). "They *did not* believe * * * therefore they *could not* believe, because * * * He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they *should not*" (John 12:37-40). And the volume of the Book closes with the positive assertion of the truth of the final permanence of character in the direction of the soul's choice, as well for "the unjust" and "the filthy" as for "the righteous" and "the holy" (Rev. 22:11). Hence, a lost soul can no more be finally saved than a saved soul be finally lost.

The salvation of the saved is emphatically *not* "in virtue of their final choice of good in Christ". He declared most emphatically to His disciples, "*You do not choose Me, but I choose you*" (Jn. 15:16). Did Paul choose good in Christ? (Ac. 9:1-8). His was the pattern for us. *We were chosen by God in Christ* (Eph. 1:4). If salvation depends on human choice or will or effort we are prepared to believe in the ultimate damnation of all, rather than their salvation. "It is not of him who is willing nor yet of him who is racing, but of God, the Merciful" (Rom. 9:16).

The inference is drawn from God's "judicial" acts of hardening and blinding, that this is final. Without the unscriptural addition of the word "final" not one of the passages quoted is in the least degree contradictory to the express declarations that all mankind will be justified and vivified and reconciled. Indeed, the strongest passage of all distinctly states that God's "judicial" acts are with a view to His glory and their good. "God locks all together in obstinacy, that He may be merciful to *all*". (Rom. 11:32). *This is the*

conclusion of the section of Romans which deals with the hardening of Pharaoh.

Because Rev. 22:11 occurs near the close of the book it is rashly assumed that it belongs to the latest time in the vision and that it has reference to conditions as they obtain on the new heavens and new earth. This is not so. The section which commences at the sixth verse of the twenty-second chapter takes us back to the time when John wrote the prophecy. *Then*, in view of the swift coming of the Lord, he said, “Let him who is injuring, injure still; and let the filthy be filthy still; and let the just do justice still; and let the holy be hal-
lowed still”. This is in view, not of the “final state” as the last eon is sometimes erroneously called, but in view of the impending judgments (Un. 22:10).

Luke 16:26.

Christ says that between the just and the unjust, in the after state, “there is a great gulf fixed,” so that to pass from the side of death to the side of life is as impossible as it is to pass from the side of life to that of death.

The Restorationist necessarily denies it.

Without pressing its true interpretation, all will admit that the rich man and Lazarus were in *hades*, the unseen. This is not by any means the final state for *hades* does not continue beyond the present earth. It is cast into the lake of fire (Un. 20:14). The lake of fire is the second death. Death is the last enemy to be abolished (I Cor. 15:26). Hence the gulf will have long since passed away when all will be made alive in Christ.

Matt. 12:45.

Christ declares that “the last state” of the deliberately wicked man is “worse than the first”. So also, says the Holy Ghost, using precisely the same words (2 Peter 2:20).

The Restorationist absolutely denies this. “The last state of that man,” as he represents it, is beyond all conception good; for it is not “corruption” (even though God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost say it is—Matt. 12:33; Gal. 6:8), but “eternal life”.

That this parable has nothing to say regarding the final destiny of mankind is evident, for our Lord limits

it to that generation (Mt. 12:45). The word “last” is often used in Scripture in a comparative sense. We are living in the “last” days. Is this absolute or comparative? Are there no more days to follow? What of the millennium and the last eon? The former state of the man in this parable when he had one unclean spirit, is compared with the later state, in which he harbors seven. The word “first” is likewise often used of the first of two, the former. The “first” resurrection (Un. 20:6) is first only with reference to the resurrection of judgment. The resurrection in which we share is before this “first” resurrection. Christ was seen *last* of all to Paul (1 Cor. 15:8). The same reasoning which would make this parable teach finality would absolutely prove that we shall never see our Lord! Paul was the last of a series who saw Him. The state in the parable was the last of a series. It has no application beyond the generation in which our Lord lived. The same is true of the passage in Peter, where the common version, indeed, changes to *latter*, but adds the word “end” without warrant. Indeed, how many men go from bad to worse! But this does not nullify God’s word, which explicitly says: “as it was through one offense *for all mankind* for condemnation, thus, too, it is through one just award *for all mankind* for life’s justifying”. (Rom. 5:18-19).

Psalm 49:19; Jude 13.

The Holy Spirit says that the wicked “shall never see light”, and that for them “is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever”.

The Restorationist says we are not to believe any such thing; for that in God’s light all shall eventually see light.

This psalm speaks not of the wicked, but of the fathers of the rich. *They* shall “never” see light. The LXX renders the “never” by “not for the eon”. The Hebrew word, *netzagh*, has no close English equivalent, as is evident from the renderings, *strength, victory, for ever, perpetual, constantly*, etc. One passage is sufficient to show that it does not mean *forever*.

“A false witness shall perish:
But the man that heareth speaketh
constantly” (Prov. 21:28).

In Jude we are concerned only with the length of the judgment. It is not “*forever*”, but *for an eon*.

Exod. 32:33.

The Holy Spirit says that God will finally blot the willful sinner out of the Book of Life (Psa. 9:5; 69:28; Rev. 13:8; 20:15; Cf. Isa. 4:3; Heb. 12:23; Rev. 3:5).

The Restorationist declares that God has no such intention.

“Thou hast blotted out his name for the eon, and for the eon of the eon” (Ps. 9:5) is the LXX translation. The book of life will be opened at the great white throne (Un. 20:12). “And if anyone was not found written in the scroll of life, he was cast into the lake of fire” (Un. 20:15). This is the second death, which will be abolished at the consummation. When there is no death, there will be no book of life.

Phil. 3:19.

The Holy Spirit affirms that the “*end*” of the enemies of the cross of Christ is destruction.

The Restorationist affirms that it is no such thing—their “*end*” is everlasting life.

The context clearly shows that the enemies of the cross are not unbelievers, but many believers. Paul laments for these because, while availing themselves of the death of Christ, they do not conform their walk to the *manner* of that death, but are disposed to earthly things (Phil. 3:18-19). *Alas!* Today not only *many* but *most* of the saints do not know the power of His cross, but are disposed to earthly things. Are all these to suffer eternal torment also? There can be no doubt but that the finish, or culmination, or consummation of such a walk is destruction. Just as all false teaching, wood, hay, and stubble, will be burned up in that day, so all conduct contrary to the truth will be destroyed and we will suffer loss at the dais of Christ. This word “*end*” never carries the meaning of cessation or limit, but always that of culmination or consummation.

1 Tim. 6:5; 2 Pet. 2:1, 12-22.

The Holy Spirit declares that the deniers of the Lord who bought them are men "corrupted in mind and bereft of the truth", who, as such, are incapable of hearing the truth. So also says Christ most expressly (Cf. John 5:37, 38; 8:43-47; 18:37).

The Restorationist says that all such may, can, and eventually will, come to the knowledge of the truth: for that no such state is continuously possible.

The *Scriptures* say that God, our Saviour, "wills all mankind to be saved and to come to a realization of the truth. For there is *one* God and *one* Mediator, also, between God and mankind, a Man, Christ Jesus, Who is giving Himself a Ransom for *all* (the testimony in its own eras) . . ." (1 Tim. 2:3-6). There is absolutely nothing in the passages quoted which in the least denies that God is able to carry out His will. Paul was the foremost of sinners, yet God succeeded in saving him. Why should He fail to bring all the rest to a realization of the truth in His own time? We shall see Him do it!

Isaiah 38:18.

The Holy Spirit says the condition of the lost is one in which they "cannot hope for God's truth".

The Restorationist flatly denies this, and emphasizes his denial by styling his theory "the doctrine of Eternal Hope".

Hezekiah, king of Judah had been sick, and when he was recovered he wrote a song in gratitude for his deliverance from death. He had been delivered from the pit of corruption by the addition of fifteen years to his life. Had he died he could not have written this song of praise. Hence he says, "They that go down to the pit cannot hope for Thy truth. The living, the living, he shall praise Thee, as I this day".

We are now asked to believe that if he had died, he would be "lost"! Yes, and all who "go down to the pit" are lost! He did die fifteen years later, and, consequently, was lost! If all who go to sheol and the grave and the pit are lost, then the doctrine of universal damnation is practically established.

Hezekiah was a most godly king, a type of the suf-

fering Messiah. The fifty-third of Isaiah is, primarily, his experience. And yet he is singled out as beyond hope!

Psalm 52:5; John 3:36; 2 Thess. 1:8, 9.

The Holy Spirit says that those who know not God and that "obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" shall be "rooted out of the land of the living" (Psa. 27:3; 116:9; 142:5); that they "shall not see life"; that they "shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the Presence of the Lord" (cf. Luke 19:27); and that "the wrath of God" thus fearfully manifested "*abideth* on them", constituting a permanent condition of being described as "death" (1 John 3:14,15)—"the second death" (Rev. 20:14), from the power of which there is no deliverance (Psa. 49:14; Rev. 21:8; 22:15. Cf. Rev. 2:11; 20:6).

The penalty meted out is here said to be of the nature of condign vengeance in the way of pure retributive justice—an expression which excludes any idea of *correction* (i. e., of punishment with a view to the betterment of the offender). Typical illustrations of the force of its meaning are to be found in the slaying of the Egyptian by Moses (Acts 7:24); the "death without compassion" of him who set at nought Moses' law" (Heb. 10:28-30); and the judging of the great harlot, Babylon the great (Rev. 19:2).

The word used by our Lord, and translated "punishment" in Matt. 25:46, is in perfect agreement with the thought of *ekdikēsis* though presenting the doom of the ungodly in a somewhat different aspect; its primary meaning being, not "correction" but "*restraint*". Lawless offenders, inveterate in their hatred of, and active opposition to, the known will of God (Luke 19:14; Rev. 20:8, 9), will no longer find themselves free, as heretofore, to break in upon the established order of His authority, and disturb the reign of absolute righteousness and truth, when God is all in all (1 Cor. 15:24-28; Rev. 21:8; 22:15). They will be relegated, together with the lawless one, to the "everlasting restraint" of a prison whose bars are "everlasting fire" (Matt. 25:41), and whose bounds they shall never be able to overpass (Luke 16:26).

The term *aiōnios*—"everlasting"—is used interchangeably with its equivalent—"for ever and ever" (literally, "unto the ages of the ages"), which, again, is the equivalent of the Hebrew phrase, "le-olam-va-ed"—"unto the ages and beyond". The limitless "and beyond" of the Hebrew is defined by its Greek equivalent, revealing an illimitable succession of "ages", and conveying, as far as it is possible for language to do so, the conception of endless duration. The substantive *aion* ("age") in itself denotes a time-period of indefinite (not necessarily of limited) duration. In the compound expres-

sion, "unto the ages of the ages", the idea is that of a series of time-periods merging into one another in a never-ending succession, and may be not improperly rendered, "unto the ages which (endlessly) succeed the ages". For the sense of "*te-olam-va-ed*" in its application to the wicked, compare Psalm 9:5 with 10:16; and for that of its Greek equivalent, compare Rev. 4:10 with 20:10: whereby the Holy Spirit affirms finally that the duration of "the second death" is co-terminous with that of the life of the Lord God Almighty.

The Restorationist says: Nothing of the sort. They shall surely be planted in, in due season. They, too, shall be shewn the path of life, and have fulness of joy in the presence of the Lord for evermore.

To be "rooted out of the land of the living" is not a determining factor of human destiny. The words might be applied to the treatment accorded Christ Himself.

The words "shall not see life", *apart from their context*, seem to contradict the great truth that, in Christ, all shall be made alive (1 Cor. 15:22). It even seems to conflict with the statement that "the rest of the dead do not *live* until the thousand years are finished". If all the dead are raised either at the resurrection of life or at the resurrection of judgment, how could it be said of any that "they shall not see life"?

The answer lies in the context. In repeating the name of something we have just described we do not need to repeat the descriptive terms. What life? That of which the Lord has just spoken—*eonian* life. This harmonizes all the passages. He who is not believing on the Son will not be made alive at His presence. Even if they are raised at the great white throne, they are consigned to the second death, from which there is no escape during the eons. But after this, when death is abolished, *all* will be made alive.

The word "abideth" is the same tense as in Jn. 1:38, "where dwellest Thou?" Did He abide there forever? It should be rendered consistently "is abiding".

That the expression "dealing out vengeance" (2 Thess. 1:8) is no denial of God's determination to save them at another time and under different circumstances,

as He has declared He will, is clearly shown when God makes Himself the Avenger when one brother in the faith overreaches another (1 Thess. 4:6). If avenging necessarily included the pains of eternal torment, then it is quite possible for one who is slaving for the living and true God and waiting for His Son from heaven (1Thess. 1:9-10) to find himself a victim of God's insatiable and vindictive wrath. A word which is applied to believers can hardly be used to prove everlasting torture.

Rev. 21:22.

The Holy Spirit affirms that the lake of fire and the doom of the lost belong as much to the fixed and final order of things, when God is all in all, as the new heavens and the new earth.

The Restorationist “takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy”, and deliberately affirms that they do not.

There is not one word in the Unveiling which states or implies that the lake of fire and the doom of the lost belong to the fixed and final order of things. There are many who append the words “fixed” and “final” to the things which are written in the scroll, but *they are not there*.

The apostle Paul reaches out much farther into the future than John does. In the fifteenth of first Corinthians he speaks of a time when all enemies will be put out of action. All the enemies he enumerates—suzerainty and authority and power and death—are still present in these chapters of the Apocalypse. The throne of God and the Lambkin is a symbol of their *suzerainty* (22:1). The reign of the saints is proof of *delegate authority* (22:5). Lastly, *the very passages concerning the second death which are adduced, prove it to be a temporary, not the final condition*, for, in that eon, the last enemy, *death*, is still present.

The consummation (Scripture is careful not to speak of a “final state”) is marked by the *absence* of some of the prominent features in the Apocalyptic vision.

To speak of a *reign* of righteousness in which there is *authority*, as the time when God is All in all, when the

Scriptures expressly stipulate that God is *not* All in all until all authority is *abolished*, makes it evident that the author of the article is ignorant of the simplest elements of that "final state" of which he speaks. Indeed the whole argument may be summed up as an attempt to force a multitude of passages on the final state which have no place there, and is a definite denial, in the very words of the one passage which does speak of it.

In the light of all this, what is the conclusion to which we are irresistibly led? Simply this—that the "*Larger Hope*" is a doctrine which makes God a liar, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. There is no escape from it. We are shut up to it, when we honestly "try the spirits whether they be of God". In the light of the Word of God, and of the direct warning of the Son of God Himself, the doctrine of the "*Larger Hope*" is a lie, the father of it is the devil, and the end of it is the murder of souls.

He who made God a liar by his first lie, "Thou shalt not surely die", is still the same; and the lie that first took hold of man is the same that appeals most readily to him still. Every soul of man that lends a sympathetic ear to the doc-tainty of everlasting life, for the reprobate wicked, is doing it at his own eternal peril; for he is a party to the Satanic trine of a second chance after death, with the ultimate certainty of everlasting life, for the reprobate wicked is doing it at his own eternal peril; for he is a party to the Satanic sin of exchanging the truth of God for a lie, and of calling the very Truth Himself a liar.

As salvation is not a matter of "chance", there can be no "second chance". Apart from the power of God, those who refuse Christ now, would do so again, if they had a "chance". It is a matter, not of man's will but of God's. Left to his own will, no man would be saved. All we need to do is to inquire, What is God's will? He operates the universe in accord with the counsel of His own will. He wills all mankind to be saved. *That settles it.*

It is useless to array God's judgments during the eons against the purpose He will fulfil through them. It is a part of the great apostasy to deny a part of God's revelation by distorting other passages so that they appear to conflict with them.

The favorite argument that the second death is "co-terminous" with the life of the Lord God Almighty is

another appeal to ignorance and prejudice. God is the “everlasting” or eonian God (Rom. 16:26). Was He God “before the “everlasting” or eonian times”? (1 Tim. 1:9). Will He be God after the “end” or consummation of the eons? (Heb. 9:26). Satan is the god of this eon. Did he live before it? Will he live after it? We have lived through the period of the great war. But does this prove that we are dead? Not only God, but all His saints live for the last two eons or ages. At their end death disappears. All are made alive in Christ. It is useless and absurd to predicate life when there is no death. The lake of fire is co-terminous, not with the life of God, but with the *eonian* life of God and His saints.

Almost all of these objections are a violation of that cardinal precept for the truth seeker, the correct partitioning of the word of truth. Perhaps the objector himself would strongly insist on what is usually termed “dispensational truth”. What is true in one dispensation or economy is not true in another. But the ages, or eons, differ from each other far more than the dispensations. It is far more important not to import truth foreign to the age or eon. Error itself becomes truth in its time. That “the resurrection is past already”, is false *now*, but will be a blessed fact in the coming eon.

So, also, truth becomes error of the most insidious kind when applied to an eon or age to which it does not belong. To teach that the kingdom of the heavens is in force *now* with all its powers and blessings is prolific of the most disastrous effects. It nullifies the word of God. In the next eon it will be blessed fact.

But far more important than “dispensational” distinctions, far more necessary than correctly partitioning the truth for the eons, or ages, is the great and vital division between the eonian or age-times and time outside of the ages or eons. Inside the eons there is sin, outside there is none. All delegated government is confined within their limits. Rule ends when they end. Death itself is abolished when the eons come to a consummation and is replaced by life. The special salvation of the saints is eonian. The salvation of all is post-eonian.

So that, while it is heinous error to say that all will be saved during the eons, it is blessed truth when they are past.

