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NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIANITY

OR

IMPORTANT THEMES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT
INDUCTIVELY STUDIED

BY

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PREFACE

THE Committee publishing this volume have issued from time to time tracts and pamphlets setting forth in brief the plea of the Churches which they serve; and for some years have wished to publish something fuller on the same subject. To meet this need the following pages have been written and approved. What I mean by the title, "New Testament Christianity," is explained in the first chapter of the book itself, and no more need be done here than ask the reader to be specially attentive to that chapter; and, if he finds it rather stiff reading, to be also specially indulgent—*definition* is apt to seem difficult and formal. A word, however, may be said here on the sub-title, "Important Themes of the New Testament inductively studied." As I have written to meet the need named above, it might be thought that I had first made acquaintance with the teaching of these Churches, and afterwards gone to the Scriptures to prove their teaching. The fact is the very opposite. In the seventies of last century—for I am no longer a young man—it was my lot by grace to become deeply impressed with the importance of studying *the Bible*, as modern science studies Nature, inductively. So long as the student of Nature merely formed theories, and went to Nature to prove them, there was no real advance in the discovery of truth, nor agreement as to what that truth is. Since the inductive method has been followed, which requires that first the facts of Nature must be gathered, and general truths deduced from the facts, tested and if necessary perfected by comparison with these

facts, advance has been sure. In like manner I have done my best conscientiously to study the Bible, gathering *all* the Bible statements on the subject to be studied, and drawing general truths from those statements. If this method were generally followed, sectarianism, which originates and is maintained, in part at least, by a wrong system of study, would tend to disappear; for each student would find the same statements, and all students would agree as to what the truth is. I do not suggest, of course, that the views set forth here are necessarily true; they are to be tested by the Scriptures of truth. But I wish it to be known that though written to serve a special purpose, the teaching here contained is some portion of the result of studies entered upon with a deliberate desire, by the method of inductive study, to find the truth revealed in the Scriptures, quite apart from any writing or teaching in which I might be engaged. Trusting that the method pursued has enabled me to outline correctly, not, of course, exhaustively, the truth in the themes treated, I humbly hope that "the God of Truth" may be pleased to give His blessing.

LANCELOT OLIVER.

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NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIANITY

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

A NUMBER of phrases are in current use to distinguish what in the New Testament itself is significantly called "the Faith" from modern teaching and practice where these differ from that *Faith*. In addition to "*New Testament Christianity*," there are "*Primitive Christianity*," "*Apostolic Christianity*," and "*Christianity as at the First*." There is also the fuller formula, "*The Faith and Practice of the Church of Christ as perfected by the Apostles*."

Sometimes the propriety of all these is called in question. It is asked, "Why speak of Primitive, or Apostolic, or New Testament Christianity? What other Christianity, properly so-called, is there? If you say, for example, *Primitive Christianity*, you imply the existence of another Christianity, that is, *Modern Christianity*. But anything of modern origin is not Christianity. Far better drop the epithets and simply say 'Christianity,' discarding everything else which bears the name as not entitled to be called Christianity at all."

There is much weighty truth in the position just stated. Our situation is much like the Apostle Paul's, when, speaking of "a different gospel" than the Gospel he preached, he added, "which is not another." So, no doubt, when we speak of *Modern* as compared with *Primitive Christianity*, it is to be

insisted on, that, as far as the former is a *different* Christianity, it is not really Christianity, but a perversion of it, by alteration of, addition to, or subtraction from the only Christianity which is properly so called.

Even the dictionaries give very little liberty to include under the name "Christianity" anything not sanctioned by Him whom Christendom calls Master and Lord.

Thus the *Standard Dictionary* defines Christianity as "1. The doctrines and teachings of Jesus, the Christian Religion. 2. The state of being a Christian, or of living in conformity with the teaching of Jesus Christ. 3. [Eng.] Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction, as, a court of Christianity." Thus, except for that third item, which is marked off as local, the word is defined as denoting that which comes from Christ, and nothing else.

Now, if the word "Christianity" were really and invariably so used, we might gladly dispense with these objectionable adjectives, *Primitive*, *Apostolic*, *New Testament*, and the like. But we find it in use, in a loose way, to cover and name all that passes for Christianity.

We agree that words which are used in the New Testament for the Faith, or any element of it, should be employed in their New Testament sense, especially by those seeking to restore Christianity as at the first. This should be done even when such words are often used loosely, or in a sense differing from that of the New Testament. But the word "Christianity" is not a New Testament word, and it seems only necessary to define the sense in which we here employ it. This we do by prefixing the limiting words, "New Testament." The Christianity for which we here contend in opposition to whatever else is popularly so called is the Christianity authorized by Christ and presented in the New Testament.

We admit that, as popularly used, the word "*Christianity*" often includes *more* in many directions, and sometimes *less* in other directions, than is authorized by Christ. Amid this varied mixture commonly called Christianity, we would lay

down the discriminating principle, "What Christ taught, instituted, or authorized, can be learned from the New Testament, and from no other source; hence of all that mass of teaching, and of institutions, which disfigure Christendom to-day, we distinguish as Christianity strictly so called that which is sanctioned by the New Testament."

We pass now from *defining* our theme, to dwell, in the remainder of this introductory chapter, on its *importance*.

"Christianity is Christ." This is the title of a recent book which gives the substance of a great many recent books bearing on the definition and defence of Christianity. To these books additions are being constantly made. The trend of many minds is to the position that Christ Himself is the substance and the sole authority of Christianity.

Now, it is obvious what an emphasis is thus placed on the New Testament. By common consent this small volume contains all that is certainly known about Jesus Christ. To learn His character, His work on earth, and His teaching there is no other authentic record to which any one can refer. Many think the portraiture of Christ contained in the Gospels proves the writers to have been supernaturally helped in their writing; but even if this is not accepted, the fact remains that here and in the "Acts of Apostles" and the "Epistles" is the only historical account of the Beginning of Christianity, the only record which shows what Christ was and what He authorized.

One of the additions just made to the literature which presents *Christ* as central to Christianity—"Faith's Certainties," by R. J. Drummond, D.D.—has a chapter entitled, "The Primary Record of Christianity—the New Testament." That chapter has a weighty beginning, as follows: "Every one knows where to turn if he wishes to learn what Christianity really is. Every one knows where to point an inquirer. The New Testament is the record of Christianity, the indispensable document for acquiring first-hand knowledge of what it is in germ, essence, and perfection."

This position, which sends us to the New Testament as containing all that is essential to Christianity, and, indeed, all that is properly called Christianity at all, is most grateful to us, because it does honour to the book only that it may do primary honour to the author of Christianity, Jesus the Christ. By means of the book we get back to the Person—Christ; and find in Him, and the teaching He authorized, the Christianity which is Christianity indeed.

But it is further grateful to us because in reality it is not practically different from the position taken by Protestantism when it refers to the Bible as the religion of Protestants, and assures us of the alone-sufficiency of Holy Scripture; as, for instance, in the sixth article of the Church of England: "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation."

No contradiction is involved in accepting the whole Bible and yet regarding the New Testament as the final source of our knowledge of Christianity in its essence and perfection. In giving a preparatory character to the Old Testament we simply follow the lead of the Scriptures themselves. No one who takes the New Testament as giving the teaching of Christ can deny, or desire to deny, the divine origin of the Old Testament and the Mosaic Dispensation of religion. But what is divinely given is, in a certain sense, divinely removed. Thus we read in Scripture, "The priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law." The position, CHRIST PRE-EMINENT AND FINAL, is involved in those eloquent opening words of the Epistle to the Hebrews: "God having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days, spoken unto us in His Son."

While, then, the New Testament itself teaches us that the Old Testament dispensations and arrangements were of divine

origin, it also teaches us that the Old has given place to the New, and is no longer in force.

At the same time, there can be no mistaking the position taken up by Christ and His Apostles as to the finality of the Christianity the New Testament reveals and records. The word "Christianity" does not occur, but what we here mean by "New Testament Christianity" is expressed by such summary expressions as "the Word," "the Truth," "the Gospel," and "the Faith." We may recall what Paul says of the Gospel: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which ye received, let him be anathema"; and Jude's well-known description of the Faith as "the faith once for all delivered to the saints."

Commenting on these pregnant words from Jude, the Rev. Alfred Plummer, M.A., D.D., says: "No other will be given, for there is no other. Whatever may be delivered in future cannot be a gospel at all. The one true Gospel is complete and final, and admits of no successors and no supplements."

It being accepted that "the faith once for all delivered" is the only religion in the world to-day having Divine authority, two consequences follow: (1) The obligation fearlessly to refuse submission to any other form of religion: (2) the true nobility of fearing to refuse obedience to that religion Divinely given.

There arises, then, from the presence of New Testament Christianity, two kinds of fear—one ignoble, and the other noble.

Ignoble Fear.

When men are seeking to exercise over us improper authority, it is ignoble to fear to refuse submission. Such fear is degrading, and sacrifices that human liberty which is our birthright, without which human life loses its high value and character; such fear sacrifices that freedom which, as Cowper says, is "Cheap when blood-bought: thrown away when sold."

It is a conviction that accompanies religion everywhere

and in every age that the only proper authority is God. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve," is the dictum, not of the New Testament only, but of all religious consciousness. It is accordingly equally a universal conviction that, in religion, to bow to any authority but God's is to accept slavery and to yield the very citadel of our manhood.

No more exalted examples of true courage are afforded by the history of humanity than are found in those cases where men, for conscience toward God, have refused that obedience to man which they knew to be due to God only.

One of the most thrilling and ennobling features of the Old Testament is its record of the sufferings for conscience sake of those who have been well-named "the Hebrew Non-conformists." Typical of them are the heroic three who were sure their God was able to deliver them, but who said that, whether it pleased Him to deliver them or not: "Be it known unto thee, O King, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."

Add the even more numerous instances of fearless refusal during the Christian era. This era began, as we saw, with the establishment of a divinely revealed and authorized Faith! Alas! men soon began to adulterate that pure fountain—there came a great apostasy. But, from the Apostolic age onwards, there was a constant succession of believers in Christ, who refused to submit to what were but the teachings and commandments of men. That stream of heroic resistance to human authority in religion became greatly strengthened at the Reformation.

Thank God, that stream has continued to increase. It is a long stretch from Luther at Worms, saying, "I cannot do otherwise, so help me, God," to Fairbairn saying at Westminster, "We will not submit," but the principle and spirit are the same.

Thus in all ages humanity manifests the same consciousness that to yield to man, out of an ignoble fear of human power,

what is due to God only, is to accept a slavery, the chains of which degrade and bind—what ordinary slavery cannot touch—the higher spiritual nature.

Now, accepting the divine origin of New Testament Christianity, and regarding all additions to it as merely human, with the heroes of faith above referred to, we must hold it an unworthy fear which would deter us from rejection of human traditions and from refusal to give reverence to any faith but that once for all delivered to the saints.

Noble Fear.

There is the other side, however. We need only remind ourselves here that in all our conduct to fear to do wrong is more becoming and manly than the false courage that violates conscience. The truth is expressed in the words :

“ I dare do all that may become a man :
Who dares do more is none.”

Hence in Scripture “the fear of the Lord” is not only extolled as “the beginning of wisdom,” but also regarded as in harmony with man’s noblest self. The Puritans were fearless in their opposition to men because they feared God. No man need think he is cultivating a sentiment less than the noblest when he acts from fear of God.

It is true that “perfect love casteth out fear.” But that is a fear we do not here speak of—the fear that has torment. The fear that “trembleth at God’s word” also knows God’s love, and is as full of joy as of reverence. Those who have this fear of God can fulfil the Psalmist’s exhortation and “rejoice with trembling.”

The Epistle to the Hebrews presses this aspect of a proper fear upon us. After describing in chapter i. the great Speaker of this, the final, dispensation, we are asked in chapter ii. how we can hope to escape punishment if we neglect to *hear Him*. It is urged that our condemnation is greater, and sorer, than was theirs who set at nought the Law of Moses. How shall

we escape if we neglect *so great salvation*? Escape, it is implied, is less likely because of the gracious character of the Revelation through the Son. Is this not obviously the right view?

We conclude, therefore, that as New Testament Christianity, and it alone, has divine authority, while no fear should be ours in rejecting all humanisms in religion, even though mistakenly named Christianity, we shall be wise and true to our noblest manhood if we fear to neglect New Testament Christianity.

In this endeavour briefly to define, and show the importance of, New Testament Christianity, we have pointed out that it alone has Christ's authority, and it alone can be obeyed implicitly by us without loss of manliness, and that, rather, *fear to refuse obedience* is the truest form of courage. But we plead not only the *authority* but the *perfection* of New Testament Christianity as a powerful claim which it possesses upon our regard and upon our joyful, practical acceptance.

In the chapters which follow, considering in detail the great features of the Faith, one by one, this perfect adaptation to our need is, we hope, made manifest; but meantime we state the claim upon the general ground that we admit Christianity to be of divine origin. If the Faith, and it only, is from God, then it must be adapted to man's need. This will be felt to be emphatically a necessary conclusion, especially in view of the frequent claim of Christ to be a Saviour, one who came for the very purpose of meeting man's spiritual needs.

If, then, Christianity as delivered once for all was perfect, it follows that any change, whether in the way of addition or subtraction, must mar that perfect adaptation. Suppose an invalid who has, like the woman in the Gospels, tried many physicians, and is not benefited, but rather has become worse. Suppose this invalid to hear of some physician with a remedy for his disease. The physician is sent for, gives instructions and supplies the medicine, saying that it is just the thing required. But let us further suppose that the invalid, perhaps

not liking its taste, alters the medicine, and does not recover. Who would be to blame? If the physician was told that his prescription had been added to, or some ingredient left out, or his instructions not followed, he would surely say, that if his remedy was perfectly suited to the case, these alterations must have rendered it unsuitable!

That is how the case stands as between New Testament Christianity and any other so-called Christianity, consisting of "the Faith," or part of the Faith, and some human additions to it. To the extent of the change, it is less suited than the unadulterated and undiminished "word of the truth of the Gospel" to meet the needs of mankind.

This illustration is commended by the fact that Jesus chose the figure of a physician by which to describe His relation to man's need, and at many points the analogy helps us to feel the importance of not altering His remedy. It often happens that a patient may claim to have enough knowledge of his own physical nature to judge of the means prescribed by his physicians; but in the case of the divine Physician, who can claim to know our need and what is required as fully as He does? On the other hand, a patient is often quite ignorant of his body and its ills, but he knows that if the doctor understands the case, and he in faith follows his instructions, the cure will come, as surely as it would if the patient understood the case himself! Now that is how we stand with the great Physician. It is for the divine Physician to give instructions; ours to receive these in faith and act upon them. As His knowledge is perfect, we must assume His arrangements are so too; and as our knowledge is limited, although we shall be more intelligently appreciative where we know that He is right, any criticism or alteration made by us is manifestly at once conceited and injurious.

In thus presenting our argument we do not wish to suggest that the Christianity of Christ is fully seen under the figure of the physician. Christianity is adapted to man both as a sinner and as man—it is food as well as medicine. Perhaps

no figure fully sets its resources forth, but our illustration will show the nature of the reason from perfect adaptability, and it will be found to be applicable to all the elements of the Faith, whether viewed under some figure or quite literally in themselves. This conclusion is confirmed from experience. We think that if the principal changes which were made in New Testament Christianity by admixture of Judaism, philosophy, and priestism were examined, it would be found that in every instance the original is the better. That thoughtful men realize this to be the case is the motive of all those reformatory movements which have sought to get back to the Christianity of Christ.

Here, however, we do not wish to enter into details. Paul once said, "Let God be found true, but every man a liar." The saying looks unfair on the surface, but is reasonable to the last degree in such a connection as that in which he uses it. And the reason we now give for preferring Christianity as at the first is similar. In Romans the point is, that if a man says *he is not*, and God says *he is*, a sinner, it is more likely that the man has made a wrong estimate than that God has done so. In like manner, if a man says, for example, that the teaching of Rome about the Virgin Mary, and the place given to her, is a helpful addition to the New Testament Christianity, and that he finds the system of Rome better suited to him than the simple approach to God in Christ of the New Testament, we should think it more reasonable to conclude that that man had wrongly estimated his experience than that the Faith once delivered needed to be perfected by such human additions. The same conclusion follows in every case in which original Christianity has been altered by human wisdom. It is a case of "painting the lily."

CHAPTER II.

GOD.

IN the list of themes which go to make up an outline of New Testament Christianity few are likely to object if we decide to begin with God as the very foundation of all.

In saying so we do not forget that Christ began His instruction by asking, not, "Do you believe there is a personal God?" but, "What think ye of Me?" Hence we have sympathy with a recent writer who, in view of the tendency, in our day especially, of abstract thought to find difficulties in reasoning out the existence of a personal God, preferred to begin with a question of history, and ask men to consider, first of all, the truth about Jesus Christ. He held that honest thought about Jesus Christ would lead them ultimately to believe in God.

It is a mistake, however, to think that Jesus began with His question, "What think ye of Me?" in order to lead those He taught to believe in God. Just the reverse of this is the truth. He began there because His hearers already believed in God as revealed in their Scriptures—what we now call the Old Testament. What He desired them to grasp was the truth, the fundamental truth, of His own teaching, namely, that He, Jesus, was "the Christ, the Son of the living God."

In beginning, then, with the question about God, or rather the New Testament truth about Him, we are in absolute harmony with the fundamental truth in New Testament Christianity. That truth is, we repeat, the statement that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God." But it will be seen that the basal truth in this proposition is the existence of a personal God. It is clear, therefore, that

not only is God fundamental to all religions, so that we must say with the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, "he that cometh to God must believe that He is"; but it is specially fundamental to Christianity, for he that believes, as Christianity requires, that Jesus is the Son of the living God, must first believe in the existence and character of this one true and living God.

A reality which meets us at every turn in considering all themes that constitute New Testament Christianity, is specially noticeable in its thought about God, and may be emphasized here. We refer to

The amount of Truth it assumes.

On almost every important subject there is a nucleus or kernel assumed as already understood and accepted. Our present theme exemplifies what is meant. The New Testament assumes, *brings over*, so to speak, from the Old Testament its assumption that "God is," and those great truths about His Personality, Character, and Work which are the principal contents of the Old Testament.

To dwell on these pre-suppositions here is not deemed wise or necessary, but we desire strongly to recommend the consideration of this feature of the New Testament Christianity and its bearing on the question of its perfection and completeness. The truth on this perfection and completeness evidently does not mean that it has not its roots in the soil of previously known truth, and especially in the soil of the Old Testament. It rather claims, on the one hand, to be understood in the light of the old truth; and, on the other, to complete and glorify that previous revelation.

Returning to our present subject, the definite article in the original of the New Testament often calls attention to the truth assumed concerning God. Thus the Gospel of John begins with, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with *the* God"—as if to say, "Observe, we take it for granted that you know about the God spoken of in our Scriptures." Similarly, Hebrews begins not simply "God,"

but *the* God who spake in divers portions and in divers manners, in old time, to the fathers in the prophets hath at the end of these days spoken unto us by His Son.

Great as was the nucleus or germ thus introduced and accepted from the past, the growth of this knowledge which "came through Jesus Christ" was greater. It completed and glorified the old.

In view of all this, our New Testament *theology*, using that word in its primary sense as meaning a discourse concerning God, may best be viewed in a three-fold division: (1) His Existence; (2) His Character as accepted; (3) The further Revelation of God made by Jesus Christ.

I. HIS EXISTENCE.

Neither in New Testament nor in Old is there any formal setting forth of the reasons for which we ought to believe that, to use the terse phrase of the Epistle to the Hebrews, "He is." In the New Testament the writers evidently assume the view of God contained in the Jewish Scriptures; and in the Old, it might almost be said that there, too, the existence of God is taken for granted. This seems done in the very first verse of the Bible, in the well-known words: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

On reflection, however, this first verse of Genesis contains in it the very essence of what is presented in our modern "Evidences" as reasons for believing in the existence of the Supreme Being. There was no need to state that in the beginning was God; it was wise and impressive simplicity merely to tell what God did, and leave us in the possession, by necessary implication, at once of the idea that a God capable of creating the universe existed, and of the proof that He did so in the heavens and earth of which the existence and exercise of the power of God are demanded as the cause. It is easily seen, in reading the Old Testament, that this reliance on the proof which the universe and men's own consciousness

afforded, was common to those who believed in God. One of the Psalm-writers in effect declares that the Creator must be Himself possessed of such personal powers as He has endowed man with, saying, "He that planted the ear, shall He not hear? He that formed the eye, shall He not see?"

The bringing over of this way of looking at the question into the New Faith is well seen in Paul's references to the subject. Thus, in restraining the heathen from worshipping them, Barnabas and Paul spoke of "the living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is : who in the generations gone by suffered all the nations to walk in their own ways. And yet He left not himself without witness, in that He did good, and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness." And to the more learned Athenians Paul says : "The God that made the world and all things therein, He, being Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands. . . . Certain even of your own poets have said, For we also are His offspring. Being, then, the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art or man's device." Note especially the view implied here, much used to-day, that the Creator must possess personality, intelligence, feelings, and will, such as He has endowed His creatures with. But the Pauline passage which is likeliest our modern way of stating the case is that in Romans first. He maintains that only by "holding down the truth in unrighteousness," only by "refusing to have God in their knowledge," was it possible for men to be unaware of the existence of God and of His everlasting power and divinity. "Because," he writes, "that which may be known of God is manifest in them ; for God manifested it unto them. For the invisible things of Him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even His everlasting power and divinity."

It is true that the proof of the existence of a Supreme

Being is generally divided into separate sections, as, for example, those used by C. A. Row, M.A., which are as follows :—

- (1) The argument founded on the principle of causation.
- (2) That founded on the order of the universe.
- (3) That founded on its innumerable correlations and adaptations, commonly called the argument from final causes.
- (4) That furnished by conscience, and the moral nature of man. But in reality the three that follow are embraced in the first.