It may be objected, Why did not our Lord reveal the truth of universal reconciliation, rather than Paul? He had many things to say to them which they could not bear. The time was not ripe. It was outside the scope of His ministry. Paul found it necessary not only to explain this in his day but pauses to insist that he is not lying. He tells us that God *wills* (not desires, or wishes but *wills*) "ALL mankind to be saved and to come to a realization of the truth. For there is *one* God, and *one* Mediator, also, between God and mankind, a Man, Christ Jesus, Who is giving Himself a correspondent Ransom for ALL (*the testimony in its own eras*) for which *I* was appointed a herald and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying) a teacher of the nations in knowledge and truth."

The testimony to this truth was entrusted to the hands of Paul. It is useless for us to seek it elsewhere. Nevertheless our Lord never said one word which conflicted with God's will in this matter. He knew that He was a Ransom for all. And thus, whenever He spoke on such a subject as the unpardonable sin He was exceedingly careful to define the time limits to which His words apply. To wrest them outside of these limits makes Him a liar and distorts the truth of God.

The subject in hand is the ultimate destiny of mankind. How many of the passages which are here quoted against the universal reconciliation deal with this subject? *Not one.* Here we have a sad example of a most unprofitable and irrational method of study. In the practical affairs of life we do not act so. We seek information where it can be found. We do not sedulously avoid the very sources of the knowledge which we seek. Yet here is an article which *never refers to those passages in the Scriptures which deal with its subject*, but presses into service a mass of evidence, wrested from its legitimate context, which has no bearing on the real subject at issue. Only a mistranslation, a misapplication, or an

unfounded inference, connects any of the Scriptures which are produced with the grand subject of God's ultimate. All are concerned with the intermediate process by which He attains it. Realizing this, the writer constantly perverts the Scriptures by adding "final" or words to that effect.

The scriptures which do treat of this subject have been referred to in this reply. *None of them needs any explanation, or reasoning, or argument.* They are plain statements of fact, which have disturbed the minds of all true students who do not believe them. May God give us grace to believe *all* that He has revealed!

A. E. K.

THE PROPHETIC SECTION

PATMOS was the place where John wrote this scroll and beheld the visions recorded in it. Seldom, indeed, are we informed where the scrolls of scripture were written, but the place of a vision is usually deemed of importance. Ezekiel was by the river Chebar (1:3) and was transported, in spirit, to Jerusalem (8:3) and Chaldea (11:24), etc. Daniel was once in the palace at Shushan (8:2) though transported in spirit to the river Ulai. At another time he was beside the Hiddekel, or Tigris (10:4).

John saw and wrote the Prophetic section of this book at Patmos. When the throne section commences, however, the first sound which he hears calls him to heaven, where the introductory vision is located (4:1). Later he came away to eat the little scroll (10:9) and to measure the temple of God (11:1), yet seems to resume his place in heaven until the new heaven is created. He never enters there. In the last Prophetic section he seems to be back at Patmos as at the first. So that, for the purposes of interpretation, we are to consider John at Patmos only during the Prophetic sections.

What reason can be assigned for this location? Why was it not revealed to him in Jerusalem? Why not on the mainland, in the center of the ecclesias to whom he writes? There must be a peculiar fitness in this place, whether we are able to discover it or not.

Patmos is a small, rocky island in the Aegean archipelago, off the shores of the province of Asia. Anciently,

it was reckoned as one of the Sporades. In medieval times it was called Palmosa, but now Patmo.

The meaning of the name seems to be TREADING. The element *Pat* occurs thrice in the verb *tread*. They will be *treading* the holy city (11:2). The wine trough will be *trodden* outside the city (14:20). The Rider on the white horse is *treading* the wine trough (19:15).

Do not all the circumstances suggest that John is sent to Patmos so that his physical environment may correspond to the spiritual condition of the nation of Israel at the time when the vision is fulfilled? What could be a better parable of their isolated, barren state, in the midst of, yet apart from the nations, with hearts at a distance from God, than this rocky islet; surrounded by the sea, far from the holy land and the sacred city.

The tradition that John was banished to the island and imprisoned there probably arose from the phrase "because of the word of God and because of the testimony of Jesus Christ". But it is far more probable that this scroll is the word of God and the testimony because of which he came to be in Patmos. He certainly had liberty to write, and was able to send his revelation to the saints.

Whatever value we may attach to the place of the Unveiling, the time element is of prime importance. The interpretation of the whole scroll, and especially the messages to the ecclesias, depends on the right translation and true interpretation of the words, "I came to be, in spirit, in the Lord's day". At the risk of being prolix and redundant, we cannot pass it by without once more enforcing its true translation and interpretation.

The phrase "in the Spirit" should read, as the sub-linear shows, without the article, simply "in spirit". The same phrase occurs on three other occasions. These are safe and sure indexes of its meaning here. In each case the apostle is transported in spirit, to a place or time which his body could not occupy. He thus ascended to heaven and beheld the magnificent throne scene (4:2).

He is carried away, in spirit, into a wilderness, to behold the woman on the scarlet wild beast (17:3). He is carried away, in spirit, to a mountain on the new earth to behold the holy city (21:10). In every case John is taken out of himself, leaves his body, and sees and hears what belongs to the far future. “In spirit” is opposed to “in flesh” (Ro. 8:9). The sense is that, as John could not be transported into the Lord’s day in flesh, his spirit was carried thither in a vision. There is no need to bring in the holy spirit of God as the agent or power *by* which this was done. We have already been told that all this was signified through his messenger (1:1). Messengers are the agents used in all the transactions of this book. One of the seven messengers who have the seven bowls carried John away, in spirit, to view the woman in the wilderness (17:3) and one of the same carries him away to view the new Jerusalem (21:10).

There is every reason to believe that the same is true here. The voice which he heard was doubtless the voice of the Messenger Who had carried him in spirit into the Lord’s day. In this case it can be no other than the Chief Messenger, our Lord Himself, for He partakes of the office of messenger, and is their Chief. He has been anointed with the oil of exultation above His fellows (Heb. 1:9).

This solves a difficulty connected with that coming for His saints which occurs before the judgment scenes encountered in this scroll can occur. We are looking for Christ, not an angel, however exalted his rank may be. It is somewhat disconcerting, then, to be told that our Lord shall descend with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God . . .” (1 Thess. 4:16). If our Lord *Himself* is coming, why bring with Him an archangel? And who blows the trump of God? Are there three great Personages coming for us? Not so! He will not share this glory with another. He gives the shout of command *Himself* and *His* is the voice

of the Chief Messenger, and *He* uses the trumpet of God. He has many glories and not the least of these is His headship over the messengers of God. The phrase should stand, then, in its simplest and most consistent form, not "*by the Spirit [of God]*", but *in [John's] spirit*".

This passage is but one example of the difficulties which confront a translator in regard to the capitalization of the word spirit. The capital S indicates the *opinion* of the translator that the holy spirit of God is intended. It is often difficult to determine whose spirit is in view and it is unwise for any version to so far usurp the function of interpretation as to decide each case. So the CONCORDANT VERSION always puts the word spirit with a small initial s, and so leaves the matter open to each student to decide for himself.

It is evident, then, that the Messenger like a Son of Mankind transports John, in spirit, into the Lord's day.

But it is objected that, if this were indeed, the day of the Lord spoken of in the prophets, then the usual formula would have been used. Why should it be changed?

There are three points of difference between the phrases "THE DAY OF THE LORD" and "THE LORD'S DAY".

All three conspire to shift the emphasis from "the day of the LORD" to "the Lord's DAY". They unite in turning our thoughts from the *character* of the day to the *time*, the *event*.

And is this not most apt? In the day of the LORD we are told that man is abased and the Lord *alone* will be exalted. But when we learn that John has come to be, in spirit, in some "day", we want to know *what day?* What *time?* As the thought of time is uppermost, the phrase "the day of the LORD" is modified and readjusted to perform its new duty. These differences, of course, are in the Greek and are but faintly reflected in the English.

The genitive case points back to the source and origin of things: it gives character. The dative case points us forward to the associations of place and time: it locates. "The day of the LORD" puts "Lord" in the genitive, telling us what *kind* of a day it will be. "The Lord's DAY" puts "Lord's" in the dative, answering the question, *When?* It is in contrast to *man's DAY*. The time when man is having his fling.

The first difference, then, changes the direction of our thoughts. What characterized, now *locates*. John comes to be, in spirit, IN the Lord's DAY. The second difference lies in the *rank* of the words employed. "Lord" is a name, or noun: "Lord's" is (or should be if it were possible in English) a descriptive term, or adjective. The Spirit very often changes an adjective into a noun in order to emphasize it. "Mighty men" are called "men of might". We almost forgot that they are men in the thought of their *might*. This cannot always be reproduced in English. "Of the glory of the grace" (Eph. 1:6) is not easily followed by our modern minds. "The grace GLORIOUS" is easier to grasp. This is the law: The higher the rank, the greater the importance, the heavier the emphasis. So that, in "the Lord's DAY" we are compelled to reduce and soften the emphasis on the word "Lord's". Because it occurs before "day" instead of after it (as it ordinarily should be) it still retains some emphasis, which we have indicated by putting it in italics.

The second difference joins its voice with the first in bidding us pay attention to the DAY rather than to its Lord, as have been accustomed to do.

The third difference is in the *order* of the words. If the whole sentence read:

I have come to be, in spirit, in the day of the Lord, instead of

I have come to be, in spirit, in the Lord's Day,

then the last word would be "LORD". As it stands the last word is "DAY". First things are important. So are things last. He is the First and the Last. In Gal. 2:19 the order of the words is "CHRIST together-with-have-I-been-crucified: yet I live; no longer I, but in me lives CHRIST". As has been remarked, "Christ is first and Christ is last and 'not I' fills in between". So here. By relieving "Lord" of its striking situation at the end of the sentence and giving DAY that prominent place, once more we are impressed with the fact that the Spirit is not using some stereotyped human phrase but is adapting His own powerful and flexible phrase "the day of the Lord" to its new and special duty of informing us that now, at last, the DAY itself has come!

It seems hardly necessary to add that all these changes do not affect the *sense* in the least. "Man's day" and "the day of man" are the same day. "Lot's wife" and "the wife of Lot" (as it is literally) is the same wife. "God's house" (Gen. 28:22) means just the same to us as "the house of God" (Gen. 28:17). "The Lord's people" (1 Sam. 2:24) are the same as the people of the Lord (Jud. 5:11). "Christ's gospel" (2 Cor. 2:12) and "Christ's sufferings" (1 Pet. 4:13) have never been taken for anything but "the gospel of Christ" and "the sufferings of Christ". In fact it is an axiom in Scripture that when God uses the same words He means the same things. The grammar, the rank of words and their order are exceedingly important, but they cannot introduce a radical change of sense.

So then, we conclude that while "the Lord's DAY" and "the day of the LORD" are *identical*, the Spirit has used the one which perfectly fits this context, so as to help rather than burden the even flow of thought; so as to give an agreeable and satisfactory answer to the question which absorbs us: *When?*

The Hebrew language has no adjective "Lord's". "The Lord's messenger" (Hag. 1:13) and "the messenger of the Lord" (Mal. 2:17) are two translations of the same Hebrew phrase. Likewise "the captain of the host of the Lord" (Josh. 5:14) and "the captain of the Lord's host" (Josh. 5:15) represent one and the same Hebrew expression. So that to translate the phrase "the Lord's day" into Hebrew one is obliged to say "the day of the Lord". Salkinson's Hebrew New Testament translates it "the Day of the Lord" (*Yom haadon*). Some modern languages are, in this respect, like the Hebrew. French and Italian, for instance, have no adjective "Lord's", and the Greek of Rev. 1:10 should have been translated "the day of the Lord". The translators, however, have colored the text by the prevailing misconception, rendering the Lord's Day by "*jour de Dimanche*" and "*giorno della Domenica*". The Russian and Old Slavonic versions have "Sunday", although both languages have the adjective "Lord's", and both translate the Hebrew *Yom Yehovah* "the Lord's Day" and "the Day of the Lord".

The first sensation which greeted John, in his new condition was a loud voice. Loud as it was, we may well believe that he recognized the accents of his Lord. He was one of His sheep and all His sheep know His voice. What a thrill it must have given him to hear once more the voice that swayed the multitudes and stilled the surging waves, that calmly commanded the dead damsel to arise, and shouted to decaying Lazarus, "Come forth!" This is the voice that all that are in the graves shall hear, and Death will have no power to withstand its force. As it was with John, our first intimation of His blessed presence will be His voice. We have never heard Him, even as we have never seen Him, but we shall need no interpreter to tell us Whose voice it is! No other sound can have the transforming power of that

voice! It will not only rouse the sleeping dead, but will give immortality to us, who are alive at His presence. We shall be changed and, like John, shall be caught up to meet Him. But, unlike John, it will not be in spirit only, but with bodies transfigured, glorified.

He is commanded to write the vision on a scroll and send it to the seven ecclesias. Much has been said about this simple command. In early times it caused a considerable prejudice against the whole scroll because, in at least one instance, there was no ecclesia in the city mentioned to which to send the message. But the real difficulty lies deeper. The succeeding letters are suitable only to ecclesias in the day of the Lord. Why send them to those for whom they were not intended? The whole matter becomes exceedingly simple if we remember that John is given this command when he himself was, in spirit, in the day of the Lord. Hence the vision and the seven epistles have *no* application to the past, and far less to the present. No one will question that, should such ecclesias be established in Asia Minor in the future they would receive these epistles. This is the only satisfactory solution.

The "application" of these epistles to the present administration has been a powerful factor in the adulteration of the grace which is ours in Christ Jesus. We cannot follow John into the day of the Lord without our falling out of grace. They find their fulfillment on earth at a time when we will find ourselves in the heavens.

A. E. K.

EDITORIAL

THE latest reports from our beloved brother Gelesnoff was comforting. For some time recovery was hindered by continual severe relapses, but now there seems to be a permanent improvement in his condition which allows us to hope for his recovery to a comparative measure of health and strength. The many friends who have been inquiring will be glad to know that he is gaining. We hope that, ere long, he will once more be able to take up his pen for our edification.

OUR special representatives, Benjamin B. Williams and wife, are traveling in a motor house, from the Pacific Coast to the north and east, and hope to call on some of our friends on the way. Any courtesies and cooperation will be appreciated by us. They are introducing the Version and our literature on the way as the Lord opens up opportunities. Pray that this effort may be abundantly blessed.

IN response to many requests the article on "Christ's Exposure of the 'Larger Hope'" with an introduction will be reprinted in pamphlet form. If all who wish copies will let us know the quantity they wish as soon as possible, we will know how many to print. The price will be 10 cents, 3 for 25 cents. It should be circulated amongst those who are carefully kept from knowing the facts by their leaders. Send your orders!

WE often have kindly inquiries as to the welfare of the work. It seems almost a miracle that we have survived the extraordinary straits of the last few years, when many magazines with much greater support had to discontinue, and those which kept on were continually calling for help. The unsolicited generosity of kind friends who have the truth at heart has enabled us to keep just above the rising tide of costs, though the work was much curtailed and the stock of literature was much depleted.

The tide of high prices is now receding, though it seems very slow in becoming normal. Paper, which cost about four times its pre-war prices, is now about three times what it ought to be. We look for further reductions and hope to be able to replenish our stock of literature when funds and conditions warrant.

The work has been carried on in the midst of weakness and weariness, and much opposition, not only by human opponents, but by our spiritual enemies, through innocent and unsuspecting media. No efforts of ours seemed of any avail to avoid the delays and difficulties which have beset us. The trial of patience seemed almost unbearable at times, but the Lord gave endurance.

Under the attractive title, "Christ Victorious over All", Joseph S. Johnson has given us a volume of studies on eschatology which denies the orthodox theory of "Satan Victorious over the Majority" and seeks to place the crown of universal conquest on the head of Christ, where it rightfully belongs.

The first chapter is entitled "He Humbled Himself". The second deals with "The Personal Equation". Then a chapter is devoted to "Things that Differ", such as

heaven and earth, the dispensations, the gospels, the resurrections, etc.

The "Five Eons of Progressive Revelation" brings in many notions which have been entertained as to the eons and their duration. Then follows a discussion of "Natural Religion", and a chapter of some length proving "Sin's Penalty Paid Once for All". The question "Punishment or Discipline?" is decided in favor of the latter. "Heaven, Hades, Gehenna, etc." is followed by a chapter on "Free-Will, or Self-Determination", which, as usual, brings in the opinions of men and contrasts them with the truth. The closing chapters are composed of "Miscellaneous Quotations" and the "Scripture Passages" which are usually referred to as bearing on the subject.

Earlier writers on this theme who are freely quoted throughout the book, lacked the only key to its solution—the doctrine of the eons. Hence this work must be classed among those which really prove the great truth of the ultimate victory of Christ over all evil. It is hoped that the free use of ridicule and sarcasm will not offend those who believe in eternal torment or those against whom it is directed.

The book may be obtained in the United States from Joseph S. Johnston, 640 East 43d St., Chicago, Ill. In England send to E. A. Sutton, 131 Brookbank Road, Lewisham, S. E. 13, London. Price 8s, 3d and postage.

WE have been pleased to receive two little booklets by A. D. Foster, 3148 Cottage Grove Avenue, Chicago, Ill. One deals with the Eons and the Law, the other with the Pentecostal Church and Miracles, putting each in its true place.

THE third instalment of the CONCORDANT VERSION is all in type. The proofs are being read and checkers are at work checking each word with a concordance to discover any irregularities in rendering, grammar, etc. It may be some time ere this work has all been satisfactorily done and conditions are such that the edition can be printed but we hope it will not be long. This will complete all of Paul's epistles, by far the most important part of the whole work for us in this economy. There is no need now to wait for the whole work to be completed to get the truth for the present time.

Half of the Greek and sublinear of Acts, the next instalment, has been put into type and work is proceeding on the balance. The many special expressions used by the writer of Acts and glossed over in our versions will make the sublinear of Acts especially valuable and interesting.