“Causation” here means that man is so made that he cannot help but think that every phenomenon or effect must have a cause. We sometimes say “adequate” cause. But the word is unnecessary, for what is not sufficient to account for an effect is not its cause at all. Observe this conviction—every phenomenon has its cause—is not one come to by a course of reasoning. It is a part of our very consciousness, and cannot be made surer by reasoning. It is nearer to us than any conclusion drawn out by reasoning. It is inherent in our nature, and if we cannot trust it, we cannot trust any reasoning, for all reasoning on all subjects is based upon it.

It matters not, then, whether it is the universe as a whole or the various *signs of mind* contained in its innumerable objects, such as order and adaptation, the argument is the same. The only cause which can account for what we see is a Great First Cause, itself uncaused. We may quote Mr. Herbert Spencer : “The assumption of the existence of a first cause of the universe is a necessity of thought.” This First Cause the Bible calls God, and speaks of not as a thing, but as a Person.

We have referred to the principle of Bible writers that the powers which man possesses must be possessed by man’s Creator—“He that planted the ear, shall He not hear?” We, being God’s offspring, ought not to think of Him as like gold

or other material things. Now undoubtedly this, too, is one of the best things in modern "Evidences." Our human consciousness, rather than our reasoning, refuses to conceive that any nature we possess can be higher than that possessed by our Maker. Since, then, man has thought, desire, will, and personality, God must be at least such a Person, but, in view of His works, beyond all thought, greater in wisdom, holiness, and purpose. Creation may not *prove* Him to be infinite, but it is surely a sufficient *index* that He is so. "The everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary, there is no searching of His understanding."

II. HIS NATURE AND CHARACTER,

AS INTRODUCED INTO CHRISTIANITY FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT.

In reading the New Testament, it is evident that the writers build and rely upon the knowledge of God they had received from the Old Testament. Sometimes distinct reference is made to their Scripture statements, as when the Unity of God is in evidence. Thus Paul's words, "If so be that God is one," in Rom. iii., and James's statement, "Thou believest that God is one," in chapter iii. of his Epistle, are both of them references to Deut. vi. 4, "Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God is one LORD: and thou shalt love the LORD thy God, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." He is repeatedly on Old Testament authority described as righteous and faithful, and also when it is said that He "is full of pity and merciful." In brief, all that had been gradually revealed of

The Name of God

as God Almighty, Jehovah, the Holy One, the Lord of Hosts, in the Jewish Scriptures, is in the New Testament pre-supposed as the truth concerning the Nature and Character of God.

Many have spoken as if a contrast existed between God as portrayed in the Old Testament and in the New respectively. The view of His Character in the Old is said to be stern; in the New, mild and loving. This is a mistake, however, due, perhaps, to the fact that the stern aspect of His Character is in the Old more frequently presented than in the New, and to the transcendent manifestation of His love which is necessarily made only in the New, in the fulness of the time, and through the coming of the Son of God.

But so far as words, sincere and strong, can convey it, the loving character is affirmed again and again in the Old, and the stern aspect in the New. Thus the formula as announced to Moses in Exod. xxxiv. 6, "The LORD, the LORD, a God full of compassion and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy and truth," is reiterated, like the ringing of the bells of heaven, throughout the Old Testament Scriptures right up to Joel ii. 12, 13, where it is used most woefully to persuade to repentance: "Yet even now, saith the LORD, turn ye unto Me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: and rend your heart and not your garments and turn unto the Lord your God: for He is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy, and repenteth Him of the evil." On the other hand, the God of love and peace in the New Testament is one who punishes iniquity, a consuming fire, to fall into whose hands is a terrible thing. The Old Testament saints rejoice in forgiveness as an experienced fact, as, "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are pardoned, blessed is the man unto whom the LORD doth not reckon sin." "Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits, who forgiveth all thine iniquities." On the other hand, the New Testament revelation of God's love did not prevent those who taught it from speaking of Him in language no less stern than that of the Old; did not prevent them from arguing that as, under the Law, God justly punished every transgression and disobedience; that as a man that set at nought Moses' Law

dieth without compassion on due proof of guilt : so he that rejecteth, not law, but *great salvation*, shall be counted worthy of still sorer punishment.

There is, then, no difference in the character attributed to the Divine Being ; there is, it may be, a seeming difference due to the differing circumstances.

Another difficulty which many feel with God in the Old Testament, as His Character is made apparent by His treatment of men, is solved by the same consideration. Some of His deeds, for example, the command to offer up Isaac, and that to extirpate the Canaanites, do not always approve themselves to our conscience as right, not to speak of tenderness. The case resembles that of a father in the training of a child. The son, when he is full-grown, and in full fellowship with his father, may have momentary visions of former parental insistence on obedience even to enforcement by corporal chastisement. But he realizes that his father was probably just as tender then as now, and can easily believe that if he knew the details which led his father to punish him in his former immature condition, he would approve.

The principle involved in this is implied in Christ's words, in which He explained that the law of divorce was allowed under the Law "because of the hardening of their hearts"—it was the best that could be done in the circumstances. By the exercise, as far as we can, of the historic sense, transporting ourselves into the circumstances, we find much is seen to be the best for the moral advancement of the race, in the circumstances ; and for the rest, we do not doubt it was so, though we may be unable to see it, so far removed as we are from the circumstances, and these only partially known to us.

It is clear the New Testament writers brought from these Old Testament narratives no unworthy views of God, and they quite escaped, as we have seen, the other extreme, of thinking of God, as seen in Christ, as deprived of the righteousness and firmness necessary to support His moral government. The Old Testament view of God was beautiful in its tenderness,

sublime in its majesty, but it needed a stronger light—the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

III. AS REVEALED IN CHRIST.

New Testament Christianity claims, as a feature of its own, to possess and present to mankind a *special* revelation of God. Not less than this can be understood by the statement of John i. 18: “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.” Especially are we bound to conclude that it is the work of Jesus Christ to make God known, when we remember that in the verses which culminate in the statement quoted we have been told of Jesus Christ that He was, as the Word, with God, and was Himself God, that as the Word He was made flesh, became *incarnate*. We do not wonder that this unique Person, the Word that was God made flesh, is finally called the *only begotten Son of God*, and it is claimed for Him that He has declared the invisible God.

This ability to reveal God is one of the powers special to Himself, to which Jesus Christ referred. In the Gospel according to Matthew—some mistakenly think this kind of language is confined to John—Jesus is reported to have said: “All things have been delivered unto Me of My Father: and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him.” Fuller and more homely, but to the same effect, is the classical passage in John xiv.: “No one cometh unto the Father, but by Me. If ye had known Me, ye would have known My Father also: from henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him. Philip saith unto Him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know Me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.”

In harmony with these statements the Epistles tell us that the Son of God was the “effulgence of God’s glory, the very

image of His substance," "the image of the invisible God"; expressions which describe Jesus Christ as presenting to men, in a higher measure and kind, the knowledge of God.

What was the special revelation of God made by Jesus Christ? There can be no doubt that He revealed God *as Father* and *as love*, though these two are one—the love is the Father's love. In the Gospels it is the term "Father," applied by Jesus so constantly and firmly to God, which arrests a reader fresh from reading in the Old Testament about God. It is an echo of the Gospels when Peter writes, "*If ye call on God as Father,*" and his words, "God as Father," exactly describe what was peculiar in Christ's representation of God.

The expression "like as a father" is once applied to God in the Old Testament, and undoubtedly it is not simply the idea of Fatherhood we owe to Christ. His revelation is only understood when it is regarded, in distinction from mere words, as *personal*. There are fathers *and* fathers; and such Fatherhood as God's it was impossible to communicate by merely likening Him to the best of human fathers. So the Revealer must be divine, as we have seen, and be able, as the unique Son of God, to show us the Father.

In like manner, in grasping the revealed LOVE of God, no progress is made so long as it is thought that Jesus simply announced that God is *love*, using the word "love" as it was understood before He spoke. It was not a verbal but a personal revelation He made. The *personal* revelation gave meaning to the verbal. No word can rise above its source. Before we can understand the significance of the word we must see, must experience, the *reality* for which it stands. This is the ground the New Testament—though without a word of philosophizing—occupies, in harmony with the profoundest philosophy. It refers in every instance, when it is meant to make known to us the measure of God's love, to the ACT OF GOD in sending, giving, sacrificing for us, the Son of His love. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

We may note, in closing, another remarkable feature of the view of the Supreme Being presented to us in the New Testament faith. As we have seen, the Unity of God was emphasized under the Old Testament dispensations. That Unity is maintained in the New, but an unexpected revelation appears in the New as to the nature of God's Unity. It is seen that His nature admits of Him acting as three Persons ; for the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are each spoken of as a Person and as God. This Unity is no doubt mysterious ; but God in three Persons is more satisfying to the mind than the conception of a simple Unity, which would leave us to think of God existing without society and without love in eternity before Creation began. If God is Three in One, then He had society within Himself. Accordingly, Jesus, in communion with His Father, said : "Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world !"

CHAPTER III.

THE BIBLE.

I. THE NEW TESTAMENT.

THE order in which the great elements of Christianity have in the past been discussed has been, first, GOD ; then, THE WORD OF GOD—THE BIBLE. Of late years some have rather inclined to give the Bible a much less central character—a view fairly represented by the *position* of the chapter on the Bible, as well as by the *contents* of that chapter, in Mr. Denney's work, "Studies in Theology."

It is pleaded, as one reason, that Christianity existed before the New Testament. The Church of Christ arose through the *preaching* of the Gospel before the writing of the Gospels. The Church produced the New Testament, not the New Testament the Church. It is, as Robert J. Drummond, D.D., of Edinburgh, remarks, an "arresting fact that Christ, our Master, wrote nothing. No letter of His remains, no diary, no pages of autobiography." Nor did the Apostles write until perhaps twenty years after the Church, on the Day of Pentecost that followed our Lord's ascension, began. To quote again from Mr. Drummond's statement in "Faith's Certainties": "The Church lived on tradition. Its position was very much like that of all communities in pagan lands when first they gather round the missionary. . . It often means a generation before they have any Bible but the spoken word."

We, of course, concede this ; yet, when the inference is drawn that Christianity is independent of the New Testament, we find that conclusion is the very opposite of the truth.

The fact is, that a review of the manner in which Christianity began shows that it was essential to its continuance and

purity that "the tradition" which first produced and sustained Christianity must be preserved in the form of inspired writing.

Let us briefly review these beginnings of Christianity. Our position that the New Testament is essential is proved incidentally by the very fact that for such a review we have no choice but to go to the New Testament. If the historic reliability of the New Testament were denied, we should be unable to form any distinct idea as to the origin of Christianity.

Fortunately, those who deny that the New Testament is necessary to Christianity do not deny that the account this Book gives of the origin of Christianity is substantially true. Now, in the course of this account, we specially emphasize the fact that we are told that Jesus, before His death, promised the Holy Spirit to His Apostles; and that, after His death, resurrection, and glorification, He did send them the Spirit. Then the preaching which produced the Church began. On Pentecost, and afterwards, the Apostle Peter, to use his own words, "preached the Gospel . . . by the Holy Spirit sent forth from heaven." These Apostles, and Paul as one born out of due season, in all they did claimed to be directed by the Holy Spirit, and proved their claim "by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers."

Now, even if it had pleased God that these miraculous powers should be perpetual in the Church, the Apostolic witness, being that of eye witnesses, could not be perpetual.

As these original witnesses could not continue for ever, at an early stage their testimony concerning Jesus was committed to writing. Thus that "tradition" which was essential to the founding of Christianity was preserved for its continuance. Thus the Christ-truth was prevented from being altered and deteriorated, as nothing but a continual miracle could have prevented, had it been left to be passed on orally from generation to generation.

Seeing, then, that the inspired testimony and teaching of the Apostles was essential to Christianity at the beginning, the

New Testament, containing that testimony and teaching, has been found essential to Christianity ever since. From the time the Apostles fell asleep the New Testament has presented the facts about Jesus necessary to faith in Him. Those who have preached Jesus have gained their knowledge from its writings. The necessity of this inspired record is seen by reading the apocryphal Gospels, and by noting the vagaries of scholarship. Every now and again some great mind presents some view of Jesus which is different from the Jesus of the New Testament; and only by the influence of this Book do we to-day keep our conception of Him from being mutilated and lost in the fancies of the human imagination.

The same considerations which show us how *essential* the New Testament is to our having any reliable conception of Christianity go to support the conviction that it is *inspired*.

Regarding this Book simply as reliable history, we see that in the early years, from Pentecost onward, the outstanding feature in the history of the early Church was the

Guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The language used in John's Gospel is clear and remarkable, and leaves us in no doubt as to the fulness of the inspiration promised to the twelve Apostles; and, as the Acts of Apostles affirms, this was actually received by them. The Spirit was to take Christ's place, so to speak—be to them *another Comforter or Advocate*. This Advocate was called the *Spirit of Truth*; was to abide with them for ever; and was to teach them all things, and bring to their remembrance all things that Christ had spoken unto them (John xiv.). It was distinctly promised that this Advocate would guide the Apostles "*into all truth*." After His resurrection, too, Christ again referred to the coming Spirit, and charged them to tarry in Jerusalem until, by the coming of the Holy Spirit, they should be "clothed with power from on high" (Acts i. 4, 5, 8).

In reference to the Apostle Paul, Jesus appeared to him

for the very purpose of qualifying him to be an Apostle, enabling him to testify to the central fact of His Resurrection. He evidently had the absence of personal intercourse with his Master during Christ's life on earth compensated by special visions and revelations afterwards. He speaks of the exceeding greatness of these revelations (2 Cor. xii. 7); and we find him declaring that he received of the Lord what he had communicated to the Corinthians concerning the Lord's Supper. His possession of the Holy Spirit, alike to work miracles and inspire him as to his teaching, is affirmed in many places in his Epistles.

In all this we simply array the things recorded in the New Testament. They are not obscure hints, but plainly-made statements; and if they are rejected, the reliability of the New Testament as a history of "the early days of Christianity" is destroyed. These statements about the guidance of the Apostles, including Paul, are so wrought into the texture of the history that he who rejects them could not reasonably believe the statements about Christ and its history generally.

Nor was the supernatural agency of the Holy Spirit confined to the Apostles. By the laying on of the Apostles' hands others received the gift. So that the gift of prophecy (teaching inspired by the Spirit) was recognized and is spoken of alike in the Acts and in the Epistles.

Consider now the circumstances. (1) There was in the beginning a guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, which supplied the Church with the truth necessary to its increase and sustenance. (2) The New Testament is confessedly the only history we have of that Spirit-guided age, and as a fact is the only source from which the "truth as it is in Jesus" has been available for the continuance and preservation of Christianity. (3) A large portion of this record is acknowledged to be the work of Paul, who claimed to have the guidance of the Holy Spirit; other portions are held, even after much research and controversy, to be the work of other Apostles — Matthew, John, and Peter; and other

portions are acknowledged to be written by such men as Mark and Luke, companions of Apostles. If the points now enumerated be all held in mind, they will show how probable it is that the New Testament, so essential to the continuance of the Christianity of Christ and His Apostles, is to be regarded as an integral part of the word of God, the complement and completion of the Old Testament. This conclusion recommends itself by its inherent fitness—a record so essential one is not surprised to find inspired; rather we should be surprised if a Spirit-guided age had not produced an inspired Book. The New Testament shares with the Old other features to be mentioned as proof of the divine origin of both.

II. THE OLD TESTAMENT.

Having seen that there are strong reasons for accepting the New Testament as inspired, it follows that we may, indeed must, accept its authority on the various subjects of which it speaks. One of these is the character of the Old Testament. Throughout the New Testament the writings we now call the Old Testament are taken for granted as an inspired God-given book. The familiar passage in 2 Tim. iii. may stand as an example. Here the Apostle Paul says to Timothy: "From a child thou hast known the sacred writings, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work." No one can doubt that the "*sacred writings*" here spoken of are those which constitute the Old Testament.

Indeed, even if the New Testament could be thought of as ordinary history, we should still be led to see that Jesus Christ, as well as His Apostles, regarded the Old Testament as God's Word. He, like the rest, argued from the following foundation,

“the Scripture cannot be broken.” Whether He met the temptations of Satan; corrected His human assailants; or taught His disciples, He used the Old Testament as the authority, the Word of God. So that whether we think immediately of Christ as our infallible Teacher, or of the whole New Testament as the work of the Holy Spirit, we find that the inspiration and divine origin of the Old Testament is a fundamental conception of New Testament Christianity.

From Matthew to Revelation the Old Testament is quoted as giving its testimony to Christianity, and to describe the character of the grace and truth that came by Jesus Christ. The relation of the two Testaments is like that between John the Baptist and Jesus. John’s business, so to speak, was to bear witness to Christ, but we know, too, how generously Jesus bore witness to John, so that no believer in Jesus can reject His harbinger. In like manner, the support of the Old and New Testaments is mutual. As we see the Scriptures fulfilled in Christ; see the vast variety of predictions about the Messiah—His sufferings, glory, and kingdom—fulfilled, we realize that the New Testament forms a wonderful proof of the inspiration of the Old Testament.

But the support is mutual. From the nature of the case it is the support the Old gives the New which is prominent in the New Testament. It was allowed, by the Jews, at least, that the Old Testament was of God. What they needed to be proved was that Jesus Christ had a divine claim on their attention, and that a new dispensation had indeed been introduced. This was met by appeals to the Old Testament. The Old Testament was shown on all points, such as the identifying of “Jesus as the Christ,” the justifying of men by faith in Him, and so on, to give its emphatic testimony to the divine origin of the New—the prophets, no less than Moses, were found to be “*for a testimony of those things*” which were afterwards to be spoken. As to illustration, we need only point out that in all matters common to Old and New Testaments, such as the traits of character and conduct which please God,

the Old Testament is used as a treasury of example and illustration.

In all this the finality of the New Testament is evident. Jesus Himself recognized that the Old Testament contained adaptations to low spiritual and moral development. Where the New is an advance on the Old, such as the progress of the history of redemption had made possible, the New, not the Old, is God's will for us. The Old is for the New, not the New for the Old. God, who spake in times past to the fathers in the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us in His Son.

III. THE DIVINE ORIGIN OF THE BIBLE

To what has been said on the inspiration of the New Testament and testimony of the New that the Old Testament also is the Word of God, we may now consider the proofs of the divine origin of the Bible as a whole.

There are certain facts in relation to its production, contents, and history which, taken together, indicate a higher than human origin. Henry Rogers, in his book on the "Superhuman Origin of the Bible"—a most reasonable and convincing book—puts this in the form of an epigram: "*The Bible is such a book as man could not write if he would, and would not write if he could.*" He calls these peculiarities the *unhuman* features of the Bible. We may mention a few of these.

(1) *The way the Bible speaks of Mankind, and especially of the Jews.*

On all hands it is allowed that the Book is of the Jews—it is their only literary possession, and, moreover, it is largely the national history of the Jews and the words to them of their teachers. Now we know that it is the tendency of patriotism to speak well of its own nation and be blind to the faults of its heroes. But the Bible, whether in history or

prophecy, is one long indictment of the Jews. Their sins and apostasies are its constant theme. The sins of their heroes and saints, as Abraham and Jacob and David, are also clearly recorded. And what is true of its portraiture of the Jew is true also of its description of mankind generally. According to the Bible, man is fallen, his constant tendency is away from God, and his hope is not in any inherent good qualities which will enable him to rise, but in the saving power of God. Now this is an *unhuman* feature characteristic of the Bible. Mr. Rogers illustrates these features and their proof of superhuman authorship by reference to those cows by which the Philistines tested whether the ark was supernaturally cared for or not. They put the ark in a new cart, and attached to the cart cows whose calves were to be left behind. The cows, however, of their own motion, went off towards the territory of the Israelites with the ark, *lowing as they went*, that is, their natural longings would have taken them to their calves, but something else took them to the territory of the Israelites against their natural inclination. And so in the Bible there is this writing of national history, and this speaking of mankind in a form contrary to what men could or would have written had they not been inspired of God. It is a superhuman feature.

(2) *Another amazing unhuman Feature is found in the Prophecies of the Bible.*

This is one of the standing, perpetual miracles. Take those relating to the Jewish people. Deuteronomy and other places foretell how, if unfaithful, they should be scattered among the heathen; and to-day, and for thousands of years, the Jews have been a standing proof of the correctness of those predictions. The Jews have been wonderfully preserved as a separate people, but are still a people without possession of a country. Then there are the prophecies relating to cities, such as Babylon and Tyre, and many others. It is not merely that they fell, but they have remained fallen; and details, such

as that Tyre would be a place where fishermen dried their nets, have been fulfilled. Now all this is utterly beyond any power man possesses. He is clearly not furnished with any faculty for anticipating the future in human affairs.

(3) *Then there is the Unity of the Bible.*

When we take up a book by one of our modern writers, whether it be theology or history or fiction, we are not surprised to find it a unit, with a clearly marked plan, the later parts developing what was introduced at the beginning. If parts of the book contradict each other we are surprised. The unity we expect, and are surprised if we find not, is due to the fact that one man has written it all. But when we come to the Bible we have a book composed of parts written severally during, according to the usually received view, sixteen hundred years, and by authors differing widely from each other, from the king to such as Amos, who was not a prophet nor the son of a prophet, but a herdsman and dresser of sycamore trees; from the fisherman to the educated Moses or Paul. That a series of sixty-six pamphlets, written under these circumstances, should form a unity, having a distinct beginning, development, and conclusion, is a unique and wonderful fact. There is no doubt that this unity is there, and that it is of a kind not usually found in even one man's writings. Every part of it is written from the point of view that there is one God, and the idea of that one God, as a God seeking man, dominates the whole book. It is features like this, *unhuman* features, permeating every book, whether it is prose or poetry, history or ethical teaching, that make the Bible so much a Book apart, all its sections like each other, but differing in detail and in general character from other books.

Then there is the gradual development of the scheme of salvation centring in the promises regarding the Christ and their fulfilment in Jesus of Nazareth.

One of the most remarkable things about this development is the manner in which the New Testament completes the

Old. Any one who looks into it finds that the New Testament is as certainly the completion of the Old as the flower is the completion of the growth of the rose tree, yet it was as certainly brought about in direct contradiction to the Jews, the writers and custodians of the Old Testament. Jesus was not the Messiah according to their ideas of the description of the Messiah given in their Scriptures, so they rejected and crucified Him, yet by this very act they fulfilled those Scriptures!