We greatly desire to push on and finish the succeeding instalment, Hebrews to Jude, which will close up the gap and complete all the Greek Scriptures except the gospels, and we trust the Lord will open the way. He has helped hitherto, and will honor our efforts in His own time.

The superlinear in the later editions will be further enriched by giving all the correctors of Sinaiticus, especially s^2 , the editor whose alterations seem to be of special value and worthy of more than ordinary consideration.

We are doing our utmost to provide the saints with the facts of God's revelation, on which they can rely, and feel it our duty to affectionately urge everyone who values God's word to aid us in its circulation, and arouse an interest in its principles and method. We believe it will yet prove the mightiest weapon forged for the truth in these days of declension and apostasy.

THE apostasy proceeds apace. The nations have a very precarious place in the olive tree. The great majority of Christians no longer believe in the inspiration of the Scriptures, or at least not in an "impossible verbal inspiration and infallibility". The leaders of the church are strong on education and social reform, but have discarded the teachings of the Word of God.

We thank God that there are some who stand true to the fact of inspiration. The various Bible Institutes and their literature and speakers, as well as their students seem to be nucleus for a counter movement. The matter bids fair to become an issue in many of the denominations, and is at present causing much stir among the Northern Baptists. The crisis is presented in the *Chosen People* thus:

"A case in point, of recent occurrence, is that of the Wealthy Street Baptist Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan, and the other churches allied with it in the Grand River Valley Association. Because Dr. Van Osdel has consistently refused to "knuckle down" to the system and has openly exposed the machinery's denial of the infallibility of the Word of God, the State Convention, led on by their enraged leaders, excommunicated the Association from the Baptist ranks of Michigan! And this, in spite of the constitutional declaration that every Baptist Church is per se a member of the State Convention! Was Rome more despotic in her day? And they call themselves Christians!"

But the situation on the foreign mission field seems to be even more deplorable. Apart from the independent faith missions and the China Inland Mission, there seems to be very little real gospel work done in China. Dr. W. H. Griffith-Thomas, who spent some time in China, reported as follows:

"There are Christian institutions where fifty per cent. of the teaching staff are non-Christian. That is risky. Shanghai is the center of all the religious societies and the headquarters of all the organizations;

there are 284 missionaries resident in Shanghai and only four of them doing evangelistic work.

"In Canton there are 100 missionaries, but not one of them doing evangelistic work.

"A friend of mine collected twenty-six graduates of a well-known Christian university in China and gave them a dinner, thinking to find out what was the net result of the work and influence of that Christian institution in which they had had four years of study. He found that twenty-five of them had gone back into full heathen Chinese life.

"There have been proposals to translate into Chinese that deplorable book called 'The Shorter Bible'.

"I found in China a very great deal of the modernistic higher critical teaching which affects everything in the Bible because it affects your conception of the Lord Jesus Christ. I was told it was due to the kind of men sent out from American seminaries."

It is needless to say where we stand, for we believe in the strictest sense in the literal inspiration of the Word of God, and hold in honor and esteem everyone who is on the side of faith, no matter how severe they may be in their treatment of us because we believe some portions which they deny. Some years since one of those who is contending for verbal inspiration read Col. 1:20, and commented on it to this effect: "There are some persons," he said, "who actually believe this scripture just as it stands; but . . .". Here alas, is the weakness of this movement. It is also tainted with the apostasy. It clings to the inspiration of the Bible, but substitutes a creed, which all must believe, quite apart from the Scriptures. And, as in this case, the Scriptures themselves must not be believed "as they stand", but they must be accommodated to this creed.

Let us have no creed but the Scriptures, and let us believe all of God's words "as they stand". Nevertheless, let us encourage every man and movement that stands on God's word written.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT AND PRESENT TRUTH

IT is sometimes brought as a reproach against those of us who believe in endeavoring to interpret various parts of the Scriptures according to the time and purpose for which each was written, that we set up Paul above Christ, and throw over large portions of the Word as having no value for us. Especially are we supposed to reject the Sermon on the Mount; and we are then branded and treated almost as blasphemers and deniers of Christ's divinity. The special object of this study therefore is to show, that the teaching of Paul's Prison and Pastoral Epistles, i. e., the Epistles of Mystery, bears out that of almost the whole of the Sermon on the Mount, but amplifying and exemplifying it. The very few exceptions are those portions that have to do with the Jewish law and ordinances, and depend for blessing on works rather than on grace.

We are not of those who hold that the Pauline epistles are mostly very human documents, the general tenor of which is in harmony with God's will, and the result of Paul's high level of life and experience. If this were all, they might be dismissed without further argument, as not to be compared with the true words of the Son of God on earth. But we believe that they are literally God-breathed (2 Tim. 3:16). and so are a fulfillment of Christ's own promise in John 16:13, that "when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He shall guide

you into all the truth." Christ did not claim when on earth to have said the last possible word on spiritual things; and we know that years later He gave special revelations to John with regard to the day of Jehovah. Over and over again we learn, that to Paul were revealed certain age-long secrets and that he had visions, about which it was not lawful to tell us. If, then, these epistles are also from the Spirit of Truth, it is obvious that they will not flatly contradict His earlier teaching, but may contain modifications suitable for a later date.

Let us then take the Sermon on the Mount subject by subject, and see wherein each is reproduced, amplified or even reversed in Paul's later epistles.

Matt. 5:3. "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for their's is the kingdom of heaven". In Phil. 2:7 Christ Jesus, Himself, is given as the great example of this poverty. He "emptied Himself"; and for Him is not merely the kingdom of heaven, but to Him every knee in the universe shall bow, and every tongue confess that He is Lord.

Verse 4. "Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted". This finds no counterpart in this economy. Our blessings and privileges in Christ are such that we are enjoined to "Rejoice in the Lord always" (Phil. 4:4).

Verse 5. "Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth". Here meekness is a condition of inheriting material blessing. But for us it is to be a consequence of "the calling wherewith" we "are called" (Eph. 4:2), and of our position "as God's elect" (Col. 4:12).

Verse 6. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled". Our thirst

is to be satisfied not merely by being filled with righteousness, but by being "filled in spirit" (Eph. 5:18).

Verse 7. "Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy". We thank God that in this economy we have obtained mercy "by grace," for we could never merit it. But on the other hand, in Eph. 6:9 masters are exhorted to do good to their servants, in view of the fact that they too have a Master, with Whom they have to do.

Verse 8. "Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God". Purity is emphasised in Eph. 5:3-5, for none who is impure "hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God." And because of our hope of glory in Christ, we are urged to "put to death" all uncleanness (Col. 3:5).

Verse 9. "Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the sons of God". But for us our calling in Christ is given as the reason for seeking after peace, and letting it rule in our hearts (Eph. 4:3, and Col. 3:15). And the Son of God Himself is declared to be the great Peacemaker (Col. 1:20).

Verses 10-12. Rejoicing in persecutions. To us "it hath been granted (as a boon) . . . to suffer in His behalf" (Phil. 1:29). Paul gives himself as an example of rejoicing in his sufferings (Phil. 2:17, 18 and Col. 1:24); and looks forward to the "great reward in heaven" in "the crown of righteousness" (2 Tim. 4:8).

Verse 13. "Salt". Our speech is to be "always with grace, seasoned with salt" (Col. 4:6).

Verses 14-16. "Ye are the light of the world". We, too, are "lights in the world" (Phil. 2:15); and are to "walk as children of light, . . . proving what is well-pleasing unto the Lord" (Eph. 5:8, 10).

Verses 17-20. Fulfilling the law. This was Christ's purpose, and He has accomplished it, "having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments in ordinances" (Eph. 2:15).

Verses 21, 22, 25, 26. Against anger. This is rebuked in Ephesians 4:26, 31.

Verses 23, 24. The offering at the altar. There is no further need of the altar in this economy; "for through Him we both have our access in one spirit unto the Father" (Eph. 2:18).

Verses 27-32. Against adultery. This we have dealt with under Verse 8.

Verses 33-37. The importance of truthfulness. This is emphasised by Paul in Eph. 4:25 and Col. 3:9.

Verses 38, 39. Laws against strife. "The Lord's servant must not strive, but be gentle towards all" (2 Tim. 2:24); and an overseer must be "no brawler, no striker; but gentle, not contentious" (1 Tim. 3:3).

Verses 40-42. Giving graciously more even than is demanded. This is especially brought out in Paul's teaching for those who were slaves, and so absolutely under compulsion (Eph. 6:5, 6; Col. 3: 22, 23; 1 Tim. 6:1,2; Tit. 2:9, 10).

Verses 43-47. "Love your enemies". Col. 3:13, 14 teaches us to be forbearing and forgiving "if any man have a complaint against any", and "above all these things put on love". Paul also exemplifies this in proclaiming the gospel to those about to kill him (2 Tim. 4:17).

Verse 48. "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect". Just as Christ teaches perfection through love, so does Paul in Col 3:14, just

quoted. Paul also longs that all may be perfect in Christ (Eph. 4:13 and Col. 1:28).

Chapter 6:1-6. Against ostentation in good works, and prayer for reward. While in the Pastoral Epistles great stress is laid on the necessity of a believer's practicing good works and being generous, especially for those who wish to be overseers or to be enrolled as widows; yet in Phil. 2:3 they are urged to do "nothing through vainglory". Our Lord also is cited as the great example of humility. And we are reminded that it is "not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to His mercy He saves us" (Tit. 3:5).

Verses 7, 8. Against vain repetitions in prayer. While these are valueless, we are urged to "continue steadfastly in prayer, watching therein with thanksgiving" (Col. 4:2).

Verse 9. "Our Father who art in heaven". We, too, "have our access . . . unto the Father" (Eph. 2:18; 3:14).

"Hallowed be Thy Name". Glory is constantly ascribed to God by Paul, but especially so in Eph. 3:20, 21 and Phil. 4:20.

Verse 10. "Thy kingdom come." In this economy we do not need to pray for the coming of the kingdom of the Father. We are already by faith "translated . . . into the kingdom of the Son of His love" (Col. 1:13).

"Thy will be done." Paul writes of "servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart" (Eph. 6:6).

Verse 11. "Give us this day our daily bread." Paul could say "My God shall supply every need of yours

according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:19).

Verses 12, 14, 15. "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." Here forgiveness by the Father is dependent on the man's forgiving others. But in the present economy this has been exactly reversed. No longer is our forgiveness a consequence of our forgiving, but the cause, as is clearly brought out in Eph. 4:32 and Col. 3:13. "By grace have ye been saved through faith and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, that no man should glory" (Eph. 2:8, 9). This is a fundamental difference.

Verse 13. "Bring us not into temptation." This word means a trial or testing. It is only used once in Paul's later epistles, of those who desire to be rich, and so test themselves (1 Tim. 6:9). Our standing with God is "by grace through faith", and so is not dependent on satisfactorily passing tests.

"Deliver us from the evil one." The means of deliverance is to our hands in "the armor of God", and especially "the shield of faith" (Eph. 6:11, 16).

Verses 16-18. Against ostentation in fasting. The words "to fast" or "fasting" do not once occur in Paul's later epistles, indicating that the subject has no place in this economy. But this is shown more definitely in Col. 2:20-23, where he reproves those who had "died with Christ from the rudiments of the world" for being again "subject to ordinances". He explains these as being human teachings about various forms of abstinence. This form of "humility and severity to the body" looks well, but is of no real "value against the indulgence of the flesh". Furthermore he implies in 1 Tim. 4:1-5 that such abstinence is one of the "doctrines

of demons" for such as "fall away from the faith", but is not to be countenanced "by them that believe and know the truth".

Verses 19-24. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, . . . but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven." We are "blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ" (Eph. 1:3); we "sit with Him in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:6); "our citizenship is in heaven" (Phil. 3:20); and finally Paul says, "Set your minds on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth" (Col. 3:2).

Verses 25-34. Against anxiety. Paul says in Phil. 4:6, "In nothing be anxious". He himself had learned to be content under all circumstances (vv. 11, 12); and he gives his reason in verse 19, "My God shall supply every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus".

Chapter 7:1-5. "Judge not, that ye be not judged." This section is well summarized in Phil. 2:3, "in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself".

Verse 6. Against indiscriminate distribution of holy things. The most precious and holy thing we have to distribute now is the knowledge of the truth, the secret that was revealed to Paul. In 2 Tim. 2:2 he impresses upon Timothy the necessity of committing these things to faithful men, who alone could use and pass on aright the secret.

Verses 7-11. On prayer and its answer. Paul by precept and example has quite a lot to say on this subject in these epistles. But it is perhaps brought out most clearly in Eph. 3:14-20, where we have his requests for the greatest things, and then his declaration that

God is "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think".

Verse 12. The Golden Rule. Paul says, "The end of the charge is love" (1 Tim. 1:5).

Verses 13, 14. The broad and narrow ways. In Phil. 3:17-21 there is a similar comparison between two classes of persons, those "who mind earthly things", and those whose "citizenship is in heaven". We can see their walk along the road, their ambition and their goal.

Verses 15-20. Christ warns against false teachers. We have similar warnings in Col. 2:8, 16-18; 1 Tim. 1:6, 7; 4:1-3; 6:2-5; 2 Tim. 3:6; etc.

Verses 21-27. Mere outward forms of good works are of no value, but to do the will of God. Similarly in Col. 2:20-23 those who "died with Christ" are not to subject themselves to ordinances and outward forms. Let us remember that our salvation is "not of works, that no man should glory".

The above does not profess to be an exhaustive treatise on the teachings of Christ and Paul, but a comparison of the main lines of thought in our Lord's kingdom teaching while on earth, and His later revelation from heaven through His servant Paul with regard to this present economy. It will be seen that on moral and ethical lines there is great similarity. The difference is seen when it comes to questions of outward ceremonies, our standing in Christ by grace, and our consequent attitude towards material things.

May the Holy Spirit enable us to realize in our lives the answer to His servant's prayer, "that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all discernment; so that ye may distinguish the things that differ" (Phil. 1:9, 10).

DANSEY SMITH

NAHUM

WE have seen, in Jonah, the rise of Assyria as the ranking power through a national repentance which, swelling upwards from the people, was confirmed and organized by the authorities. Micah sweeps over the entire period of Assyrian ascendancy. We watch the progress of the titanic struggle of Judah with Assyria. We see the unfoldment of the great combat in its political and religious aspects. In Nahum Assyrian supremacy is ebbing away to return no more. Nahum is a prophet identified with that turn in Judah's fortunes, by which she defeated Assyria, and attained the zenith of national glory. He is the prophet of revenge, and from the most bitter of the heathen wars.

The book of Nahum consists of a double title and two odes vibrant to the impending fall of Assyria. The title runs *Removal of Nineveh: Book of Tracing of Nahum the Elkoshite*.^{*} The two divisions of the title supply an index to the special scope of the two component poems. While both treat the common topic of the fall of Nineveh, the two odes are quite distinct in character. The first, (1:2-2:2) delineate a national crisis. It points out the principles underlying a life and death struggle between two nations. A brief poem, affirming the power of divine vengeance and instancing the physical means for its execution, is followed by reference to a clash of kingdoms exhibiting the worship of

^{*} See UNSEARCHABLE RICHES, Vol. X, pp. 237-239.

retributive justice in an illustrative light. Arrogant Assyria, which defies Jehovah and marshals her forces to oppose His sway, sinks to rise no more; whereas feeble Judah, humbly, even though imperfectly, bowing to His supremacy, experiences an unprecedented, undreamt-of realization of its national hopes.

The second ode (2:3-3:19) is a study of a moral problem. Here the theme is lifted to a higher plane, passing beyond its personal and specific manifestations to the universal and impersonal. There is a striking absence of any reference to Israel. Local interests are not in evidence. Racial and creedal distinctions, which bulk so large in the first ode, have vanished. The transient aspects through which human experience manifests itself have faded. The whole fabric of eonian time has volatilized. National conduct is set in the searching light of the one abiding, immutable principle—justice. Nineveh has sold *peoples* by her whoredoms and *races* by her sorceries; it is *nations* that shall gaze upon her failure and kingdoms upon her baseness. We view no single episode of Assyrian history, no isolated instance of barbaric treatment, but the passion of her whole career on the eve of its close. Nahum does not exult over the fall of Nineveh in Judah's name. He is the spokesman for all the peoples of Western Asia. He gives voice to the outraged conscience of humanity. For centuries the countries of the Persian gulf and the Mediterranean had been crushed, thwarted and demoralized by the most brutal empire which was ever suffered to roll its force across the world. But the reckoning day has come. Nineveh is stripped of power. The enslaved peoples greet the news of her fall with a wild uproar of hand-

clapping. Nahum's book is a sigh of world-wide relief—one great "At Last!"

The first ode reflects a definite historical situation. It celebrates the defeat of Sennacherib and the passing away of Assyria's supremacy. It begins by affirming the power of divine vengeance and the certainty of the overthrow of His enemies. Jehovah is patient and slow to anger, but in the end He must rise to judgment. He has a vast range of weapons to encompass the overthrow of His adversaries. The whole armory of physical forces is at His disposal (3). At this point the train of thought is suspended while the occasion which called up in the prophet's mind thoughts of divine vengeance is being taken in. A rebuker has appeared on the scene. He has thrown the nations into a state of agitation by his avowed determination to reduce peoples and races to a state of abject submission.* The disturbance, which has already engulfed Samaria and wasted its fairest portions, has spread over the whole prophetic world.† From the Persian gulf to the Mediterranean the nations are in tumult (4:5). The political upheaval provoked by this troubler is aggravated by seismic convulsions and disturbances in the realm of nature (5, cf. Joel 2:10).

The prophet now picks up the flow of argument at the point where he left it off (6). Who can stand before the fury of a God Whose arsenal embraces the whole range of nature's forces? But the very idea of irresistible power, which invests the thought of His vengeance

* *A rebuker in the sea to curb it! to dry up all rivers!* Rivers and waters are nations, 1:4, 12; 2:8. Cf. Isa. 8:7; Rev. 17:5.