If we were told that a statue, which was a perfect model of a man, every part suitable to every other part, was composed of sixty-six pieces, carved by sixty-six sculptors, some of whom knew nothing about sculpture, during sixteen hundred years, and yet that when put together the result was this harmonious model of the human form—what could we say? Surely there could be no explanation except that these workers had all been inspired in their work by one spirit—the Spirit of the eternal God. And so we believe that the unity of the Bible proves it inspired of God. The last of these features of the Bible here to be named may be covered by two words—

(4) *Vitality and Service.*

Peter says that Christians have been “begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which *liveth and abideth*. For all flesh is grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withereth, and the flower falleth, but the Word of the Lord abideth for ever.” Now, books for the most part are, comparatively speaking, ephemeral—like our little systems, of which Tennyson speaks: “They have their day and cease to be.” Sometimes the book has no merit of its own; sometimes, science advancing, a book’s contents are rendered out of date; sometimes a better book takes its place. A few do survive from age to age, but most of these appeal to a few persons only.

The Bible has a strange vitality. Voltaire said that in a

hundred years from the time when he spoke the Bible would be forgotten, except as a curiosity in the museum. About the time when his prophecy should have been fulfilled the revisers finished their work on the New Testament, and to gain time the whole New Testament was telegraphed to America! To-day, the Bible, or a portion of it, can be had in over 400 languages or dialects. Somehow, in spite of its supposed contradiction of science and all the rest, it manages to keep abreast, not to fall out of date, but to be in its moral and spiritual contents in advance of the most advanced portion of mankind.

Men, of course, in testing the book by *its service*, cannot distinguish sharply between the influence of the Book and the influence of the Christ of which it speaks, but as a fact its influence is known to be always on the side of justice and liberty and social progress. Men may point out that it records and speaks with much plainness of evil things, and say that some portions are not fit to be read. But the influence of the Book is always felt to be a rebuke to every kind of sin. So much depends on the atmosphere and tone of a book as to whether it will recommend or condemn the evils it records or speaks of. The very map of Europe shows the service of the Bible. The countries which at the Reformation chose Protestantism and a translated and open Bible, progressed; those which chose Rome, the priest, and the closed Bible, stood still and then decayed.

That is a true illustration Hastings uses in his tract, "Will the Old Book stand?" when he tells of the old lawyer and young man in the backwoods of America, who were distrustful of the rough-looking old settler who sheltered them in his cabin for a night. They arranged to watch in turn. But when the old lawyer, who was a sceptic (if we remember aright), saw the old man take down a Bible and read a portion, and then kneel in prayer, he lay down feeling perfectly safe. The people who make the crime in this land and in America, whether millionaires or poor people, are not the

people who read and love the Bible. They are the people who do not believe in the Bible.

We must be content to leave the evidences that the Bible is of divine origin with these four points—

- (1) The impartial way it speaks of man, especially of the Jews ;
- (2) Prophecy ;
- (3) Unity ;
- (4) Vitality and Service.

While, then, it is obvious that the New Testament, as the only historical record of the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, and of the teaching of Christ and His Apostles, is essential to New Testament Christianity, it is a joy to find that not only is the New Testament an inspired book, but that so also is the Old Testament, to which we must ever turn to support the claim, define the meaning, and exemplify the teaching of the New.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PLACE OF JESUS CHRIST.

IN writing these outlines of New Testament Christianity, and having selected "Jesus Christ" as its central theme, we think of many a passage which endorses our selection. We quote two from the short but important Epistle to the Colossians: "That in all things He [Christ] might have the pre-eminence." "Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bondman, freeman: but

Christ is all, and in all."

The application of this great truth in the Scripture above, "Christ is all, and in all" (Col. iii. 11), may not be equally clear to us all. We know, of course, that the primitive Churches did not exclude any man because of his nationality or his place in society. But it might be said, "Entering the Church would not destroy the differences between men. The Gentile who became a Christian would still be a Gentile; the converted Jew would still be a Jew; and in the eyes of society the converted bondmen and freemen were doubtless still bondmen and freemen." What, then, does the Apostle mean when he says that *in the Church*—for that we take to be the meaning of his "where"—there cannot be Greek or Jew or any of these other distinctions?

Perhaps a little incident which occurred in America, when the States formed their Union, will bring out the force of the Apostle's statement. At the Colonial Congress, Patrick Henry said: "The distinctions between Virginians, Pennsylvanians, New Yorkers, and New Englanders are no more. I am not a Virginian, but an American." The words may not seem to

mean much to us, but they were followed then by a great outburst of enthusiasm, and they still mean much in the United States. They mean, of course, that the great new thing they had in common should henceforth overshadow and make them practically forget the distinctions which had previously seemed so important. Their rivalries and jealousies as separate States were to be forgotten in their mutual glory in the Unity of the States. The Apostle's meaning is similar—only he speaks of a more wonderful new mutual feature, uniting those in Christ. They have exchanged the old man, the old sinful will, character, and life, for the new man, the holy will, and character, and life. This new heavenly feature completely annihilates the old distinctions. They forget the old differences in the enthusiasm of being all members of a new humanity. To them now the old distinctions are trivial. The Jew is no longer the proud, circumcised child of Abraham—he is a Christian. The cultured Greek no longer despises the uncultured barbarian—the barbarian, like himself, is a Christian. As Paul sums it up, to all of them now, “Christ is all, and in all.” What is true of the Church is true in other aspects.

I. CHRIST IS THE PRE-EMINENT THEME OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

He must indeed be a careless reader who does not know how completely everything in the New Testament gathers around Jesus Christ. In the same sense as that in which there is neither Jew nor Greek in the Church, we may say that in the New Testament, in Christianity as there revealed, there can be neither Moses nor Elijah; neither John the Baptist nor Caiaphas the high priest; neither Peter the Apostle of the uncircumcision nor Paul the Apostle of the Gentiles; neither angel nor archangel; but Christ is all, and in all. Joseph's dreams are fulfilled a second time in his great antitype. Christ is pre-eminent. To His sheaf the sheaves of all the other servants of God do obeisance. To Him, sun, moon, and

stars do homage. That this central and all-important place is occupied by Jesus Christ is the Alpha and Omega of New Testament Christianity. It is its first, its easiest, and its most formative message.

(1) *Take the Four Gospels.*

Here certainly Christ is all, and in all. He is their theme; except to tell of Him no one of them would have been written. And the importance given to Him is all the more striking because of the wonderful restraint of the writers. The evangelists tell you what He said and did, and let the facts produce their own impression. Yet no Life of Christ, written with open, enthusiastic comment, has ever produced so deep an impression of the glory of the Christ as these Gospels, singly, and still more, unitedly, produce on the mind of the reader.

Look at Matthew's record. Jesus is born, and is named Jesus because He came to save His people from their sins. He is baptized, and John acknowledges His superiority to himself; the heavens open, and the voice of God the Father says, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." He calls His Apostles, works His miracles, gives His teaching, and the Apostles are led to confess that *Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God*; and He, in a manner perfectly gracious and kingly, accepts that confession. What did that confession mean? Nothing less than this—that *the Christ* promised in their *holy writings*, and expected at that time, was depicted in those Scriptures as of the Nature of God as well as of the seed of David; and that Jesus fulfilled the description—was that promised and long-expected Christ, the Son of the living God.

He is transfigured on the Mount, and converses there with the two greatest saints of the Old Testament—Moses, the giver of the Law, and Elijah, its restorer. But these disappear, adding significance to the Divine Message, which came out of heaven, "This is My beloved Son, hear ye HIM." Henceforth Christ is to be all.

Now He begins to speak of His death and resurrection. He is to give His life a ransom for many. His disciples do not understand Him, and seem to make no effort to do so. Controversy with the leaders of the nation arises. The different opponents are all easily foiled in their efforts to entangle Him in His talk. On the main issue, whether the Christ was to be divine as well as human, He completely triumphs. David, He shows, spoke of the Christ as his Lord.

Then follows the upper room, Gethsemane, the judgment, Calvary, and Joseph's tomb. The triumph of the Jews and the despair of the disciples are of brief duration. He rises from the dead the third day. To His disciples He appears, and shows that the death which occasioned them such dismay really fulfilled the Scriptures. Passing from text to text of the inspired writings, He demonstrates that thus it behoved the Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day.

Lastly, all this claim of His—His Messiahship, including divine nature; vicarious suffering; authority and ability to save—is fully embodied in the simple but dignified and truly "great" commission which He gave to His Apostles, and with which the Gospel according to Matthew terminates: "And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

Such (save one item) is a brief epitome of one Gospel; with precious variation in detail, especially in the fourth, the substance of the three others is the same.

(2) *Pass on to the Acts of the Apostles.*

Here, too, Christ is all, and in all. The writer intimates that what is here recorded is a continuation of what

Jesus *began* to do and to teach in the Gospels. He continues His work through the Holy Spirit, who, as promised, does not speak of Himself, but shows to the Apostles the things of Christ, and these preach Him to the world. They witness to His resurrection; declare Him to be Lord of all; that only in His Name is there salvation. Paul is "apprehended" by Christ. He becomes of all the Apostles the most effective preacher of Christ. It is for Christ he travels and suffers so nobly and indefatigably. Nevertheless, "Not I, but Christ, liveth in me"—his own words—are the best description of Paul's abundant labours. His assertion, "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord," is proved true at every sphere of labour: in the synagogue or on Mars Hill; in Asia or in Europe; at liberty or a prisoner; Christ is all and is in all he does or says.

(3) *Examine next the Epistles.*

The same pre-eminence is given to Christ, but with even greater fulness. What in Gospels and Acts is merely stated, in the Epistles is explained and applied to Christian life. Romans is but a demonstration that the Gospel of Christ is, and how it is, the power of God unto salvation; Hebrews is devoted to proving that Christ is the fulfilment of the Old Covenant, the substance of which the Old was but type and shadow. The two Corinthians are but a call to glory only in the Lord Jesus Christ, and to submit to Him as Lord. In pleading for unity one can see that Paul relies upon the influence of the very mention of Christ's dear Name. In the first ten verses of 1 Cor. the name occurs ten times. We quote verses 4 to 9: "I thank my God always concerning you, for the grace of God which was given you in *Christ Jesus*; that in every thing ye were enriched in Him, in all utterance and all knowledge; even as the testimony of *Christ* was confirmed in you; so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the revelation of our

Lord Jesus Christ; who shall also confirm you unto the end, *that ye be unreprouable in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.* God is faithful, through whom ye were called into the fellowship of His *Son Jesus Christ our Lord.*" See how he rings the changes on the name! It is music to him; he hopes it will touch the chords of his readers' hearts—" *Christ Jesus—Christ—Lord Jesus Christ—God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.*" This but illustrates the manner in which Christ is inwoven into warp and woof, language and thought, of these Epistles. Christ is all, and in all.

In these Epistles it is Christ that justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies. The Church is His body, and Paul's highest ideal of loving and honourable and complete subjection is the subjection of the Church to Christ. What Christ is; has done; is doing; will yet do, are the great motives named to induce Christians to live noble lives—to live indeed as Christ, for He is also their perfect example.