† Heb. *te-vel*, see UNSEARCHABLE RICHES, Vol. X, pp. 244-246.

with terror, enhances immeasurably another divine quality—goodness (7). Jehovah protects His people with the same inflexibility of purpose and relentless energy with which He pursues His foes. The same ponderous array of forces which overwhelms His enemies shields His friends. This creates assurance of His ability to provide for His own a shelter in the day of adversity. The world may be breaking up; the elements may be loose, but amidst the blind crash the feeble few may know that Jehovah knows them (7). The God Who works with such irresistible, absolute power in nature will not relax in the fate He is preparing for Nineveh. He will destroy her utterly at one stroke, not needing to raise His forces a second time. No half measures are His, Whose are the storm, the drought and the earthquake(8).

What can Nineveh scheme against Jehovah? What do her carefully planned campaigns amount to in the face of Jehovah's irrevocable verdict of utter destruction? Has not an evil counselor, scheming evil against Jehovah gone out of her? That fact fixes her fate and seals her doom. As dry stubble before the fire so will his mighty legions go down before Him. "Thus saith Jehovah, ruling over many waters: yet shall they be shorn, and pass away." So, with the Septuagint and the Syriac, we read verse 12. This reading imparts force and cogency to the passage and throws upon it the light of contemporary prophetic utterances. (Compare Isa. 8:7, which has in view the same situation, and where the same simile is used). It focuses the passage around one central idea which is carried forward to a consummating anti-climax. In verse 4, the nations, under the simile of wa-

ters, are drawn into a confederation by the Assyrian. In verse 12, Jehovah, presiding over the waters, dissolves the confederation, and thus frustrates the ambitious scheme of the Assyrian. More than this: Jehovah has fixed the fate of the evil counselor himself:

Charged against thee Jehovah:

No further sowing from thy name!

(No further sowing) from the house of thy God!

I cut off graven image and molten image!

I make thy grave, for thou art accursed!

The sowing, as in Hos. 1:4, where the same verb is employed, refers to a deportation. The Assyrian boasted of his ability to overthrow Judah and many nations beside by the strength of his might and by the power of his god (Isa. 10:8-11). His hopes were doomed to disappointment. His legions melt away as snow before heat; the house of his god became his grave; his pantheon was left vacant with the fragments of its broken images strewn over the pavement!

Let Judah rejoice! The bearer of glad tidings is in her midst. Behold him standing on the temple mountain! Hark to his proclamation of peace! He brings to the citizens of Judah the welcome intelligence that the tyrant is laid low! No more will he trespass in the holy land.

The first ode has baffled expositors. The text, chh. 1:9-2:2, has been pronounced badly disordered calling for a reconstruction of some kind. The perplexing feature is the supposed alternation of Judah and Assyria.* To

* The alleged alternation is as follows: 1:12, Assyria; 1:13, Judah; 1:14, Assyria; 1:15, Judah; 2:1, Assyria; 2:2, Judah, again.

remove the alleged difficulty the position of verses 13 and 14, in the first chapter, and of verses 1 and 2 in the second, are reversed. By this transposition, it is claimed, the verses on Assyria and Judah become a connected whole; the first poem terminates at ch. 2:1; and the ode on the fall of Nineveh commences with a note of alarm announcing the approach of the avenger. "He that dasheth in pieces is come", etc. This rearrangement is very clever, and reads as if it were right; but this is not obvious, and would hardly have been alleged apart from the exigencies of an *a priori* theory. We may well ask the question: how were the verses thrown out of alignment?

The passage as it lies gives a satisfactory account of itself, and needs no reconstruction. It views the crisis from the respective standpoints of the two contestants. Ch. 1:9-14 refers to Assyria and makes a connected and orderly whole. The proposed rearrangement roots itself in failure to see that 1:13 refers to the nations mustered by the Assyrian, and not to Judah. Ch. 1:15-2:2 refers to Judah, and likewise makes a connected and orderly whole. The two passages are akin in aim as well as form. The counter forces involved on either side center themselves in personal representatives. On the Assyrian side, the evil counselor is pitted against the divine Avenger. On the Judean side, the bearer of glad tidings is matched against the hammer*. Both passages exhibit the common feature of an interrupting parenthesis. In the

* Read *mappatz*, *hammer*, instead of *mepheets*, *breaker in pieces*. In Jer. 51:20 Babylon is called by God His *mappatz*, *Hammer* or *Maul*. Cf. Isa. 10:5, where the Assyrian is called by God His *Rod*, and Isa 7:20, where he is called a *Razor*.

verses on Assyria, the divine verdict against Nineveh and her king is interrupted by an explanatory note indicating the method of deliverance (1:13): the pressure on Judah is relieved by relaxing the Assyrian's hold on subject races. In the verses on Judah, the flow of glad tidings is broken by recollections of the crisis from which Judah is emerging. Between the announcements of the tyrant's doom and the return of freedom to Zion we hear snatches of yesterday's tidings. *The hammer is upon thee! Keep the fortress! Watch thy way! Brace the loins! Summon courage!* These admonitory calls of the leaders still resound in Judah's ears. The advance of God's hosts on Nineveh, the opening scene of the second ode, forms the logical sequence to the doom of her king which concluded the antecedent ode.

(To be continued)

IN HIM

In Him the far-flung ages dawned, aglow
With all the splendour of God's purpose deep,
In Him the orbs of space their stations keep,
And all creation, longing, waits to show
The beauty of His perfect reign. And lo!
Earth's weary toilers o'er life's mountains steep,
Unite with nature's myriad hosts to leap
Their bars, His liberty and grace to know.

In hope, thus throbbing, ages pass along,
Attendant on His will, august, sublime.
Each interlude a vivid drama, strong
In mystery, unfolding to the prime
Rare day of God. 'Tis then in Him the song
Exults, Who triumphs o'er the ills of time.

WILLIAM MEALAND.

IN THE BEGINNING

ONE of the scientific theories of the beginning of the physical universe is called the "nebular hypothesis". It describes the primordial condition as a vast, diffused, shapeless mass of matter, like the nebulae still to be seen in the heavens. Where this nebula came from it does not stop to inquire. We may well hold up such a theory to ridicule if it pretends to tell us of the *beginning* of things, for it starts in the middle, and does not lead us back to any beginning at all. It is a *nebulous hypothesis*.

Theology has its nebulous hypothesis also. It is reflected in our versions by the rendering "*In the beginning*". *What beginning?* When the mind seeks to grasp the idea of a definite absolute beginning of the universe, before which nothing existed it lands in a misty nebula. No matter how far back it may go, or how much it may antedate, it cannot go back of the existence of God, Who had no beginning. The more thought there is given to the question, the more apparent it will become that Scripture does not speak of any definite absolute beginning, which marked the transition of the universe from non-existence into existence.

Let the reader of this article attempt to formulate in his mind the idea of an absolute beginning, before which there was nothing. To do this it will be necessary to give even God a beginning. It will be found that both mind and heart revolt and refuse to formulate any such

conception. No matter how far back we project our thoughts, God is there, even though there be nothing else. Whatever may have had a beginning, He had none. From this, as well as further considerations which we shall find in a study of the words for *beginning*, we conclude that the phrase, "in [the] beginning", is a relative formula, defining, not the absolute inauguration of all, but the beginning of that which is suggested by the context. God and the heavens and the earth did not begin at the same time. God was before the creation of the heavens and the earth. Hence, as we shall see from the form of the phrase in the original, creation was not in *the* absolute beginning, but in *a* beginning, or *as* a beginning on which subsequent revelation is based. The first point to be solidly settled in our minds is its *relative* usage. This is abundantly clear in those passages in which we are informed what it is of which it is the beginning.

Arranging them as nearly as possible in chronological order, we have the beginning of

Creation, Mk. 10:6; 13:19; 2 Pet. 3:4; Rev. 3:14

The world, Mt. 24:21

Days, Heb. 7:3

The gospel, Mk. 1:1; Phil. 4:15

Miracles, Jn. 2:11

Travail, Mt. 24:8; Mk. 13:8.

One beginning is in the dim past and one is still in the future. It is evident then, that, to fix the time of any beginning we must know of what it speaks.

The Greek word *archee* and the Hebrew *reshith*, are very much alike both in meaning and usage. *Reshith* comes from the Hebrew root denoting the *head*. *Archee* is from the Greek element denoting *origin*. Both are

used in a variety of spheres. They stand for that which is *chief*, as the chief priest. *Archee* is often used of sovereignties, usually called "principalities" in the common version. But we will confine ourselves to its usage with reference to *time*. Then it is best translated *beginning*. One example will graphically illustrate its force. The sheet which Peter saw let down from heaven had four *beginnings* (A. V., corners) or edges (Ac. 10: 11, 15). The sheet began at its edge.

Even the beginning of creation does not refer to a fixed point but to a series of acts. Peter (2 Pet. 3:4) doubtless refers to the creation of Gen. 1:1. Mark (Mk. 10:6) refers to the later creation of Adam. John (Rev. 3:14) takes in all the range of creation and makes our Lord Himself the great Beginning of Creation, or; to revert to the original meaning of *archee*, God's creative Original, for all was created *in* and *through* Him.

The beginning of the gospel also refers to two distinct thoughts. In Mark (1:1) it may refer to the *pre-face* to his account of our Lord's ministry. It cannot however, refer to the much later event spoken of by Paul to the Philippians (4:15).

The beginning of miracles took place in Cana of Galilee, in the early days of our Lord's ministry. The beginning of sorrows awaits the great time of affliction, more severe than any since the beginning of the world.

We are at a considerable disadvantage because we must consider the finer distinctions of Scripture through the medium of a language which is not adequate to the task, nor flexible enough to be bent to the exact turn of the inspired thought. We must say "in *the* beginning", when the original has no definite article, and does not refer us to any previously understood beginning. If

we use the indefinite article we must change the connective and say "*For* a beginning", or "*As* a beginning", or use the idiomatic phrase "To begin with". This leaves the beginning open for definition by the context. From these passages we deduce the principle that, when the time of a beginning is not stated in so many words, it is to be inferred from the context.

At this point anyone who reads the originals will admire the manner in which the matter is treated in the inspired records. Not "*in the beginning*" but simply "In beginning", without the article, which in idiomatic English would be "*For* a beginning", "*As* a beginning". "*To commence with*" or some such phrase. While "*In the beginning*" is impossible and mystifying, this is illuminating. God does not begin His revelation by putting before us a thought beyond human comprehension and of no vital value to what follows, but He prefaces His word by predicating what it was that began the universe of which it deals. It is not that the creation was at "*the beginning*", but that the creation of the heavens and the earth *was* the beginning on which subsequent revelation rests. The whole range of revelation is occupied with these two spheres—heaven and earth. How reasonable, then, to commence with their creation. God existed before the creation, hence it was not "*in the beginning*".

The same phrase "In the beginning" commences John's account of our Lord's ministry. Like the Hebrew phrase, it also lacks the definite article. It is not "*In the beginning*" but "In beginning", idiomatically "To begin with". Just as the heavens and the earth are the foundations of the Genesis revelation, so the Logos, or Expression, or "Word" is the basis of the writings

of John. Paul brings the Lord before our *eyes* as the Image of the invisible God, but John appeals to our *ears* by introducing Him as the "Word" of God. This is the foundation on which his whole presentation of Christ rests. Hence he commences by introducing Him as the beginning of his whole system of doctrine.

There is something very nebulous also in the thought of the Word or Expression being *with* God. What is the force of this connection? The word is *pros*, and means TOWARD, as in the twenty-ninth verse of this chapter, where John sees Jesus coming *toward* Him. It is evident that we could not use *with* in such a connection. In fact, though this word occurs about a hundred times in John's account, it is never rendered *with* in any other passage. It is usually *unto* or *to*. A remarkable parallel passage is found in the tenth chapter, where it is used again of the *logos* or word. There it is rendered "*unto* whom the word of God came". As there are at least two Greek connections, *meta*, and *sun*, which mean "with", it is evident that "the Word was *with* God" does not give us an accurate idea of the true meaning of this passage.

To translate "the Word was *toward* God" is too literal, but its meaning is clear enough if we remember the significance of the Logos, the Interpreter of the unknown God. It corresponds closely to His later declaration, "I am the Way". The Word indicated the *direction* in which we must go to find God. He was ever the Mediator between God and His creatures.

But there is still another grave difficulty in this passage which all who value a clear apprehension of God's revelation will not shrink from facing. How could the Logos be *with* (or toward) God and also *be* God? One

entity which has a definite relation to another can by no means be that other. Neither can one thing sustain such a relation to itself. The key to this dilemma lies in the significance of the term "Word" and in the arrangement of the words in the original, which our translators have seen fit to reverse with no apparent cause. It should read "God was the Word", not "the Word was God". Writing to Jews who were accustomed to designate the early theophanies by the term Logos, John now assures them that the God with Whom they were acquainted through the Hebrew scriptures was the Logos or Word of whom he is about to write. God Himself is invisible. Adam did not see Him. Moses did not speak to Him. They saw and spoke to the Logos. So that the God of the Hebrews to whom John wrote was the Logos. Hence he says, not that "the Word *was* God", but that "God (of your Scriptures) was the Word".

Christ is the great Mediator between God and His creatures, through Whom He reveals Himself. As the Word or Expression He speaks for the silent God. As the Image He unveils the invisible God. In both of these relations He is connected with creation. As the Word, all was made *through* Him. As the Image, all was created *in* Him.

It is evident that our Lord, at some time, became a part of creation. His holy body, which He received at His birth was a visible, tangible frame of flesh and blood like our own, apart from sin. No one would deny that He was born. But, as the Image and Word of God, He existed long before His birth, since all was made through Him and created in Him. Nor is it possible to conceive of Him as a tangible and visible Repre-

sentation of God—One Whom men could see and with Whom they could converse—without acknowledging that He sustained a close relation to the visible creation. Creation is not necessarily visible, but that which is visible, is of necessity, a part of creation.

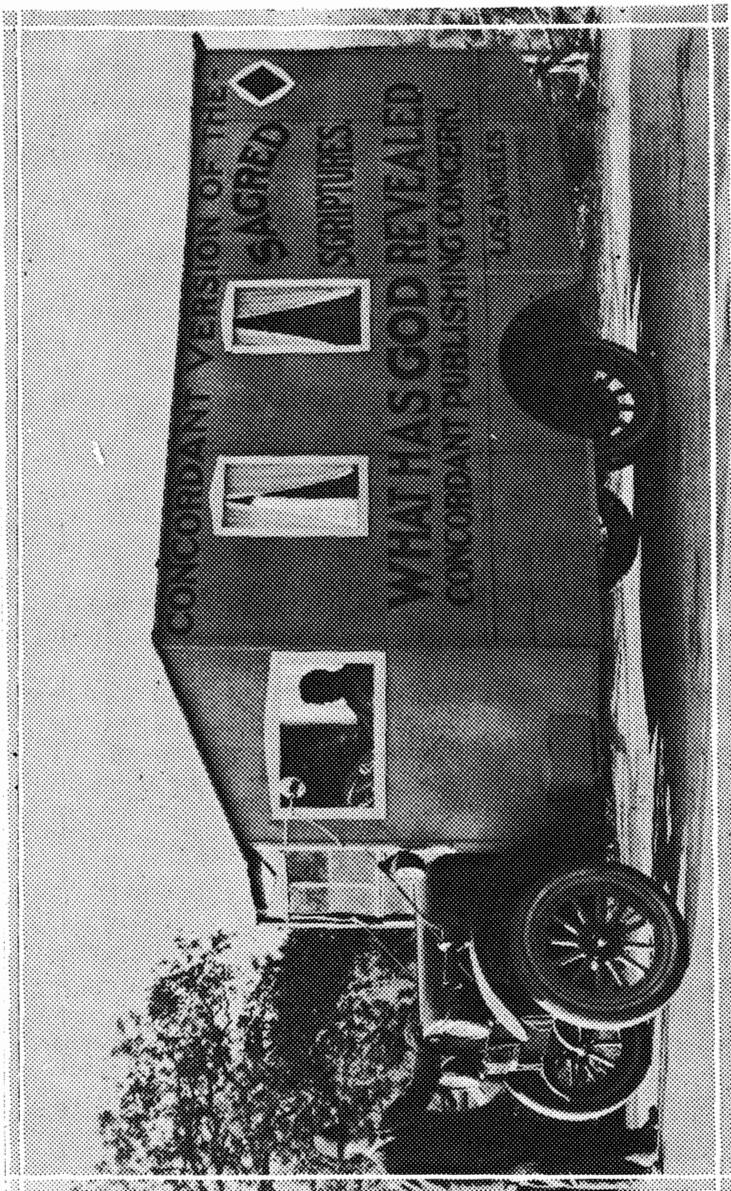
The question then remains, what relation did He sustain to creation before His birth? As in all else, here also, He has the place of pre-eminent. Creation was not a thing apart from Christ. It had its origin *in* Christ. He *is* the beginning of Creation.

How marvelously this illuminates His glory as the Image of God! Creation is full of tangible evidences of God's power and divinity. It, too, is His reflection, however dimmed it may be by sin. Whence has it these intimations of the Creator? Is it not because it has come through Christ, and originally was created in Him? He is God's Effulgence and it has caught some feeble rays from His glory.

Every endeavor to exalt Christ in our own way and according to human creeds robs Him of His rightful dignities. The desire to divorce Him from creation seems to ignore the fact of His birth, which was lower far in the scale of His humiliation. The Scriptures give Him the foremost place in creation. He is its Firstborn. All its privilege and dignity center in Him. How He could hold this place apart from participation is a problem to which there is no solution. The firstborn of a family is not outside that family.