(4) *What of the Revelation?*

Whatever else is obscure here, there is no difficulty in finding the pre-eminent place occupied in it by Christ. No descriptions of the great theme of the Bible are so impressive as those given here. At first He is seen "like unto a son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about at the breasts with a golden girdle. And His head and His hair were white as white wool, *white* as snow; and His eyes were as a flame of fire; and His feet like unto burnished brass, as if it had been refined in a furnace; and His voice as the voice of many waters. And He had in His right hand seven stars: and out of His mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword: and His countenance was as the sun shining in his strength. And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as one dead. And He laid his right hand upon me, saying, Fear not; I am the First and the Last, and the

Living One ; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades."

This wondrous vision is but one of many equally impressive, in which His omnipotence, omniscience, and eternity are set forth. Heaven as well as earth joyfully worships Him. John writes : "And I saw, and I heard a voice of many angels round about the throne and the living creatures and the elders ; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands ; saying with a great voice, Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every created thing which is in the heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and on the sea, and all things that are in them, heard I saying, Unto Him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, be the blessing, and the honour, and the glory, and the dominion, for ever and ever. Amen. And the elders fell down and worshipped."

In this Book, too, all is obviously subservient to Him. The war is against the Lord and His Christ, and is continued until the kingdom of this world becomes the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ. Almost its closing cry is, *Come, Lord Jesus.*

We have seen that Jesus is pre-eminent in the Old and especially in the New. The impression grows on the student of the Book until it is beyond expression in words. It is, however, of moment to point out—

II. THE RESULTS OF CHRIST'S PRIMACY BEING EVER KEPT IN VIEW.

New Testament Christianity is like other things, where one general feature being settled, it is easily determined what form certain details must take. In architecture, for instance, there are different styles. If the building is Corinthian, the merest tyro in architecture will exclaim against the barbarism if some

Old English form of structure, or Egyptian ornamentation, is introduced. In like manner, once it is seen what place Christ holds in Christianity, it will be found that the mere mention of some things is enough to make us realize their incongruity.

Consider the controversies with unbelief. How much is the whole matter simplified if it is seen that the vital questions are those relating to Christ! If the evidence for His resurrection is left intact, we retain faith in Christ as the Son of God, and the everliving and present. Again, is any inquirer in embarrassment as to what he is to believe in order to salvation? Let him note how the four Gospels aim only to prove one proposition—that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; how in Acts it is Christ that is preached, believed, obeyed; and he will not fail to be strongly convinced that to accept Christ as his Prophet, Priest, and King, and bow to His authority, is all that is required. Paul's question gives the point of view: "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

We must be content with one other example. To-day, we have numerous denominations of Christians, and some who apologize for them. But think of this subject in the presence of the Master. We feel at once how disloyal are these divisions. We know how He prayed that His people might be one as the necessary antecedent to the world believing on Him. And how shocked Paul was at the very idea of any one taking his name, or that of Peter. "Was Paul," he asks, "crucified for you?" How, then, can we look up to Him who died for us and acknowledge, without shame, that in the world we wear most conspicuously the name of Luther, or of Wesley, or of an ordinance, or a form of Church organization? Is this congruous with Christ having the pre-eminence in all things? Wesley, at least, saw that it is not. His lines rebuke such a use of his name; his desire is that—

"Names and sects and parties fall,
Thou, O Christ, art all in all."

III. THE OLD TESTAMENT ALSO GIVES THE CHIEF PLACE TO THE CHRIST.

It must be admitted that any one unacquainted with the New Testament would not so readily discover in the Old the pre-eminence of Jesus. The Bible is a whole, and as such may be compared to a monument. The masonry, plain and square at the bottom, may give you no idea of its main and, indeed, only purpose. You glance up the long pedestal standing on the square base, and still you do not see the purpose of either base or pedestal. You look higher still, and you see there the exquisitely, incomparably noble and beautiful figure of a man, and now you grasp the purpose of the whole. So, as you read the Old Testament, unable to grasp a promise here or a prophecy there, you are only conscious of a narrowing of the field of vision. The base is broad, *God creating the heaven and earth*, and for a time the history of *all mankind*. Then comes the narrower pedestal, the history of but *one chosen race* is given. But the promises and prophecies of a MAN, a KING, a SON OF GOD, become so numerous that when you reach the New Testament you are not surprised to find attention fixed on one wondrous descendant of that race. You see now that the Old Testament was but the base and pedestal on which the Saviour of all men should stand. The testimony of Jesus is seen to be the spirit of prophecy; the Law but a tutor to bring men to Christ; the Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament able to make men wise unto salvation, but *through faith which is in Christ Jesus*.

CHAPTER V.

“JESUS IS THE CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD.”

THE reader of the New Testament is impressed not only by the central position everywhere given to Jesus Christ, who is to Christianity as the sun to the solar system, but also with—

I. THE PROMINENCE GIVEN TO BELIEF THAT HE IS THE CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD.

In the very first chapter our attention is attracted by the word *Christ* having the definite article with it—“*The Christ.*” Thus in summing up the genealogy the last great period is said to bring us “from the carrying away to Babylon unto

The Christ.”

In the second chapter, too, when Herod, intent on finding out the birthplace of Him reported of as “born King of the Jews,” gathered together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, his use of the article is striking: “he inquired of them where *the Christ* should be born.” So the Gospel goes on; all through one feels this is its great question—Is Jesus *the Christ*?

But the place in Matthew which pulls up and compels the cursory reader to note the vehement emphasis put on the belief that Jesus is the Christ is chapter xvi. 13-20. The confession itself is in verse 16: “And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art *the Christ, the Son of the living God*”; but to *feel* its gravity one must read the whole—the approach to the question through the thoughts of others; the glowing benediction on Peter which follows his great confession; and the significant hint that all was not yet ready for the truth the Apostles had grasped being

openly proclaimed given in the words : " Then charged He the disciples that they should tell no man that He was *the Christ*."

While one easily gathers that the purpose of the *first* Gospel is to prove that Jesus is the Christ, it is explicitly stated that this is the purpose of the *fourth*. These signs were written " that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God " (John xx. 31). This, too, was the aim of apostolic preaching. What is said of one occasion was true generally—the preacher " reasoned with them from the Scriptures, opening and alleging that it behoved the Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead ; and that this Jesus, whom, said Paul, I proclaim unto you, is the Christ."

It is no mere traditional worship of language which leads us to urge that not only the *substance* of what the New Testament teaches us to believe concerning its central Person, but also the *form* in which it was held is worthy of careful investigation and regard. In later centuries Ecumenical Councils laboured to find the best forms of language in which to utter their conviction concerning the nature of Jesus Christ. Assuming, however, the inspiration of the New Testament, we do not doubt that the truth is expressed here at least as fully but also more suitably than in the most laboured of human creeds and confessions.

II. THE MEANING OF THE PROPOSITION, JESUS IS THE CHRIST.

The great confession made by Peter, as recorded in Matthew, is, " Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God " ; but in Mark the second phrase is omitted—viii. 29 reads : " And He asked them, But who say ye that I am ? Peter answereth and saith unto Him, *Thou art the Christ*." This suggests that the added words in Matthew are simply explanatory of an important part of what was understood by saying that Jesus is *the Christ*. If that is so, we arrive at once at the conclusion that the term "*the Christ*" includes being "*the Son of the living*

God.” That it really does so, however, can be easily established, apart from this suggestion arising from comparing the good confession in Matthew and Mark. Hence the great interest in considering what exactly is meant by confessing that Jesus is the Christ.

It is well to proceed here in the most elementary manner. The proposition, Jesus is the Christ, can be divided into the two parts: what is spoken about—Jesus; and what is said about it—the Christ. When we make a statement of this sort we assume that those to whom we make it have already a certain amount of knowledge of the subject or thing spoken about, and also of that which is said about it. When we say, then, that Jesus is the Christ, we suppose that those to whom we speak know at least the outstanding facts about the subject—“Jesus.” When Jesus asked, “Who say ye that I am?” He assumed that the Apostles knew Him *personally*. So for us to-day, *Jesus* is the *personal name*. We know about this Person that He was born in Bethlehem; lived in Nazareth; was baptized by John; wrought miracles and taught the people; was crucified and buried; rose from the dead and ascended to heaven. These are the facts about the subject—Jesus. The proposition asks us to add to all this a *conviction about* this Person; the new thought lies in the thing said about Him—*the Christ*. We are to believe that Jesus is the Christ.

It is, then, on the meaning of the term *the Christ* that attention must be concentrated if we would intelligently either believe or disbelieve that Jesus is the Christ. It is therefore to be hailed with a joy like that of the wise men when they saw the star, that in the New Testament this term, *the Christ*, has a definite meaning, a meaning all who used it understood.

The term *the Christ* means *the Person who fulfils certain Old Testament predictions*. It was agreed on all hands that a Person who should in His character and life fulfil these predictions, answer to the portraiture given in the Old Testament, is the Christ. This may be illustrated by any passage where the term is used in a manner setting forth its

meaning. Thus in Matt. ii., already referred to, King Herod asked the chief priests and scribes where *the Christ* should be born. The sequel shows that he and they were agreed on the meaning of *the Christ* as One who should fulfil the Scriptures. "They said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judæa : for thus it is written by the prophet" ; and then they quote a well-known prophecy. As much as to say, the Christ must answer to the picture of Him given in the Scriptures ; therefore any one not born in Bethlehem is not and cannot be *the Christ*.

Take, also, John vii. 41, 42 : "Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, What, doth the Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the Scripture said that the Christ cometh of the seed of David, and from Bethlehem, the village where David was?" One sees here that the speakers were unaware that Jesus actually was born in Bethlehem ; but the point to note is how all of them take it for granted that any one to be rightly accepted as "*the Christ*" must fulfil the description of Him contained in the prophecies.

As another example we refer to the beautiful account of the risen Jesus conversing on the way to Emmaus with the two forlorn disciples : "And He said unto them, O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken ! Behoved it not the Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." The common ground which Jesus and His disciples occupied is clear. They had been upset by His death. Jesus said in effect, "You ought not to be. You and I both understand that He who is the Christ must fulfil the Scriptures. Now, the Scriptures depict the Christ as One who dies and rises again. Therefore My death, being according to Scripture, and followed by resurrection, really proves that I am the Christ."

But there was one feature of the Christ, as depicted in the Scriptures, as Jesus Himself pointed out, which His

contemporaries had not noticed. Jesus claimed to be David's Lord as well as David's Son. He spoke of Himself as being the Son of God. For this they rejected Him from being *the Christ*. He on His part maintained that His claim to be *divine* was a necessary claim. He refused not that His opponents should ask for proof that He was the Son of God. If He gave no proof that He was, then He was not the Christ, because the Scripture portrait of the Christ was the portrait of a Divine One. On the other hand, He held that if He gave the needed proof He should be accepted as the Christ, because the Christ was not only to be born in Bethlehem and the Son of David, but was also to be David's Lord.