The beginning, then, of all God's self revelation is found in Christ. He is the Alpha as well as the Omega. He is the Origin as well as the Consummation. But just as the consummation is not an utter end and cessation of all existence, so the beginning is not the commencement of all existence, but the crisis which marked the inauguration of a new departure in God's unveiling of Himself.

A. E. K.



MOTOR-HOME OF R. B. WILLIAMS, WHO IS SPREADING THE TRUTH IN AMERICA

The Unbeiling of Jesus Christ

THE FIRST VISION

WHEN John turned, he beheld a vision of Israel's Mediator and Judge. The judgment of the Lord's day begins at the house of God (1 Pet. 4:17). Before the Lord commences His strange work among the peoples and sheaths His sword in the nations, He speaks to Israel with the saber that proceeds out of His mouth, and rebukes the people of the covenant.

This vision is not in heaven, as is usually assumed. It is true that the patterns of the tabernacle and temple furniture are in heaven, as we shall see in the later visions of this scroll. But if the seven "candlesticks" of this vision were the pattern for Moses when he had the lampstand of the tabernacle made, he was guilty of a very radical departure, for here there are seven single lampstands, while the tabernacle contained only one with seven branches. Moreover, before the next vision is given, John is told to *ascend* (4:1). We may conclude, then, that John, at this time had not ascended, and that this vision is located on earth.

This conclusion will help us to set right another misconception as to the character of Christ as He appears in the midst of the lampstands. On earth He cannot exercise the priestly office (Heb. 8:4). Nothing in the vision, when carefully considered, suggests the priesthood. The lampstands are not to be confused with the one in the temple, His vestments do not correspond with those which were made for Aaron and his sons, which did not reach to the ground. Even the girdle is not of linen (Ex. 39:29) but of gold.

Indeed there is much, very much, in this vision which stands in severe contrast to the priestly office. Priests are ordained for men in that which pertains to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sin. They have compassion on the ignorant and those who are out of the way (Heb. 5:1-2). Where are there any signs of compassion in this picture? Eyes like a flame of fire, a mouth from which issues a sharp two-edged saber do not speak of compassion but of judgment. A countenance like the sun is not comforting. And there is no provision for sacrifice. Sin is exposed and condemned; not expiated. No wonder John fell at His feet as dead! No wonder he needed to be reassured, "Fear not!" Truly, it was a fearful and dreadful sight, enough to cause dismay and death even to the disciple whom Jesus loved, who had reclined in His bosom with perfect confidence and trust. Priesthood is far removed from this vision.

There is a delightful reticence in the manner in which our Lord is referred to in this judgment scene. It is as though He would not be too closely associated with it. There is no doubt that it is the Son of Mankind Who walks among the lampstands. But both here and in Daniel (7:13) He is evasively termed "One like a son of mankind". His form was human, but how unlike that lowly frame and face, once marred and mangled, bruised and spat upon! How unlike He seems to the Son of Mankind Who came to seek and to save that which was lost!

The dreadful splendor of this vision is concentrated in the figure of the Judge. The light of the lamps and the shining of the stars could contribute no radiance in the presence of that countenance which glowed like the sun. As in the judgment of the dead, after the thousand years, the majesty of the throne will consist in its whiteness, so the appalling figure of the Judge is re-

splendently white. Not only are the head and hair of purest white, but the feet, also, are a dazzling luminous whiteness, like bronze when it is heated in a furnace.

All this is portentous of the fiery judgment of Jehovah's day. Were such a Judge as this presiding over the destinies of the church today the awful apostasy and pollution in which we are plunged would not be endured for a moment. The reign of grace would give place to the instant execution of judgment. Let us thank our God that such scenes as this are not for us! He never will look at us with flaming eyes! He never will speak to us with a sabered tongue!

The various particulars of this vision are all adapted to the work of judging in the midst of the ecclesias. The desertion of Ephesus is met by reminding them that He has the stars and lamps in His power and will remove them unless they repent. He is able to cope with the uncleanness and deception in Thyatira because His flaming eyes ferret out all evil and His glowing feet burn against their immorality. He will battle with the Nicolaitans in Pergamos with the saber of His mouth.

It is of utmost consequence to grasp the character which Christ assumes in connection with each of His administrations. Everything here points to the office of Prophet. He appears as God's Spokesman to the people. The functions of the priest and the prophet are opposite in character. The priest brought the offerings of the people to God, but the prophet brought the word of God to the people. Moses is the type of the prophetic office which the Messiah of Israel was to fulfill. The Lord said to him, "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put My word in His mouth; and He shall speak unto them all that I shall command Him. And it shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken unto My

words which He shall speak in My name, I will require it of him" (Deut. 18:18-19).

It was in this character that He was presented to Israel in the Pentecostal era (Ac. 3:22; 7:37). If this were apprehended no one would insist on transporting that stern judgment period into the present. That era was in close agreement with the seven epistles which follow this vision. Indeed, Peter shows clearly from Joel's prophecy that Pentecost was the precursor of the Apocalyptic judgments, for *afterward* were to follow the portents of His presence. At the close of the testimony to the city of Jerusalem, when Stephen was stoned, we find Him as the Son of Man, standing. In this vision He reappears, walking in the midst of the ecclesias.

We should never confound the glorious personality of our Lord with His appearance as seen in visions. On the mount of transformation He was glorified, and even His garments became white and glistening. The same glory was revealed to Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus road, and it outshone the sun in its effulgence. It will be sufficient to illuminate the New Jerusalem.

Yet in vision, He sometimes lays aside this glory, as when He becomes a Lambkin in the next scene in this scroll. At all such times His appearance is official and symbolic, rather than personal. The whiteness of His head and hair, the terror of His eyes, the fiery feet, the booming voice, the two-edged saber—all these are assumed characteristics and dignities suited to the work in hand and the office of a judge. They are not His permanent personal glories. They indicate, as nothing else could do, the searching severity with which the ecclesias at the end time will be dealt with.

To further emphasize the character of the vision we are told of its effect on John. He fell at His feet as dead. How different it will be with us when we hear

the trumpet and rise to life! Let us not allow this dread picture of the Judge dim our desire to meet Him as our Saviour. There will be no need to say to us: "Fear not!" The glorious majesty will not be insufferable, for we will be transfigured ourselves and have a body like His glorious body. We will not fall. We will rise! No dread of Him will deliver us to death. His presence will be our life!

To comfort and strengthen John the Judge reminds him of those great truths which we should always bear in mind where we see Him executing judgment. Judgment is God's strange work. It is temporary and fleeting and intermediate. It is only part of the divine process. It has no permanent place in His purpose and is no part of the final result. Christ is the First and the Last. What He has inaugurated He will see completed. Moreover, He, too, has passed through the ordeal and is the Type and Pledge of the coming glory. He endured the judgment of death, but is now beyond it. More than this, He has the keys, and can deliver those whom judgment casts into the jaws of death and the unseen.

Being thus comforted and restored, John is once again charged to write. As this command is a key passage, and its mistranslation has been used as the foundation of a whole system of interpretation which applies the seven messages to the ecclesias to the present economy, we shall examine it with more than ordinary care.

THE THINGS THAT ARE

The expression "the things that are" (1:9) and the interpretation of the second and third chapters of the Unveiling founded upon it, may be a stumbling block in the way of some and serve to keep them from appreciating and enjoying the light which is shed upon the

whole book by the identification of “the Lord’s day” with “the day of the Lord”.

But in order to understand this scroll, we too, must in spirit, accompany John and view all from *his* point of vantage, not the one we at present occupy. Is he transported to heaven, or to the wilderness? Then let us take our stand there too. Does he see a new heaven and a new earth? Then let us remember that the former things are passed away (21:4) and not burden that blessed time with the failure of former ages. We should act as to *time* just as we should in regard to place. John *saw* these things and *heard* them.

And in this way, when we read of “the things that are” we are to view them, not from the present, but from the view-point which John then occupied, that is, the Lord’s day.

This is sufficient to remove any difficulty which the phrase “the things that are” might present. But our purpose is not to remove objections simply, but to open up His word.

As the usual version is entirely out of line with the context and quite contrary to the facts, we give the idiomatic rendering of the CONCORDANT VERSION and the necessary data so that anyone can test the matter to his own satisfaction.

“I came to be, in spirit, in the Lord’s day, and I hear behind me a voice, loud as a trumpet, saying: “*What you are observing write in a scroll and send it to the seven ecclesias.*” The apostle turns and looks and sees the vision of the Son of Man in magisterial majesty in the midst of the seven lampstands with the seven stars in His right hand. *After this vision* he is told, “Write, then, what you perceived, and what they are, and what is about to occur after this: the secret of the seven stars which you perceived on My right hand, and of the seven golden lampstands. The seven stars are

messengers of the seven ecclesias, and the seven lampstands are the seven ecclesias."

"Write, *then*." This tells us that the second charge which John received to write flows from the vision he had just seen. It is in consequence of having seen it that he is to take up his pen. The charge is divided into three separate items. He has already recorded what he had seen and we are about to be told what the things he had seen represent. This is done in the very next sentence where the stars and lampstands are explained. Then follow the seven letters detailing to each assembly the things which impend or what was in store for them *in consequence of this vision*.

The writer once held that the things which John had seen were *past* things, then followed "the things that are" *present* things, (as described in the second and third chapters) and then "the things that shall be after these things" (from chapter four onwards to the end of the scroll). This division was so convenient and plausible that he was loath to leave it even when it became clear that a close study of the passage could not be forced to support it. But when God speaks it is useless to cling to anything not absolutely in harmony with His word. A few of the reasons why this interpretation had to be abandoned may be helpful to others.

In the first place, we would naturally expect that the past, present and future tenses—what John *had* seen, which *are*, and *shall be*—would be found just so in the original. But in this we will be disappointed. The "shall be" is in the *present* tense, that is, things even then impending. And, moreover, the things which we supposed were exclusively in the past, as distinct from "the things that *are*," were found continually present during this period. This is vital. The vision of the Son of Man did *not* pass away or become past in any sense. All through the seven letters we are continually re-

minded that the vision which John had seen was an abiding and solemn reality. *There is no such distinction as past and present possible here.*

Were the point and purpose of the passage a contrast between present and past events, then we would expect the form of expression which the Spirit is accustomed to use in such cases. We would expect it to read “things *present*,” (which, indeed is the gloss ordinarily suggested) as in Ro. 8:38; Cor. 3:22, etc. This is the confessed understanding of the commentators, but, as the Spirit has avoided His own formula in this case, such a meaning cannot be forced out of it.

Were it the Spirit’s intention to draw our attention to “the things that *are*” (i. e., *exist*) in contrast to the things that are not, then we would expect the same phrase as is used in Cor. 1:28, where we have such a distinction.

But we have, instead, a relative pronoun, *a form whose special office is to connect the statement with what has previously been said*. It links the “are” or “represents” with the previous vision, and cannot be divorced from it without a serious infringement of the laws that govern all language.

Considerations concerning Greek idiom will lead us to change “the things that are” to “*what they are*” or, “*what they represent*”. The verb *to be* is sometimes rendered in our versions by other words, and an examination of such passages justifies the translators in so doing. The following are some examples:

“But if ye had known what this *meaneth*, I desire mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless” (Matt. 12:7).

“And there came a poor widow, and she cast in two mites, which *make* a farthing” (Mark 12:42).

“And he called to him one of his servants, and inquired what these things might *mean*” (Lu. 15:26).

“And they were all amazed, and were perplexed, saying one to another, What *meaneth* this?” (Acts 2:12).

“Now while Peter was much perplexed in himself what the vision which he has seen might *mean*” (Acts 10:17).

“Which things *contain* an allegory” (Gal. 4:24).

The statement is not to the effect that the two women and their sons are purely imaginary or mythical personages, but that the actual happenings referred to possess an allegoric signification.

The words “are” and “is” are frequently employed in explaining symbols, and in such instances they are equivalent to *signify* or *represent*, as will be seen from the following examples:

“And they shall call his name Immanuel; which is (i. e., *means* or *signifies*), being interpreted, God with us” (Matt. 1:23).

“He that soweth the good seed is (*represents*) the Son of Man” (Matt. 13:37).

“The field is (*represents*) the world” (Matt 13:38).

“The enemy that soweth them is (*represents*) the devil; and the harvest is (*represents*) the end of the age” (Matt. 12:39).

“Now the parable is (*represents* or *sets forth*) this . . . ” (Luke 8:1).

“Now this Hagar is (*represents*) Mount Sinai.” (Gal. 4:25). It hardly needs to be said that Hagar is *not* Mount Sinai; but merely *represents* the covenant of law there made with Israel, which brought them into bondage.

It will help us to take a number of similar examples from the scroll we are considering:

“And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are (*represent*) the seven spirits of God” (Un. 4:5; 5:6).

"Here is the mind which has wisdom. The seven heads are (*represent*) seven mountains, where the woman is sitting on them, and they are (*represent*) seven kings . . ." (Un. 17:9, 10).

"And the ten horns which you perceived are (*represent*) ten kings, who obtained no kingdom as yet" (Un. 17:12).

"And he is saying to me, 'These waters which you perceived, where the prostitute is sitting, are (*represent*) peoples, and throngs, and nations, and languages'" (Un. 17:15).

"And the woman whom you perceived is (*represents*) the great city which has a kingdom over the kings of the earth" (Un. 17:18).

It is indisputable that in these places the real force of the words "are" is to *represent* or *signify*. Lamps are *not* spirits, mountains are *not* kings, and cities are *not* women, but in these visions lamps and mountains and women are emblems of spirits, and kings and cities. And that this is the true rendering is placed beyond any doubt, *because that is exactly what John proceeds to do*. After he has described the vision he immediately goes on to say: "The seven stars are (or *represent*, exactly the same word rendered "are" above) messengers of the seven ecclesias, and the seven lampstands are (or *represent*) the seven ecclesias".

But what things impend? What is about to happen *within the range of the vision John had seen*? The word "then" connects the charge to write so vitally with the vision itself that we are not at liberty to allow our thoughts to stray beyond its boundaries. What connection is there between the judgments following the fourth chapter and the vision of the Son of Man *in the midst of the lampstands*? None at all. Those judgments are preceded by and based upon entirely different visions, in

which the Lord is seen in totally different environments and relationships.

We must confine the things that impend to those things which were about to befall the assemblies. This is the burden of the seven letters. If Ephesus did not repent and do the first works there was danger of its being removed out of its place. Ten days tribulation hung over the Smyrnan assembly, and so they are encouraged. The Lord Himself threatened to fight with Pergamos. He was about to come as a thief to Sardis. He cannot come thus to us (1 Thes. 5:4). Philadelphia is assured of being kept *out* of the hour of temptation which was about to come upon all the world. The Laodiceans were to be spewed out of His mouth. Here we have John's record of "the things which impend after these things".

Another consideration leads to the same result. In the very same sentence, as an explanation of what had just been said, it is added: "The secret of the seven stars which you perceived on my right hand and the seven golden lampstands". Were this an *added* thought then the word "*and*" would have connected it with the previous words. But as it stands it is in apposition, that is, the same thought expressed in different words. The explanation of the stars and lampstands and His words "to the seven ecclesias", is the secret here spoken of. Thus we find that John, in fulfilling the charge to write, explains first *what* the things he had seen represent and then details the events about to befall each separate assembly, and in no wise goes beyond the pale of the vision in doing so. He had previously been given a general charge to write what he should see before he had turned about to view the vision, but this second charge is in the very midst of the vision itself and its explanation. To say the least this would be a strange place to introduce a general analysis of the whole range

of the Unveiling, and the faintest suspicion of such a thing is dispelled by its introductory connection "then", which shows that the charge is exclusively concerned with the vision, its meaning and its consequences.

Instead, therefore, of clashing with the previous statement that John was in the Lord's day, it is in closest harmony therewith.

At the present time we are enjoying "the stewardship of God's *grace* (Eph. 3:2). But Peter tells us that the time has come that *judgment* must *begin* from the house of God (1 Pet. 4:17). This, however, can only refer to that "holy *nation*" (1 Pet. 2:9) to whom the Hebrew letter was sent (Heb. 3:6, omit "own"; it is God's house). Peter also refers us to Noah and Lot as a sample of what the Lord was about to do (2 Pet. 2:5-7). Our Lord tells us that the days of Noah and the days of Lot are pictures of what it will be in the *days of the Son of Man* (Luke 17:26, 28). The vision of the Son of Man in the midst of the lampstands brings before us these very days. But they *cannot, must not*, be suffered to dim the glories of God's present dispensation of unmixed, undiluted and matchless grace.

It remains only to add that the literary form of these epistles is an echo of the opening denunciatory address in Amos, in which Israel and Judah are presented as among the Seven Doomed Nations: particular addresses of doom are made to each of the seven peoples, these being bound together by recurrent (though varied in detail) *formulae* of doom. So in the Book of Revelation the charges to the particular churches are independent; but these are enclosed between recurrent formulae at opening and close of each, the formulae varied in detail for each church. The opening formula describes the Divine Speaker, the close is made up of promises and a cry of emphasis. The symbolism of the for-

mulae is largely, but not entirely, an anticipation of the coming Revelation.

A. E. KNOCH

EDITORIAL

THIS number of the magazine concludes the twelfth volume. We know not how to thank God enough for His sustaining grace, which has brought us to this point. It seems incredible that it should have survived the hindrances and the opposition, the weakness and discouragements, which must necessarily be the lot of any testimony to rejected truth in the midst of prevailing apostasy.

The outlook, from the human standpoint, is no brighter than it has been in the past. Indeed, the opposition is more determined, and more unscrupulous than ever. Fresh truth always offends. Error has become so deeply ingrained in our very natures that we look with suspicion upon any further refreshment from the fountain of truth. There is yet more light to break forth from the Scriptures. Shall we go on in His strength in our efforts to unveil the unknown God, or shall we succumb to the indifference, the unfaithfulness, the opposition with which it is received?