The notable passage showing this to be the position as to Messiahship, or Christhood, taken up by Jesus is Matt. xxii. 41-46, and parallels. We quote in full. The reader is asked kindly to note that here, too, the term *the Christ* is understood equally by Jesus and His opponents to mean one who fulfils the predictions :

“Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, saying, What think ye of the Christ? whose Son is He? They say unto him, *The Son* of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in the Spirit call him Lord, saying,

The Lord said unto my Lord,

Sit Thou on My right hand,

'Till I put Thine enemies underneath Thy feet?

If David then calleth Him Lord, how is He his son? And no one was able to answer Him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask Him any more questions.”

This gives the real difference between the position of Jesus and that of the Jews. They differed on the question as to what the Scriptures described as the Nature or Sonship of the Christ. The Jews did not reject Him because He did not fulfil the Scriptures describing His human nature. But all through they took umbrage whenever He claimed divinity—that is, deity—as when He called God His own Father, making Himself, as

they said, equal with God; or when He exercised divine prerogatives, as in forgiving sins.

Let us sum up here as to the meaning of the faith that *Jesus is the Christ*. As Jesus Himself understood it, while it means generally that Jesus fulfilled the Scriptures, it means particularly that He is divine as well as human, David's Lord not less than David's Son.

It will thus be seen that what is usually called "the Divinity of Christ" (using the word "Divinity" as equal to "Deity") is included in the New Testament expression, "Jesus is the Christ." But as in the defective view of the Pharisees to say that *Jesus was the Christ* would have excluded Sonship, in the Great Confession of Peter the words are added in apposition, "the Son of the living God." In this way the full sense in which Jesus used the proposition is without dispute assured. "*Jesus is the Christ*," in the Christian sense, does not, as in the Jewish sense, exclude His deity, but deliberately includes it.

It does not appear that Jesus ever needed to use any further proof than Psalm cx. that Christhood included divinity. In recording His question on that Psalm, "If David then called Him Lord, how is He his Son?" the evangelist adds to the effect that the Pharisees were obviously beaten, and did not attempt to refute His position, namely, that the only answer was that David acknowledged this greater Son of his to be also his Lord. "No one," writes Matthew, "was able to answer Him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask Him any more questions."

But if Jesus had needed to quote other places to prove that the portraiture of the Christ contained in the Old Testament included divinity, one would be greatly interested to know what places He would have quoted. He would, no doubt, have included Isa. ix. 5-7, which foretells of a Child to be born, a Son to be given, whose name should be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace—a portrait for which no man, who is only

man, could sit. Isa. xl. 3, too, which reads, “The voice of one that crieth, Prepare ye in the wilderness the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God,” is applied in Matt. iii. 1-3, to John the harbinger in such a way as to imply that in preparing the way of Jesus the Christ, John was preparing the way of the Lord—that is, of *Jehovah*. Mal. iii. 1 is also applied to John: “Behold I send My messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me; and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple; and the Messenger of the Covenant, whom ye delight in, behold He cometh, saith the Lord of Hosts.” The application of this verse to John by Jesus as proof that John was much more than a prophet, is only to be understood if it is perceived that Jesus is that Angel or Messenger of the Covenant who, on His appearances in the Old Testament, is spoken to and worshipped, as at once the Angel of *Jehovah* and *Jehovah* Himself (Gen. xvii., Exod. iii., Judges vi.).

It is thus apparent that the Psalm our Lord quoted, while enough to prove His view, is far from the only Old Testament passage which exhibits the Christ as divine as well as human; the Root as well as the Offspring of David.

III. THE TERM “THE SON OF GOD” AS APPLIED TO JESUS.

In what has been said to show that deity is included in the meaning of the term “the Christ,” or “the Messiah,” we have suggested that in Peter’s great confession the words “the Son of the living God,” were added to indicate that “*the Christ*” was used in that sense. But if the added phrase is taken by itself, it is found that this term also—namely, “the Son of the living God”—marks the deity of Him to whom it is applied.

(1) *The Sonship of Jesus is evidently unique, and includes Divinity.*

Rom. i. 1-4 shows this, for the Apostle puts the human

and the divine side by side. We may set this out in the form of a table—

God's Son.

(Human Nature).	(Divine Nature).
(1) Was born	(1) Was declared
(2) of the seed of David	(2) to be the Son of God with power
(3) according to the flesh.	(3) according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection of the dead.

In John i. 18 we read : “ No man hath seen God at any time ; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.” As *only-begotten Son* here He is evidently in contrast with “ man.” So, too, in John iii. 16, the measure of God’s love is His gift of His “ only-begotten Son,” which surely requires that the Sonship here is so unique as to make this gift an amazing thing. Again, in Rom. viii. 32 : “ He that spared not his *own* Son, how shall He not with Him freely give us all things ? ” we cannot escape the conclusion that to be God’s “ *own* Son ” is indeed a special kind of Sonship which makes Jesus Christ more than all other things combined. Of this unique Sonship Jesus Himself speaks in Matt. xi. 27 : “ No one knoweth the Son save the Father, neither doth any know the Father save the Son ”—words which express that there is that in the nature of the Son which is the same as that of the Father, and classes the Son with the Father as those who are able to know each other, while it puts the Son in contrast with all others who cannot, as the Son can, know the Father.

(2) *The Deity of Christ's unique Sonship is proved by His death.*

If John v. 17, 18, viii. 53-59, and Matt. xxvi. 63 be consulted, the conclusion that Jesus regarded His Sonship as including His divine Nature is unavoidable, except by giving

up our confidence in His sincere and good character as a man. In these passages we find the Jews regard Jesus as claiming, through calling God His own Father, to be equal with God. In the last of them they condemn Him to death on these grounds as a blasphemer. Now, Jesus either did claim equality with God or He did not. If He did not, then as an honest man He was bound to explain to the Jews that He made no such claim, and so prevent them from committing a great crime. But as He accepted their charge, and died for saying, in the sense they attached to His words, that He was the Christ, the Son of the living God, the meaning of Peter's confession, which was also the good confession which Christ Himself witnessed, stands fixed to mean, in addition to His having generally fulfilled all the predictions of the Christ, that in particular He fulfilled the requirement that the Christ should be divine. Thus no human-made creed includes deity more clearly than the inspired creed of the Apostolic Church—Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

We find another chapter would be needed to deal even summarily with the remaining proofs of the deity of Christ contained in the Gospels and the Epistles. To the Word that was with God and was God, yet became flesh (John i. 1-18); to His "equality with God," affirmed in Phil. ii. 1-11; and to His superiority to angels, the Creator of the heavens and earth—the Eternal whose years shall not fail, as described in Heb. i., we can only refer our readers. There is the less need to enter into the exposition of such Scriptures as there is scarcely any disagreement to-day as to the meaning of the New Testament. There are doubtless many who cannot accept that meaning, yet they acknowledge that the New Testament gives Jesus Christ the pre-eminency and teaches His deity, while they hesitate to accept its teaching.

Our next chapter aims to show the logical necessity for accepting Jesus the Christ as indeed the Son of the living God. For while in the beginning all were required to believe in the Messiahship of Jesus, including, as we see, accepting Him as

the Son of God, yet none were expected thus to believe without reasonable proof. That proof centred in HIS RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD. This proof can be given without assuming the authority of the New Testament, just as it was given before the New Testament existed.

CHAPTER VI.

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST.

“ORDER,” it is said, “is heaven’s first law.” God is a God of order ; and it may be because He has made us like Himself that any teaching to which our attention is called is recommended to our mind by being orderly and systematic. We have already seen that the Bible has this recommendation. It has an orderly plan. Christ is its centre. The Old Testament leads you to anticipate Him ; and the New Testament describes Him ; tells in four-fold narrative the story of His life, and death and resurrection ; the preachers preach Christ ; the Church obeys Him as her Head ; Christ is all, and in all ; He is the Alpha and Omega—or, as we might say, the A and the Z, and all the letters that lie between.

In coming to us, then, with this Supreme Person, divine wisdom exactly meets our need. If we had had our choice could we have wished anything more adapted to our personal being than that a personal Being should be offered to our minds and hearts ? No cold statue of law is here, but a loving *Person*, to be trusted, loved, and followed !

This adaptation to our case is still further seen in this—it

Affords us the proof we need

to enable us to put our trust in Him. This proof is of various kinds ; we are not going to marshal it fully, but wish to make it clear that the intention of the New Testament is to enable each of us to be sure that Jesus Christ is this divine Leader and Saviour. There are some who have an idea that this faith in Christ is a thing that is asked for in an arbitrary way, and think that Christians are persons who simply believe in

Christ because the Bible commands them to do so. Now that is as far from being the New Testament way of asking for faith in Christ as it can possibly be. See how differently Luke regards the question. In his preface to his Gospel he says that he has made an investigation, traced everything the first preachers had reported, and so now he writes the narrative about Jesus, Mary's Son, the things he has ascertained to be true, that his reader may know the *certainty* of those things that he had been instructed in. Mark that word *certainty*. He has satisfied his mind that this narrative about Jesus is no cunningly devised fable, no mere lovely imagining, but a reality as sure as it is beautiful and inspiring.

Take John's Gospel. He tells the story of Thomas's slowness to believe. He shows us his opposition completely overcome, and his faith not rising gradually like the sun in the morning, but appearing like the midday sun emerging from a passing cloud—in fulness and splendour. "My Lord and my God," he exclaims. Oh, for such a faith that embraces Jesus as the Son of God! and John tells us that we, too, may have such a reasonable and well-grounded faith that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. His whole book, he says, is full of the signs that prove who Jesus is. "These things are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye may have life in His Name." Thus, in giving us this body of testimony about Jesus, all these facts about Him—His birth, His public ministry, His going about doing good and teaching, His death and His resurrection—our minds as well as our hearts are met. The writers write as men who tell you what they know took place, and they hold that in doing so they are making it possible for us also to repose in faith on Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world.

Do you say, But how am I to know that this account is all true? Here is a variety of incidents: am I to take them one by one and to consider whether each is true; whether, for instance, Jesus really did speak the Sermon on the Mount;

did feed the five thousand ; did raise the daughter of Jairus, the widow's son, and the brother of the Bethany sisters? Is my faith to result from a continued investigation of each and every one of the particulars about Jesus?

Now here this wonderful adaptation of the New Testament to our minds and hearts is still further seen. It not only places before us one Person to be the one subject of our inquiry, but in the mass of evidence for His being a divinely-sent Saviour there is one fact chosen out, and our attention is concentrated on that one fact ; special provision is made to fully satisfy us that this one fact took place. This is a very remarkable thing, but not more remarkable than it is certain and evident to any reader of the New Testament. The proof centres in the Resurrection of Christ. Let us, then, notice somewhat in detail—

I. THAT CHRIST ROSE FROM THE DEAD IS THE CHIEF
FACT PROVED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Begin with the Gospels. Jesus Himself takes the lead in emphasizing the importance of His resurrection. Early in His ministry to the leaders at Jerusalem, who desired proof that He had a right to cleanse the temple, He says : “ Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” When, later, they sought a sign from heaven, some great unconnected portent, He says that the only sign should be that of the prophet Jonah, for as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so should the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. He repeatedly foretells to the disciples that He is to suffer death, and on the third day will rise. It is, however, when the event comes to be recorded in the Gospels that you see how completely Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the disciples all alike speak and act on the understanding that the one fact which is to be *proved* true is that Jesus Christ is risen from the dead.