We thank God for the faithful few who uphold our hands in the fight of faith. As they are the companions of our sufferings so also shall they be of the reward which the Lord Jesus will give to all who suffer for His sake. It is a privilege to be prized, not a duty to be shunned. A few, alas, seek to maintain their influence and their friends by evading any testimony to the truth or even by discounting it. But their temporary personal gain will result in untold loss. We sympathize

with them. The road is rough, the path is painful, but the prize is all the more to be desired. He suffered for us; shall we shirk a short ordeal for His sake?

Our future testimony may be brief. Our opportunity for service may be very short. When our Lord calls us to Himself the ministry of suffering will be over, and give place to the glory. Shall we not make the most of the time that still remains?

There is nothing we can do in the world comparable to making known God. That was the mission of Christ. That will be our work in the coming eons. That is our task now. And what truths in the Scriptures are so necessary to a knowledge of Him as His transcendent grace to His saints in this economy and His limitless favor to the whole universe in the consummation? What is more derogatory to His great name than the defeated, vindictive, vengeful god revealed by the doctrine of eternal torment? Let us do our utmost to exalt the love and power and wisdom of our God and the potency of the cross of His Christ by showing what they will accomplish when the eons have been harvested. Let us deem it an inestimable privilege to suffer in the proclamation of the truth that thus we may bring pleasure to Him Who suffered for our sakes on the accursed tree.

As most of our subscribers will be sending in their subscriptions at this time, may we suggest that they take advantage of the occasion to stock up on literature for use among their friends and acquaintances? Some of our publications are low or out of print, but we hope to replenish our stock and will fill missing items as soon as they are reprinted. This is the means which has been most used of God in the past. A single booklet has turned the whole current of a life into the joyous liberty and exaltation of worshipping the God Who can and Who will.

THE article on "The Larger Hope" is now in pamphlet form. Price 10c, 3 for 25c.

IN this issue, we commence a new department, dealing with the subject of Bible translation. We hesitated somewhat lest it should appear as if we were merely advertising the CONCORDANT VERSION. But we are convinced that there is great profit in a discussion of this kind, and that it will prove of more than ordinary interest to everyone who has a real love for the Word of God.

Our first article deals with a passage of supreme importance, from the standpoint of the Authorized Version.

Though our efforts are, in no sense, based on the common version, nevertheless it is gratifying to know that, in most cases, we can find "authority" for our renderings in the very version from which we differ. Hence the CONCORDANT VERSION is, in large measure, a readjustment of the Authorized to conform it to the laws of language. No one should object to this, for a lawless version leads to lawless theology.

WE reserve the privilege of silence when we are slandered by means of false and misleading statements, but we cannot conscientiously stand by and see others slandered because their case seems similar to ours.

The story has been started that the International Bible Students Association "are putting out a Greek text called the Diaglott through Fowler & Wells of New York, with an interlinear translation, and notes favorable to the errors of Millennial Dawnism".

This is most misleading and should never have been published by anyone professing the name of Christ. The Emphatic Diaglott was first issued by Benjamin Wilson, independently of and without the least co-operation with the International Bible Students Association. Indeed, it was out long before they existed. Later it was published by Fowler & Wells, but they, in turn, sold the plates and they came into the possession of the International Bible Students Association. We under-

stand that the members of the association are warned of the fact that the work was done by one not in sympathy with their teachings, but that its many excellent features warranted its use nevertheless.

To turn and say that they got up this work is worse than absurd: it is such a transparent slander that it hardly calls for refutation. No wonder the CONCORDANT VERSION suffers at such hands! One leader insists it is an attempt to eliminate the personality of Satan! Another knows that it is gotten up by the Catholics! Then it is propaganda for the Universalists! All this by men who insist that slanderers (A. V. devils) cannot be saved. What chance have they if such be the case!

We hereby beg them to retract these false statements, for they can easily satisfy themselves that they are not true. The International Bible Students Association has shown a spirit in this matter which they would do well to emulate. Though Benjamin Wilson was not one of them, though his teaching differed from theirs,—this did not hinder them from benefiting by his earnest and honest effort to bring the Lord's people into closer contact with the Scriptures of truth.

NAHUM

The scene now changes from the threat of vengeance to its historical consummation. The second ode presents a vivid picture of the siege, the capture and the sack of Nineveh. Let us try, before we follow Nahum's description of the military operations, to form some picture of Assyria's capital at the time.

The kernel of Assyrian territory, "the land of Nimrod" (Gen. 10:10; Mic. 5:6), was a triangle whose sides are represented by the Tigris, the Lower Zab, and the foot of the Kurdistan mountain. It is a fertile plain, with some low hills. The plains were covered by an almost continuous series of towns. At either end lay a group of fortresses. The southern was the ancient capital of Assyria Cala. The northern was the great fortress of Dur-Sargina (the Benge of Sargon), which covered the roads upon Nineveh from the north and protected its water supply. Besides these there were scattered upon all the main roads and round the frontiers of the territory a number of forts, towers and posts.

Nahum peers into the distance and sees the innumerable mounted horses of the Mando closing upon the city (2:3). The outer line of forts has fallen into their hands like ripe figs into the mouth of the eater (3:12). The old lion has withdrawn to his inner den and is making his last stand (2:11). The prophet cries to Nineveh to prepare for the siege (3:14). There is fighting in the suburbs before the assault on the walls. The out places are full of marching troops; prancing horses, rattling

chariots and cavalry patrols dash through the streets (2:4). The water works fall into the hands of the besiegers. The breech is effected by directing upon the wall the waters of the canal: *the gates of the rivers are opened, the palace is dissolved* (2:6). The queen is captured, and, attended by the court ladies moaning like doves, is led away into captivity (2:7). Then comes the mad rush of the barbarians into the city. Nahum hears the whips crack beneath the walls, the rattle of the leaping chariots; the end is slaughter: the streets and broad places are filled with dead bodies (3:2, 3). Next we see a vivid picture of the sack. In the forces of the Mando there must be inhabitants of provinces which had been ruthlessly devastated by Assyrian conquerors. They certainly had grievances to revenge, and were likely to spare not. These had joined the Mando for hatred's sake or for the sake of the vast plunder which must have been stored in the city (2:9). For ages Assyria had plundered all people within the range of her possible influence. For centuries the whole civilized world had paid unwilling tribute to the great city. Plunder beyond dreams of avarice was there heaped up, awaiting the despoiler. The city was plundered of everything of value which it contained, and then given to the torch. The vast majority of the houses, built probably of unburnt brick, soon were a ruin. The great palaces, when the cedar beams which supported the upper stories had been burnt off, fell in heaps. Their great, thick walls, built of unburnt bricks with the outer covering of beautiful burnt bricks, cracked open, and when the rains descended, the unburnt bricks soon dissolved away into the clay of which they had been made. The rains and the overflow of the river made the

soft clay into a covering over the great palace and their records. The winds bore seeds into the mass, and a carpet of grass covered the mounds, and stunted trees grew out of them. Year by year the mounds bore less and less resemblance to the site of a city, until no trace remained above ground of the magnificence that once had been.

Between the two odes there is an intervening gap of over a century. We glide silently from the middle of the reign of king Hezekiah to the rise of New Babylon. The defeat of Sennacherib marks the collapse of Assyria's ascendancy. From that time onward its decline was rapid. It lost the power of aggression which had swept over mountain and valley. When Sennacherib died the empire which still remained was very unlike the empire which he had received of his fathers. It was, indeed, still the chief power in Western Asia, but it was not the only power. The day of its unparalleled glory and honor was past. In the reign of his successor there was felt for the first time in all its keenness the danger of an overflow of the land by great Indo-European migrations. Long before his time these peoples, living in what is now southern Russia, had begun to spread southward. The great bulk of immigration moved on into the Assyrian province of Persia, which was rapidly overflowed and filled with a new population. The nomads could not penetrate the kernel of Assyrian territory; the armies were too strong and the fortified outposts too numerous for that. They were, however, quietly overspreading a rich and valuable country which Assyria had partially conquered, and had hoped to fully fit into the empire. But the nomads were making this forever impossible. The Assyrian armies might conquer them here and there,

but it was only along the edges of the slow moving current. The great volume pressed behind, and the tide advanced again. Esarchaddon watched developments with concern. He saw clearly that the very existence of Assyria was threatened, that the passing away of her leadership was impending. He must strike to save the empire. He delivered his stroke and postponed its dissolution. No army, however well led, was of permanent value against a moving mass of men with unknowing and unthinking masses pressing from the rear.

In the lulls between assaults Nahum looks at the foundations on which Assyria had reared its imposing national structure.

“Nineveh! from the days she has been a reservoir of waters. They flee. Stand! stand! but there is no turner” (2:3). From the very outset Nineveh embarked on a fatal course. From the first she formed a definite program. She adhered unswervingly to a fixed policy. She built, steadily and systematically, along well defined lines. But she built on rotten pillars; and her inflexible adherence to a fixed policy, at first an element of strength, became a disintegrating factor corroding the foundations of the empire.

The early Assyrian settlers were surrounded by able-bodied rivals. Menaced by fierce, warlike tribes from the north and east, and by stronger, more highly civilized peoples from the west and south, they could only maintain themselves by presenting to their neighbors a united front. The conditions of existence favored solidarity, and developed a vigorous, virile and aggressive people. A state founded under such conditions naturally laid strong emphasis on strength. Successful aggression

against adjacent states strengthened the emphasis and led to the rise of a military class. This was not slow to utilize the situation for its own ends. Under its exploiting hand the martial propensity swiftly developed into a fixed national characteristic. Magnified out of all proportion, prowess degenerated into savagery, and this, with the passage of time crystallized itself into a settled policy of blood and rapine (3:1). Idolizing brute force, Nineveh ignored the finer arts of statecraft, neglected to cultivate the faculties of assimilation and appreciation, and failed to create the basic elements of political stability—a cohesive bond. Her native forces became exhausted by long and unceasing wars, and she had no power to absorb or stamp with her own spirit the foreign elements that thronged to her. What had been once a fine and vigorous nation of warriors, irresistible in their united impact upon the world, was now a loose aggregate of many peoples, without patriotism, discipline or sense of honor. Her population, especially in the large cities, were largely alien and distraught, with nothing to hold them together save their commercial interests. They were bound to break up and fly at the sight of danger. Nahum likens it to a reservoir of waters (2:8), which as soon as it is breached must scatter, and leave the city bare. His foresight, and the metaphor in which he expressed it, are thoroughly sound. Water, as a liquid, takes its shape from its surroundings. It holds together as a body so long as the tensile strength of the container is greater than the pressure exerted by the volume of the liquid. When the tensile strength is impaired, the water forces the container, and escapes. Thus it was with Nineveh. The floating foreign or semi-foreign population within

her borders held together so long as she exerted over them superior force. When her power weakened, her population vanished like water to return no more. The site bears little trace of any disturbance since the ruin by the Mando.

The steady influx of heterogeneous races attracted by the greed of gain and love of ease swelled the ranks of idle sybarites. Luxury usurped the place of simplicity and weakness had conquered strength. Enervation and effeminacy followed swiftly. Its empire had been built on force. By the sword Assyria had been founded, by the sword it had added kingdom unto kingdom until it became a world empire. By the sword it had cleared the way for the advance of its traders and opened up to civilization great territories. It had held all the vast empire together by the sword, not by beneficent and unselfish rule. That which had been founded by the sword and maintained by the sword would not survive if the sword lost its keenness or if the arm which wielded it lost its strength and firmness.

Those who live by the sword shall perish by the sword. Nineveh furnished a concrete example of the operation of this law of retribution. By oppressing and plundering so many nations Nineveh was preparing her own destruction. As she treated them, so in time they will treat her. She was like a debtor who increases the number of his creditors. Some day they will rise up and exact the last penny. In every injustice inheres a tendency to decay. Every abuse of principle sets in motion a neutralizing counter force. "Behold, I am against thee!" cries Jehovah (2:13; 3:5). He turns against her the very weapon she has used against others. She trusted

in force, force shall be her undoing. In developing strength, she overstepped the breaking point, and lapsed into exhaustion. But the offender is called upon to exhibit as well as bear the penalties of moral failure. Thus Nineveh is made a gazingstock (3:6), an object lesson to nations and kingdoms. Though dead, she still speaketh in eloquent accents. Her voice cries out of the hoary past, and says: "*Remember! Force is but a means to an end—the upholding and safe-guarding of the interests of justice. Folded in its bosom lie the elements of self-destruction. Unless controlled by reason and tempered by kindness, it will destroy its possessor*".

Nations, like individuals, learn wisdom by bitter experience and hard knocks. Their path in the world lies across sore trials, failures, disappointments. Their moral sense is deepened by experiences of material suffering and national disasters. But, in the wise providence of God, all evil subserves a good purpose. And Assyria paid her tribute to the cause of progress and universal weal. Whatever expands human imagination, enabling it to enter into the experience of others, is a powerful agent of ethical advance. Now Assyria broadened the imagination and sympathy of Israel in precisely this way. By crushing all peoples to a common level of despair, by the universal pity which her cruelties excited, she toned down racial and religious austerity, and helped to develop in Israel the feeling of the moral unity of mankind.

Nahum next glances at the finished product of Nineveh's policy of empire-building reflected in her trade, religion and culture. He likens her merchants, priests*

* *Minazareem*, rendered "crowned", is derived from *nazar*, to separate (Nu. 6:2), whence *nazeer*, *Nazarite* (Nu. 13:21), a religious order. It designates religious leaders—ecclesiastics.

and *literati*† to a pest of parasitic insects (3:16-17). As grasshoppers camping in the hedges on a cold night melt away before the rising sun, so these time-servers passed away leaving behind an empty hulk as a mute witness to their unnatural activity. Nineveh's trade, religion and literature were not natural outlets of an exuberant vitality, avenues for the spontaneous expression of her material, spiritual and intellectual growth: they were forced, artificial products fostered and exploited in the interests of the state and foisted upon the people to clothe the nakedness of its savagery in a robe of gorgeous splendor.

Nineveh's trade lacked a sound basis. It was not founded on systematic development of its natural resources and friendly interchange with foreign peoples, but on forcible appropriation of the labor of her more peaceful and industrious neighbors. Her wealth represented the legalized plunder extorted from subject races. Her vastness and her splendor were artificial. She diverted to herself the avenues of trade regardless of her position with respect to the trade marts of the world. Nineveh was not a natural commercial center, and when its political power fell, the great lines of trade drew back to more natural sources.

Assyria's religion and literature were not spiritual and intellectual forces springing up among advanced individuals and reaching down into the masses: they were monopolies exercised by and for the state, were tools in furthering the interests of the ruling class. They

† *Tiph sar*, rendered "captain" or "marshal", is the Assyrian word for *scribe*. It designates *literati*. The passage (3:16-17) brings before us the leaders in the leading spheres of national activity—*merchants, ecclesiastics, and men of letters*. All alike are likened to parasites.

did not express aspirations after higher things felt among the rank and file, hence they never became part of the life of the people. Under state patronage religion degenerated into deification of national barbarism, and literature narrowed down to servile glorification of the exploits of national savagery. They contributed not to national patriotism, but only to national enervation. The most brilliant color of all Assyrian history was only overlaid on the palace and temple walls. No deep ethical feeling had penetrated into the masses. On the contrary, an artificial mercenary culture split the nation into factions with separate interests, and destroyed the solidarity which had carried Assyria's banner across plain and mountain.

As often in history, the period of Assyria's decadence was marked by a development in the arts. Science, whether astronomy or mathematics, reached a higher point than in the history of man before. The literature of Assyria took a marvelous development. Books of song and story, of religion and of law, of grammar and lexicography, were produced in extraordinary numbers and of a remarkable style of execution. The pride of the Assyrians swelled as they looked on all these things, and saw around them the marvellous material prosperity which likewise had exceeded all the old bounds. The Assyrian trader was in all lands, and his wealth was growing apace.

But all this outward grandeur was not the fruit of normal, healthy growth: it was a symptom of decay presaging the approach of integration. Her haughty spirit alienated from her all peoples. She won no friend and no ally. She was hated all over the world and her

cruelty fanned that hatred into a passion. Everywhere that her name was known it was execrated. Nahum concludes his ode by expressing the whole volume of hope, wrath and just passion for vengeance which had been gathering for more than a century among the oppressed peoples, when he says: "All that hear the report of thee, clap their hands over thee: for upon whom has not thy wickedness passed continually?"

V. G.

SEVENTY AND SEVEN

WHAT need is there for another version? Why change the Authorized? Are there any vital improvements in the new version? What is the proportion of improvements? How can we know that the new readings are better? What authority is there for them? How does the Editor of the CONCORDANT VERSION plan to keep out his own opinion? These are the principal questions which arise in the minds of those who hear of the CONCORDANT VERSION.

We have told of the principles and the plan which underlie it. We now propose to give a concrete example, showing how its method works in practice, and giving the reason for every "change from the Authorized", though, in the nature of the case, there can be no "changes", as the work is based on a concordance, not on any previous version.

In order to make this study instructive and helpful, we have chosen a passage of Scripture which contains the very foundation of the evangel—Romans, chapter three, verses 19 to 28.

In this short passage there are about seventy points in which the CONCORDANT VERSION differs from the Authorized. We shall take up each in turn, and tell why it is preferable. Some may seem trivial at first sight, but only to those who underrate the preciousness of God's revelation. In a costly gem an almost imperceptible flaw greatly depreciates its value. In the most precious treasure in all the universe we should welcome the most minute improvement.

As there are about two hundred words in this passage and we propose seventy improvements, two-thirds of the Authorized Version stands, while the remainder, half as much, is replaced by better renderings. The American Revision, either in its text or margin, makes or suggests about half of these betterments.

It is presumed that the reader has a great respect and reverence for the Authorized Version. *Nearly all of the corrections made by the CONCORDANT VERSION may be based on the authority of the Authorized.* All that needs to be done in most cases is to apply the best one of their own renderings consistently. Thus, in the passage before us they have translated a certain word *conclude*. Yet in five other occurrences in the same epistle they render this word *reckon*. Is it criminal or commendable to "change" to the rendering they themselves have used elsewhere?

There is a law, which is the foundation of all language, which is continually violated in our versions of the Scriptures. Words are merely the sounds or signs of an idea. We gather this idea from the surroundings in which we find a word. Every time we read a passage of Scripture we unconsciously clothe each word with a meaning appropriate to its context. Every new context adds to our knowledge of its meaning. If we find it where it should not be, we unconsciously burden it with wrong ideas and color it with false notions.

In practical life we learn the meaning of a word, not from the dictionary, but from the use to which it is put in the Scriptures themselves. If this is in concord with the Greek word it represents, we unconsciously imbibe the correct thought beyond the power of any dictionary definition to impart. Conversely, should we use it in discordant contexts, the mental image becomes distorted and confused.

It is impossible to overestimate the gain in clearness and accuracy which such a course imparts. An English word, being found in the same context as the Greek word

for which it stands, takes on the same force and color. If it should occur in false contexts, as in the A. V., then it would assume false and misleading tendencies.

There seems to be no valid reason for changing from the clear reading of the Greek simply because we cannot grasp a distinction. It is not the translator's duty to comprehend the minute differences in the original, but to pass them on to others, who may be able to discover beauties which he has failed to observe.

19 Now we are aware that, as much as the law
Now we know, that what things soever the law

is saying, it is speaking to those under the law,
saith, it saith to them who are under the law:

that every mouth may be barred, and the entire
that every mouth may be stopped, and all the

world may become subject to the just sentence of
world may become guilty before

God,
God.

1. *are aware* for *know*] The A. V. uses *know* for six different terms, KNOW, PERCEIVE (perfect *aware*), *recognize*, *be adept*, *foreknow*, *be conscious of*. One of these it translates *know* 196 times out of 224 occurrences. The C. V. simply renders these *know* always as there is no reason for any change. This passage, however, uses a different term, which they have rendered *aware* in Lu. 12:46, "at an hour when he is not aware". Thus they are authority that it has this meaning.

The sublinear has HAVE-PERCEIVED, and this word is rendered *perceived*, except when its form is in the complete or perfect tense, denoting the condition which follows an act, rather than the act itself. Then it is more agreeable to the English idiom to render it *be aware* or *be acquainted*. This, however, is done consistently. It refers to knowledge gained experimentally, through the senses. Both terms occur in Rom. 7:7, which should read "I had not been *aware* of coveting".

He knew of it, but not in his own experience. So here, Paul is aware from personal experience that the law speaks to those who are under it. We, who have never been under it, *know* that this is so, but have never felt the force of it as they have.

2. *as much as* for *what things soever*] Although this word occurs over a hundred times the A. V. never translates it "what things soever" in any other passage. In Romans they render it *as many as* (2:12, twice; 8:14), *so many as* (6:3), *as long as* (7:1), in *as much as* (11:13). They render it *as much as* in Jn. 6:11. Hence we have them for authority in our consistent rendering.

3. *is saying* for *saith*] *Saith* has become archaic.

4. *is speaking* for *saith*] As is shown in the sub-linear, this is quite a different word from the *saith* immediately preceding. Why, then, render it the same? The A. V. itself translates it *speak*, as we do, 241 times. Only 15 times do they use *say*. There is often a decided difference between these words, as there is between our English *say* and *talk*, as when men *talk* much but *say* little. The contrast here is between the contents of the law and its application.

5. *those* for *them*] *Them* is archaic.

6. Omits *who are*] There is no necessity for adding these words.

7. *bar* for *stop*] The usual meaning of *stop* is to bring from motion to rest. The word here used signifies to block up, hinder, dam. It seems specially fit to use *barred* here, because it is used of a moral and legal hindrance.

8. *the entire* for *all the*] When the word EVERY is followed by a noun preceded by THE, in Greek, it changes the sense from EVERY world to the entire world, *taken as a single unit*. The word *all* is used with the plural in English and fails to convey the idea of unity which is enforced here.

9. *subject to the just sentence* for *guilty before*] The A. V. rendering "guilty before God" has been chal-

lenged by almost every translator and commentator. It is certainly not correct, for the Greek word here used does not tell us whether the sentence is "guilty" or "not guilty". The Revisers have tried to indicate this by rendering "may be brought under the judgment of God". This, however, *suggests* an adverse judgment, even if it does not express it. It is unfortunate also, in that the word judgment is always associated with an entirely different term, and should never be linked with the word here used.

The apostle's argument has developed the fact that the entire world, Jews as well as Gentiles, are subject to the just sentence of God. They have been tried, but the sentence waits. It has not been pronounced. Only in the case of those who believe is the Judge's decision given out, but in their case it is "*not guilty*", rather than "guilty". They are acquitted, or vindicated, or justified by His grace through the deliverance in Christ Jesus.

It is manifestly absurd to pronounce all "guilty" and then immediately, without any further explanation, pronounce believers "*not guilty*". The A. V. rendering is without foundation in the Greek, it is contrary to the apostle's argument, it is subversive of the grand doctrine of justification. One who is guilty cannot be justified. He may be pardoned or forgiven, but to justify a guilty person is to become a partner in his crimes. God is just, as well as a Justifier. He holds the entire world subject to His just sentence, and never, under any circumstances does aught but vindicate anyone who believes Him.

The A. V. rendering has given us a false impression of God's attitude toward the world. It creates a condition where justification is impossible. It has effectually robbed the saints of the truth of justification and substituted for it remission or pardon, which alone are possible for those who are guilty.

The value of this version lies in large measure in the

fact that its foundation principles make it possible to translate beyond the comprehension of the translator. His understanding or misunderstanding will not necessarily bar others from the truth. The common version, "guilty before God", is terse, vigorous English, which cannot be misunderstood. Why say "subject to the just sentence" for "guilty" when the preceding phrase "every mouth may be barred" seems to show that the sentence is "guilty"? Is this not quibbling and hair splitting? In fact, the translator himself was convinced that the sentence in this case was always "guilty" and he would assuredly have rendered it so if he had not been held in check by the law which does not allow him to import into a word what it does not contain in the Greek. A study of UNDER-JUST made it evident that it was the legal term for those under sentence of a judge, but it does not, in itself, give the slightest hint whether the sentence is for or against.

It was not until after this reading had been challenged that the truth dawned on the mind of the translator. He was wrong in supposing that in this passage, it amounted to the same as "guilty".

Thus it is the aim of the C. V. to give a clear transcript of the Scriptures, so that earnest students will not be hampered by the limitations of the translator, but may discover truth which he has overlooked, but which he has endeavored to leave open for those who may have a keener insight into the truth.

20. Because, by works of law, no flesh,
 Therefore by *the* deeds of *the* law there shall
 shall be justified before Him, for through law
 no flesh be justified in His sight: for by *the* law
 is the recognition of sin.
is the knowledge of sin.

10. *because for therefore*] Nowhere else does the
 A. V. render this *therefore*. Ten times they translate

it *because*. They themselves are ten to one for this rendering. It does not introduce a new conclusion, but gives the reason for the previous statement. The world is subject to the just sentence of God because law fails to provide any ground for justification. The Revisers changed to *because*.

11. Omit *the* before *works*] It is not in the Greek and English usage corresponds to Greek in this case. See 13 below. The Revised margin omits it.

12. *Works* for *deeds*] The A. V. has this very phrase *works of law* in Rom. 9:32; Gal. 2:16. Why change it here? The Revisers have corrected this. *Deeds* is the equivalent of another term, associated with the verb *do*. "*Deeds of the law*" suggests that the law itself is the actor, rather than that which characterizes the action.

13. Omit *the* before *law*] This is important. Throughout this passage and elsewhere *the law* [of Moses] is distinguished from the principle of law in general by means of the word *THE*. The statement here is a broad one. No one, either Jew or Gentile, under the dictates of conscience, can be justified by law, for through law (not *the law* of Moses only) is the recognition of sin. The A. V. has entirely obscured this vital point throughout this passage. The Revisers omit *the* in their margin.

14. Omit *there*] The Revisers also omit this useless addition.

15. *through* for *by*] The A. V. usually renders this word *through*. *By* is the efficient agent rather than the channel. The Revisers suggest *through* in their margin.

16. Omits *the*] See 13.

17. *recognition* for *knowledge*] The A. V. have recognized the special force of this word—ON-KNOWLEDGE—in Matt. 14:35, "*when the men of that place had knowledge of Him*", that is, *recognized Him*. So also Mk. 6:33, 54; Lu. 24:16, 13, etc. The law gives us a standard by which we can *recognize sin*.

21 Yet now, apart from law, a righteousness
 But now *the* righteousness of God without *the*
 of God has been manifested (being testified to
 law is manifested, being witnessed by
 by the law and the prophets)
 the law and the prophets;

18. *Yet for but*] The A. V. translates another disjunctive *but* 572 times. The word here used is much weaker than our *but*. In verse 19 the A. V. renders it *Now*. The C. V. renders it *now* and *yet*. It would be awkward to translate it *now* here, for it would read "Now now".

19. *apart from for without*] The Revisers agree in this change. *Without* means *outside of*. In Jn. 20:7 the handkerchief was not *without* the tomb, but in a place *apart*.

20. Omit *the*] With the Greek text we omit *the*. It is not the law of Moses merely, but the wider principle of law which is intended.

21. Omit *the*] "*The* righteousness of God" is too personal and narrow. The article is omitted in the Greek. It is a divine righteousness, for us as well as God. The Revisers made this correction.

22. *has been for is manifested*] The A. V. has rendered this very form of this word "hath appeared" (Heb. 9:8), showing that they recognized that it represents a state consequent on an action rather than a continuous action. Whenever the initial sound of a Greek verb is doubled, as in this case, the verb is in what may be called the perfect or complete tense, signifying the result of an action rather than the action itself. The Revisers have *hath been*.

23. *testified to for witnessed*] *Witness* is no longer used with an object in this sense. *Testify to* has replaced it in modern English.

22 Yet a righteousness of God, through Jesus
 Even *the* righteousness of God *which is*
 Christ's faith, for all, and on all who are believ-
 by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them
 ing, for there is no distinction,
 that believe: for there is no difference:

23 For all sinned and are wanting of the
 For all *have* sinned, and come short of the
 glory of God,
 glory of God;

24. *yet for even*] This is the same word which the A. V. translated *but* at the beginning of this paragraph, and we render *yet*. The word is a disjunctive not a conjunctive, as *even*.

25. *a for the*] As 21.

26. Omits *which is*] It is without warrant and unnecessary. The Revisers also omit these words.

27. *through for by*] As 15 above. The Revisers make this change.

28. *for for unto*] The A. V. translates this word *into* 571 times, and idiomatically *for*, 87 times. Thus we are amply justified in our sublinear *into*, and the version *for*. The *unto* and *upon* suggests a distinction which does not exist, as though it came *up to* or *as far as* all, but only *upon* all who believe. In both cases it is the believer who is in question. It is *into* or *for* him and is *on* him.

29. *on for upon*] The A. V. renders this word both *on* and *upon*, without any apparent cause.

30. *who for them that*] *Them that* is not in good form. The A. V. uses *who* for this very phrase in Eph. 1:19.

31. *are believing for believe*] The A. V. renders this form *believed* (Ac. 22:19), *believe* (Rom. 3:22, 1 Cor. 1:21), *do believe* (1 Pet. 1:21). It is evident that they had no system. We distinguish between the in-

definite form (usually called the aorist) and the present active, which is used here.

32. *distinction for difference*] The A. V. uses *distinction* in 1 Cor. 14:7. There are many *differences* between men, even as to their sins. The Revisers make this change.

33. *sinned for have sinned*] The margin of the Revision suggests this change. *Have sinned* suggests a present state, the equivalent of being sinners. We who are justified *sinned* in the past, but, being acquitted, are no longer in the condition of those who *have sinned*. This distinction is important, especially when we realize the full import of justification.

34. *are wanting for come short*] The A. V. has only once again "come short" (Heb. 4:1). In that characteristic occurrence (Lu. 15:14) the prodigal began *to be in want*. See also 2 Cor. 11:9. Paul was *in want*. So here it is not that our *efforts* fail to reach the divine standard, but our *condition* is one of want.

24 Being justified gratuitously by His grace
Being justified freely by His grace
through the deliverance which is in Christ Jesus
through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

35. *gratuitously for freely*] The A. V. *freely* no longer has the sense of a gift, but now means liberally, abundantly. *Gratuitously* is the only English word which adequately conveys the causelessness of this gracious gift.

36. *deliverance for redemption*] The A. V. consistently translates the usual word for *redemption* (Lu. 1:68; 2:38; Heb. 9:12) and the C. V. does the same. The word here used, however, is a strengthened form which they on one occasion, render happily by *deliverance* (Heb. 11:35). This is used uniformly in the C. V. Its aptness can only be appreciated by seeing it in all its contexts.

25 (Whom God purposed for a Propitiatory,
 Whom God *hath* set forth to be a propitiation
 through faith in His blood, for a display of His
 through faith in His blood, to declare His
 righteousness because of the passing over of the
 righteousness for the remission of
 penalty of sins which occurred before in the
 sins that are past, through the
 forbearance of God)
 forbearance of God;

37. *purposed* for *set forth*] This word may mean
 “set forth”, but the connection indicates a past act with
 a present point, which is better satisfied by the usual
 rendering *purposed*. Thus it is always elsewhere in the
 A. V.

38. *Propitiatory* for *propitiation*] The A. V. cor-
 rectly and consistently renders *propitiation* in its two
 occurrences (1 Jn. 2:2; 4:10). But this is a different
 form which they have translated *mercy seat* in its only
 other occurrence (Heb. 9:5). It should, consequently
 be *mercy seat* here, or better, *Propitiatory*, to preserve
 its connection with *propitiation*. This is not the act,
 but the place of propitiation, the meeting place of God
 with man. The propitiatory was sprinkled with blood,
 hence God could meet with man between the cherubim.
 The passage is concerned with justification and a com-
 mon ground where both God and man can be just. This
 is the blood stained Mercy Seat—the Propitiatory.

39. *for* for *to*] Very rarely indeed does the A. V.
 translate this word *to*, though it occurs hundreds of
 times.

40. *a display* for *declare*] This is a noun, not a verb.
 Elsewhere they translate it *evident token* (Phil. 1:28)
 and *proof* (2 Cor. 8:24). The Revisers have changed
 it to *show*. The word *display* fits all of its occurrences
 better than the variety of the A. V. The evident thought
 is that God wishes to show openly that He is just.

41. *of* is added] The word righteousness is in the case which the A. V. usually indicates by prefixing *of* as in Rom, 4:11; 5:17.

42. *because of* for *for*] The A. V. often has this *because of*. The Revisers have changed it to this.

43. *passing over* for *remission*] This is quite a different term from *remission* elsewhere in the A. V. It does not involve nearly so much. Sin's penalty was not *remitted* before the sacrifice of Christ. It was merely covered or *passed over*. The use of *remission* here is a serious defect which was remedied by the Revisers.

44. *the* is added] The Revisers insert the *the* here to define the particular sins or penalty referred to. It is in the Greek.

45. *penalty of sins* for *sins*] The word here rendered *sin* by the A. V. has a special ending which changes it from sin to the *effect of sin*. This is clearly seen in 1 Cor. 6:18 where the penalty of sinning, not sin itself is demanded by the context. It was the divine penalty of sins which was passed over when the sacrifices were offered in connection with the law.

46. *which occurred before* for *that are past*] The Greek, as shown by the sublinear, is BEFORE-HAVING-BECOME. The A. V. is a loose paraphrase, which has led us to think that the apostle is speaking of our past sins as individuals. The Revisers have changed it to *done aforetime*, rather old-fashioned phraseology for a modern version, and almost as loose as the A. V.

47. *in* for *through*] The Revisers change this to *in*, as it should be.

26. Toward the display of His righteousness

To declare, *I say*, at this time His righteousness in the current era, for Him to be just and a
ness: that He might be just, and *the*
Justifier of the one who is of the faith of Jesus.
justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

48. *toward* for *to*] The A. V. *to declare* suggests

that this is a repetition of the same phrase in the previous verse. It is not. The connection here is quite different. The A. V. translates it *toward* in other places.

49. *display* for *declare*] See 40. The italicized "I say" is also omitted.

50. *of* added] See 41.

51. *in* for *at*] The A. V. translates this connective *in*, 1853 times, *at*, 106 times.

52. *current* for *this*] This is the usual word for *now*, which we translate *current* when the English idiom will not bear the usual rendering. The word *this* is too indefinite.

53. *era* for *time*] This is not the word usually translated *time* in the A. V. They often render it *season*. The Revisers have changed it to this. But it is better to speak of the Christian *era* than the Christian *season*, for the latter is used only of a short period of time, and the era here referred to has run nearly two millenniums.

54, 55, 56. *for Him to be* for *that He might be*] There is no warrant for the word *might* and the idea of contingency. It is the simplest form of the verb *to be*, as the A. V. itself is witness (Rom. 1:22). If this were turned back into Greek an entirely different phrase would be the result. *That* is the same word which they made *unto* in verse 22 and *to* in verse 25, which we have consistently given as *for*. *He* is in the objective case, *Him*.

57. *a* for *the*] It is His character as a Justifier which is pressed here. The insertion of *the*, which is not in the Greek, interferes rather than helps.

58. *one who* for *him which*] The Greek is simply *THE* in the singular, and though usually listed as masculine, is applied to both genders in common. Hence it is not well to limit this to the masculine *him*. No one would defend the *which*, though the Revisers retained it.

59. *of faith for believeth*] A reference to the sub-linear will show that this is not a verb, *believe*, but a noun, *belief*. The A. V. has deliberately altered the sense of this passage, making our believing *in* Jesus the basis of justification instead of Jesus Christ's faith, as in verse 22. The point is that it is not His keeping the law which made Him a fit Propitiatory where we could meet God and be justified, but His faith which led Him far beyond the law's demands, in faith obedience, even to the death of the cross. From this faith springs justification. It is out of this faith for our faith (Rom. 1:17). Whatever we may believe on this point we are not warranted in deliberately altering the text to suit, as the A. V. has done.

60. *of for in*] See 59. The *in* is absent in the Greek.

27 Where, then, is boasting? It is debarred!

Where *is* boasting then? It is excluded.

Through what law? Of works? No! but

By what law? of works? Nay: but

through the law of faith.

by *the* law of faith.

61. *debarred for excluded*] Literally this is LOCKED-OUT. *Exclude* is a mild term more suited to another Greek word. We no longer speak of *excluding* boasting. Usage and elegance are both better satisfied with *debarred*.

62, 63. *through for by*] As English will bear *through* as well as *by*, it is better to use the more precise term as in verse 20, and so distinguish this phrase from *by the law* in verse 21.

28 For we are reckoning mankind to be just-

Therefore we conclude that a man is justified

ified by faith apart from works of law.

by faith without *the* deeds of *the* law.

64. *for for therefore*] The A. V. follows a different reading here, which is given in the superlinear as *THEN*. The better reading, which we follow, they have translated *for* 992 times.

65. *we are reckoning for we conclude*] Only here has the A. V. used *conclude*. Elsewhere they render *number, account, count, reason, think, suppose, esteem, etc., and reckon* (Rom. 4:4, 9, 10; 6:11; 8:18). The tense is present active, not indefinite.

66. *mankind for a man*] This is not the word for a *man* as distinct from a woman, but a human being of either sex. This cannot always be expressed in English, as it has no noun corresponding to *human* except *mankind* and *humanity*.

67. *to be for that . . . is*] Why change the Greek when the same construction yields good sense in English? Besides there may be a subtle distinction which our dull minds fail to grasp.

68. *apart from for without*] See 19.

69, 70. Omit *the* twice] *The* works of *the* law confines the statement to the Jew and the law of Moses. The Greek omits both *the*'s in order to include the principle of law wherever found.

The point we wish to press in this comparison with the Authorized Version is that, to a large degree, our work can claim the "authority" of these translators for the very variations which distinguish it from theirs. Their work was loose, with little system or order. We use much the same material but dispose it in accord with the fundamental law of language that the same word should always be used to express a given idea.

We wish also to show that, however much we may revere the version to which we are bound by ties of sentiment, there is a real need for another. Everyone must acknowledge that some of these seventy corrections are vital, and that most of them are desirable. Very

few of them can be questioned, because the translators of the Authorized have themselves set their seal to most of the corrections by their renderings in other passages.

There are at least seven improvements of vital value in this short passage. They affect our enjoyment of justification, our attitude toward law, our apprehension of the place of Christ Jesus as the Propitiatory, and His part in procuring justification. If the rest of the seventy seem unimportant these alone ought to convince us of the vital value of a version based on a concordance rather than on human scholarship.

APOSTOLIC ARITHMETIC

TRADITION represents a kind of mental rust that has eaten into the very center of Christian theology. At first it may have been but the human comment on the divine text, held in a subordinate and tentative position. Alas, it has turned so that we can hardly find the text because of the comments. The clinging ivy of human opinion has weakened the walls of Christianity's defenses. It has also well-nigh obscured them.

Traditional theology has numbered the apostles. Yes, but its arithmetic is so faulty that it cannot prove its addition. Let us count up the number of those referred to in the Word as being "apostles". We shall, of course, begin with the list of names found in Matthew 3:14-19. Here the fallacies of human arithmetic find no place, for the total is given, viz., twelve. Acts 1:26 speaks of a new addition to the apostolic band. Acts 14:14 refers to "the apostles Barnabas and Paul" which adds two more to the count. 1 Cor. 4:4-9 includes Apollos. 2 Cor. 8:23 (R. V.) includes Titus. 1 Thes. 1:1 and 2:6 includes Silvanus and Timothy. Phil 2:25 (R. V.) includes Epaphroditus. Count them! Twelve? Of course not—TWENTY! Tradition cannot count! It can count neither the ages nor the apostles, and when it comes to counting the very days of the week it makes the first day the Sabbath instead of the seventh. A follower of tradition would not dare employ in his busi-

ness the kind of arithmetic he uses in his theology for fear of becoming bankrupt in both.

Those who have forgotten, or have never known, how the Author of Scripture counts, suggest that when Acts 1:26 informs us that "Matthias was numbered with the apostles" it does not mean he was so numbered by God but by man. It is not man, however, but the spirit of the living God who records in Acts 2:14 that Peter stood up "with the eleven" making the same obvious total of twelve that the same expression did in chapter 1:26. Again we are informed in Acts 6:2 that "the twelve called the multitude of disciples unto them". This was after the descent of the Holy Spirit upon them. Because of the Spirit's influence upon the faculties of Peter he could read the inmost thoughts of another's heart (Acts 5:3-4) but apparently it could not tell him there was one masquerading as an apostle, who had no title to that name.

How may we expect success in interpreting the epistles if we cannot first successfully interpret the apostles? And how may we expect success in interpreting the apostles if we cannot even so much as number them? It is not our purpose to dwell at length on this so we would merely suggest to the reader that the New Testament indicates not merely one group of apostles but two, one group consisting of twelve and the other of seven members.

"What God hath joined let not man put asunder." Deity has joined sin and death; man would divorce the two. God has united righteousness and happiness; man would gladly have righteousness some other way. But if man is actively employed in the endeavor to

separate what God has joined, he is none the less busy seeking to join what God has separated. And instead of being *joined* to the Twelve as traditional theology would have it, Scripture records that he was *separated* from their controlling influence. "Separate unto me Barnabas and Saul" (Acts 13:2). When reading a book if we meet a page which is of such exceptional interest that we desire to refer to it again we turn down the corner of it, or "earmark" it. Acts 13:2 records the ear-marking of Saul and Barnabas for future reference. The theology that cannot count appears equally unable to spell! In the orthography of the creeds S-E-P-A-R-A-T-E spells JOIN!

What is the best possible method of combating the claims of the Higher Criticism? How may we best resist its insidious advance? Not by defending the old Book but by allowing the old Book to defend itself. By clearing away the age-high pile of rubbish that we men have piled upon it. By scouring away the innumerable glosses with which we have concealed the clarities of the Book. And, if we are not wise in our own conceits, by consenting to go back to our kindergarten and learn afresh how its blessed Author counts and spells.

ALAN BURNS.

The Unbelling of Jesus Christ

THE SEVEN ECCLESIAS

THE darkest hour of earth's history leaves the people of God without a light to guide them if we take the seven epistles to ourselves, as well as those of James and Peter and John and Jude. How can the era of judgment use the doctrines of grace? And how can we find anything for us in the stern demands and threats which characterize God's dealing with His earthly people in preparation for the millennial reign of righteousness?

No lengthy interpretation of these seven epistles is necessary once we grasp their true place in the crisis which comes at the end of this eon. Like gems they fit in their settings. Difficulties not only disappear, but are turned into helps.

Ephesus is the only place in these epistles which seems to connect us with Paul's ministry. While the words "to Ephesus" were not in the original draft of Ephesians as prepared by Paul, it seems certain that the letter was sent to Ephesus as well as to other places. Paul had spent a long time in that city. The question arises, if the doctrine here set forth is so much below the level of his teaching, how could this letter have been sent to them? The answer is simple. It is sent to Ephesus, not as it was in the days of the apostles, but as it will be in the Lord's day. *Then* this epistle will have its true application. The One like a son of mankind does not walk in the midst of the lampstands now with a sharp two-edged saber issuing from His mouth.

The highest reward to the overcomer falls far short of the lowest place in the present grace. Only those who repent, and return to their first love and do the former acts may eat of the tree of life which is in the center of the paradise of God. This paradise will be on the earth. Every believer today no matter what his conduct may be, is blessed with every spiritual blessedness in Christ. His faithfulness and sufferings may be rewarded with still higher dignities and glories than this, but he will never descend to the highest award offered to the conqueror in Ephesus.

On the other hand, what a delightful prospect for one who lives amidst the judgments of those days! Though offering no attraction to us, a place in paradise will be a rare inducement to one who is striving to stem the tide of evil in the day of His indignation.

Those who have adhered to the historical fulfilment of these epistles have had much ado to account for the Nicolaitans. History knows nothing of any such cult. The attempt to connect them with Nicholas, a proselyte of Antioch, one of the seven deacons appointed by the apostles (Acts 6:5), is without any foundation in fact. This is the only body of people definitely named. The history of the church abounds with the names of heretical sects, not one of whom bore this appellation. The conclusion is obvious. No such cult has yet existed.

The Nicolaitans are referred to only twice (Un. 2: 6,15). First the Ephesians hate their *acts*. Some in Pergamos hold their *doctrine*. On the principle that these churches represent stages in the church's history, this sect existed from the beginning until the Reformation, and should have been very prominent. It has been applied to the clergy, but we fear the clergy did not disappear at the Reformation. They are still with us.

The name, as shown in the sublinear of the CONCORDANT VERSION, is composed of two words CONQUER-PEOPLE. It seems to refer to some conqueror. If we can find out who this conqueror is, we shall soon see who the Nicolaitans are.

There are many conquerors in the Unveiling, but only one who is hateful to God. At the opening of the first seal a victor's wreath is given to the rider on the white horse and he came forth conquering and that he should conquer (Un. 6:2). His presence is followed by war and famine and pestilence. He is the false Messiah. In the next section of this scroll he appears as a wild beast. Of him it is written: "And to it was given to do battle with the saints *and to conquer them.*" (Un. 13:7). Here is the Nicholas, or conqueror of the people, whose adherents are the Nicolaitans. He it is who will *conquer* the two witnesses (Un. 11:7). He it is who scatters the power of the holy people (Dan. 12:7).

His conquest of the two witnesses carries him to the zenith of earthly power, especially in the sight of Israel. The witnesses were able to hold their own against all who came against them. Fire devoured all who would injure them. Their testimony was upheld by superhuman power, yet the wild beast is able to conquer them. No wonder they cry "Who is like the wild beast?" "Who is able to battle with it?" No wonder that the whole earth marvels after the wild beast (Un. 13:3-4).

How can we miss the evident conclusion: The Nicolaitans are the Israelitish worshipers of the wild beast. They are the Herodians of the end time. Hence they are hated by the Lord and those who are true to Him.

The doctrine of the Nicolaitans is associated with the teaching of Balaam (Nu. 25). While we may eat things sacrificed to idols, so long as it is not offending the conscience of others, it will be a sign of apostasy

when the wild beast sets up his image. Hence it is punishable with death (Un. 2:16). The worship of the image and its accompanying lewdness is the height of apostasy and of this the Nicolaitans are guilty. Their end is seen when the true Conqueror comes on His white horse (19:11) when the votaries of the wild beast are killed by the saber which comes out of His mouth (19:21).

In Smyrna the victor receives the wreath of life. The "crown" here spoken of is not the regal crown denoting rule. It is the award of effort, the prize offered to those who can win it. Do we get life thus? The *gracious gift* of God is eonian life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 6:23). We will never wear a wreath of life, for we do nothing to win it. We may win a wreath of *righteousness* (2 Ti. 4:8), even though we may not be famed for our just conduct toward our fellow man. Real righteousness today consists in love for the advent of Christ.

Our life is hid together with Christ in God (Col. 3:3). What appeal, then, can there be to us in the promise to the conqueror in Smyrna? He will not be injured by the second death. Neither will we, whether we are faithful or not.

Though such a reward cannot help us, it will be full of encouragement in the days to come to those who stare death in the face at every turn. Many, no doubt, will be faithful, and die the first death, and thus find immunity from the second death by their martyrdom.

The ten days of affliction has been variously interpreted. Some say it refers to ten separate persecutions, some to ten years of oppression. History knows nothing of ten days which are so marked as to call for such special mention.

If, however, we refer this to the future, at the time

of the fifth seal (6:9) all need for mutilating the text is gone. By faith we understand that the pogrom under the fifth seal will last ten days.

The Lord's attitude in Pergamos is impossible in this day of grace. No saber issues from His mouth. He does not battle with His own.

The awards to the victors—the manna and the pebble—have no point for us. No literal manna falls, and the figurative manna—spiritual food—is free for all. The pebble, signifying an allotment in the kingdom, would be no reward for us, for we could make no use of it unless we desert our higher heavenly heritage.

In Israel, however, in the days which are swiftly coming, it will be an unspeakable boon to be sustained by manna through the time of trial and find an allotment in the land in the millennial kingdom. It is a reward worthy of their most earnest effort.

Antipas (2:13) needless to say, has not yet appeared.

We shall rule messengers in the celestial realms: Israel will rule the nations in the day of Jehovah. The voice of prophecy is clear on this point and is acknowledged by many who "take" these seven epistles for the church. The conquerors in Thyatira must certainly be Israelites, for they are given authority over the nations, and they shepherd them with an iron club.

The Lord's coming to the unwatchful ones in Sardis will be as a thief (Un. 3:3). We, however, are not in darkness that that day should overtake us as a thief (1 Thes. 5:4). But, you say, suppose we should not watch? The answer is plain, God did not appoint us to indignation, but to the procuring of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, Who dies for us that, *whether we are watching or drowsing*, we should live at the same time together with Him (1 Thes. 5:9, 10).

No amount of unfaithfulness will take from us the

life we have in Christ. Paul speaks of certain ones "whose names are in the scroll of life" (Phil. 4:3), in such a way as to suggest that this applies only to a class. It is evident that some of his helpers were of the Circumcision (Col. 4:11). And the use of the phrase elsewhere makes it evident that it applies only to those whose life is contingent on their behaviour, hence their names may be erased. Such a thought is absolutely impossible for those in grace. Hence we have already a greater security than comes to the conqueror in Sardis.

The prize of the Philadelphian conquerors is as earthly as any of the rest. A place of honor in the millennial temple and the New Jerusalem cannot be coveted by any who have learned their high calling in Christ.

Who, in these days, profess to be Jews, and are not? When have they worshiped before the feet of true Jews?

Only the Laodicean promise has some likeness to present truth. Those who conquer will reign with Him. But now it is those who *endure* who will reign with Him (2 Tim. 2:12).

Is it not remarkable that the highest reward, that of reigning with Christ, is the only one which is not lower than what we possess by faith, apart from faithfulness? Yet it is evident that the throne here mentioned is the earthly throne which He occupies as the Son of Mankind. Our rule will be universal, and in the celestial realms.

The fact that there are *seven* epistles doubtless is significant especially as each one ends with the injunction, in the plural, to hear what the spirit is saying to the *ecclesias*. Just as Paul's nine epistles to seven *ecclesias* are intended to be read by all, so these letters, though addressed to individual *ecclesias* with reference to their special condition, are intended for them all and will be read by all. They are a marvelous picture of Israel's condition at the time of the end.

A. E. K.

JOB'S CHILDREN

ON the authority of Bildad, the Shuhite, we are asked to believe that Job's children are eternally lost. Bildad said (Job 8:4):

“Doth God pervert judgment?
Or doth the Almighty pervert
justice?
If thy children have sinned
against Him
And He have cast them away
for their transgression . . .”

This is taken as proof indisputable that they are lost forever and nothing was left to Job but submission!

Job's reply to Bildad was that (Job 9:22):

“He destroyeth the perfect and
the lawless.”

Do we need to ask who was right? The Lord saith to one of Job's friends: “My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of Me the thing that is right, as My servant Job.” And again, “lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of Me the thing which is right, like My servant Job” (Job 42:7, 8).

How can the folly of Bildad support the truth of God? Job's friends insisted not only that his children sinned, but that his own trial came as a punishment for secret evil doing. But God's record concerning him was the very opposite of this. He could challenge

Satan, "Hast thou considered My servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?" If suffering can only come as the direct result of sin, how is it that such a man became the very type of suffering?

There is not the slightest hint that Job's children had sinned. Even if they had, Job had offered sacrifices to cover such a possibility. Their death is laid directly at the door of Satan, with a view to testing Job. How unfounded, indeed, is the suspicion that they were lost!

Any argument sustained by an appeal to Job's friends condemns itself and is distasteful to God. If Bildad is on the side of eternal torment that alone is proof that it is error.

CONTENTS OF VOLUME TWELVE

Amos	3
Brotherly Kindness	46
Christ, The Supremacy of	41
Demons, The Doctrines of	21
Disruption, The	125
God's Revealed Purpose	13
Grace in Romans Seven	55
In Him	194
In The Beginning	195
Job's Children	257
Jonah	99
'Larger Hope' Christ's Exposure of the	143
Life and Peace	95
Micah	129
Nahum	187
Obadiah	47
Old Testament Studies—	
Amos	3
Obadiah	47
Jonah	99
Micah	129
Nahum	187, 221
Romans, Readings in	91
The Number of the Apostles	247
Sermon on the Mount and Present Truth, The	179
Seventy and Seven (C. V. Rom. 3:19-28)	231
Suffering, The School of	119
Unveiling of Jesus Christ, The	
The Introduction and Conclusion	31
The Prophetic Portions	73
The Prophetic Section—Introduction	111
The Prophetic Section—Continued	165
The First Vision	203
The Seven Ecclesias	251