No one sees Jesus rise, but each of the evangelists tells of

the unbelief of the disciples, and the gradual way in which the appearances of Jesus to the disciples convinced them that He was risen. *Follow on into the Acts of the Apostles.* Luke, beginning his narrative of what happened after Christ ascended, tells us that to the Apostles whom He had chosen He also showed Himself alive after His passion by many proofs, appearing unto them by the space of forty days. That the Apostles quite grasped the central character of the fact of the Resurrection is seen in this, that when they proceeded to choose one to take the place of Judas they stipulated that he must be one who had known Jesus, during His ministry, and who could become a witness with them of His Resurrection.

Peter's first sermon, like all apostolic preaching, was a demonstration that the Old Testament had foretold the Resurrection, and a definite statement that they were witnesses to the grand fact—"This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses." In his second address he tells the leaders: "Ye killed the Prince of Life; whom God raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses." Later we read: "With great power gave the Apostles their witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus."

One can understand how powerful this testimony would be. It was given within a few weeks of the death of Christ, in the city where He was crucified, to the people who crucified Him. The authorities, if they had had the body of Jesus, could have refuted the preaching of the Apostles by producing the body. But they were powerless to oppose; and the fearlessness of the preachers, their evident sincerity, proved by their willingness to be imprisoned, scourged, or put to death, rather than cease to declare the things they had seen and heard—all these circumstances show to us that the testimony to Jesus by bearing witness to this one great fact was convincing because it was well calculated to convince.

But it might be thought this central position of the Resurrection may be due to the fact of this preaching being shortly after the fact, and in Jerusalem. Did these preachers

still keep the Resurrection in this chief place when they went further afield and to Gentiles? The reply is a clear and decisive "Yes." When Peter preached to the first Gentiles he was especially emphatic in stating that special care had been taken to provide witnesses to the truth of the fact of the Resurrection. His words are: "Him God raised up the third day, and gave Him to be made manifest, not to all the people, but unto witnesses that were chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with Him after He rose from the dead." Lastly, as to Paul's similar method. We will not detain you to examine His preaching in detail; the familiar 1 Cor. xv. is a host in itself. Some were doubting whether the bodies of the dead saints would be raised again, apparently regarding such an event as impossible. In order to correct them he reminds them that in the Gospel which he had preached the Resurrection of Jesus Christ was central. He passes in review the evidence upon which the fact was believed to have taken place, namely, the various appearances to Apostles and even to five hundred disciples; and, lastly, to Paul himself. He assumes that they will never think of denying that Jesus rose, and argues that in like manner the power of God will raise others. "In Adam all die; in Christ shall all be made alive."

Utterly transcendent is the importance Paul gives to this fact. Christianity, he in effect says, cannot be true if the Resurrection is false. "If Christ hath not been raised, then is our preaching vain, your faith also is vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we witnessed of God that He raised up Christ. . . . If Christ hath not been raised, your faith is vain. Ye are yet in your sins." This chapter, then, is undeniable evidence that Paul preached as the Gospel that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures; and also regarded the supernatural fact of the Resurrection of Christ as the great chief fact to be proved true. We are now led to notice—

II. THE VALUE FOR US TO-DAY OF THE EVIDENCE FOR CHRIST BEING MADE TO CENTRE IN THE PROOF OF HIS RESURRECTION.

(1) *As we have seen, it simplifies the work of testing the claims of Christ.*

When we ask for the evidence which can convince us in the twentieth century that Jesus is the Son of God we still need to turn to the proof of His Resurrection. Our object is simply to direct your minds into the right way of approaching Christianity; it claims to be strong and triumphant at this point of the Resurrection, and if we desire either to feel its strength for our consolation, or to attack it successfully, we must examine the evidence that Jesus Christ rose from the dead. To either attack or defend it at other points is contrary to its own indications, and is equally unwise on the part of all concerned. God did not take pains to provide us with the same decisive proof for other facts, as the supernatural birth, for instance; and just as it is full of instruction to be sure that the sun is not more certainly the centre round which the planets revolve, than that Jesus Christ is the sun of the system of Redemption, so it is equally instructive to observe that the citadel of the proof that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and our Saviour is the proof, divinely arranged for, that He rose from the dead.

(2) *It accounts for the Triumphs of the Gospel.*

As we have seen, the preaching of the Apostles, their testimony to the Resurrection, was with great power. At Jerusalem itself thousands, and even a multitude of the priests, were obedient to the faith.

The strength of the evidence for the Resurrection has been often tried, the citadel stormed with new weapons, but ever without success. While the original witnesses whom God had fitted were alive it was impossible to doubt their veracity.

After they were gone men attempted to set aside the Resurrection by saying their preaching was a fraud.

III. THE QUESTION AS IT STANDS TO-DAY.

Against the fraud theory, Paley's argument of the twelve honest men has proved final. No leader now believes that these men were "confederate in evil for purposes of good," or suffered and died to support what they knew to be untrue. It is contrary to human nature to think this possible. Well, what other alternative is there? There are really only three alternatives altogether. This preaching, that Christ rose from the dead, by men who said they had seen Him after His Resurrection, was either

Fraud, Fancy, or Fact.

We have seen it could not be *fraud*, and if it could not be *fancy*, then it must be *fact*. Our own day has seen the attempt made to prove that these early preachers were mistaken. It being impossible to deny their sincerity, the only way to overcome their testimony was to affirm that they did not really see Jesus, only fancied they did. The theory has been stated with all the brilliancy of the Frenchman, Renan, and the penetration of the German, Strauss. It can never be stated more strongly. But it has failed.

Briefly, the cause of the failure may be summed up under three heads:

(1) *That the belief in the Resurrection started up a few weeks after the death of Christ.* This kills the mythical theory, which requires time for the gradual growth of the myth.

(2) *The body of Jesus.* Whether the disciples had the body, or their foes had it, the body of Jesus would have equally destroyed any mere fancy that Christ was risen.

(3) The evidence that the Apostles and early disciples were intelligent men, little likely to commit themselves to be the victims of fancy. The narratives of the Gospels, the letters of the Apostle Paul, whose genuineness are beyond

doubt, all show that there was careful investigation, and none of the expectation of the Resurrection which alone could create the fancy that He was seen. No, the Resurrection is no fraud, no fancy, but veritable, substantial fact.

But now you will agree that the pre-eminence of Jesus in the Bible, as the chief theme spoken of, is not more truly a feature of the Bible than is this feature of the testimony to Christ—the Resurrection is the fact selected to be the fact proved, the key-stone of the arch of evidence on which rests the claims of Jesus Christ; and that, moreover, both features are immensely valuable in guiding our minds in the consideration of Christianity.

The full beauty and strength of this, however, is not appreciated unless we get an answer to a question, which for its importance we consider separately.

IV. WHY WAS THIS FACT RATHER THAN ANY OTHER MADE CENTRAL ?

Why not such a great fact as stilling the storm, or feeding the five thousand, or raising Lazarus? The answer to this question is this: No other fact in connection with Jesus was fitted to prove and set forth all that we are asked to find in Jesus; but this fact is singularly suitable. Let us notice a few things, beginning with the lowest:

(1) *We are asked to believe in the holiness of Jesus—that in Him God was ever well pleased.*

Now, in every age man has continued to think that death is the result of sin. As Tennyson expresses it—

“Thou hast made him, he knows not why,
He thinks he was not made to die.”

Hence man expects that if a sinless one arise he shall not see corruption. And if for any reason he is permitted to die, man expects the holy one to rise again. This is met in the fact of the Resurrection. God did not suffer His Holy One

to see corruption. If Jesus had not risen, we could not believe Him sinless. His Resurrection proves Him holy, that God approved Him, and confirms His teaching as the truth.

(2) *We are asked to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.*

The very central blessing expected from the Messiah was life, eternal life. "Ye search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of Me; and ye will not come to Me that ye might have life." This thought, that in Him as the Messiah was life for men, was stated in many forms by Jesus. What, then, would have become of the belief in Jesus as the Christ if after raising others from the dead He Himself had remained in Hades and the tomb of Joseph? But now consider especially that other phrase—the Son of God. The Gospels are explicit as to the meaning of this. The Jews crucify Jesus because He made God His own Father, thus making Himself equal with God; and Jesus does not correct them, and say He made no such blasphemous claim. Therefore, the claim of Jesus is to nothing short of deity. And it is His deity that is everywhere referred to as giving efficacy to His work as Saviour. Now, had Christ died and not risen we could not have believed Him divine; but no fact could be more in harmony with His claim than that as the Prince and Author of life; having suffered for our sins, He should rise from the dead. The fact is admirably suited to prove that Jesus is the Son of the living God.

(3) *We are to believe that His death avails as a propitiation for our sins.*

The guilty conscience, unsatisfied with the shedding of the blood of animal sacrifices, is asked to believe that the blood of Christ, God's Son, is a sufficient atonement. But had He died and not risen we could not have believed this. Jesus died for our sins, and was raised again for our justification.

(4) To mention but one more point, *we are asked to believe in a living Saviour, who is able to help us to live a new life, and to raise us from the dead at last.* The believer in Christ is required, and himself desires, to abandon the practice of sin. But sin has often proved too much for him in the past. What hope is there? In the very act in which he, as a believer, is pardoned, he has put before him in the most vivid way conceivable the source of his new life. He is buried with Christ in baptism for the remission of sins, that, as *Christ was raised* by the glory of the Father, even so he may be raised to walk in newness of life. The divine power that raised Christ, the living Lord that died to sin, but now lives to die no more, is the strength in which the new, holy life of service to God and man is to be lived. Finally, we need an assurance that God will not leave us in the dust. And that assurance is never lost so long as we believe that Jesus died and rose again. Our citizenship is in heaven, from whence we look for a Saviour who shall change the body of our humiliation, and make it like unto His own glorious body by that power whereby He is able to subject all things unto Himself.

We now see the great object placed before us for faith and love and obedience—the Lord Jesus Christ; and the glorious fulness of proof that He is risen, and that that Resurrection proves Him to be all we need—the Holy One—the Christ—the Son of God—the Propitiation for our sins—the living Saviour to help us to live holy lives now, and to raise us to glory hereafter. Our further chapters will assume this foundation, and deal with the will of God as revealed to us in the New Testament.

CHAPTER VII.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

NO one can have failed to observe that in the teaching of Jesus Christ a leading place was given to *the Kingdom of God*. This is seen most strikingly in the Gospel according to Matthew. Here Jesus is ever speaking of the *Kingdom of Heaven*, or the *Kingdom of God* (in Matthew He employs both descriptions), and leaves no doubt that in His estimation this is the one thing the possession of which makes men "blessed," the thing to be sought "*first*," the "Pearl of Great Price," man's *Summum Bonum*, or Highest Good.

It must always, therefore, be necessary to an intelligent and practical grasp of the mind of Christ, of His purposes in relation to mankind, of His will for those who realize that He is their all in all, that we should be acquainted with His teaching regarding the Kingdom of Heaven.

I. THE USE OF THE TITLE "THE KINGDOM OF GOD" IN SCRIPTURE.

While the theme is prominent in the *New Testament*, it is found in the *Old* as well. Indeed, most important subjects of the New have their origin in the Old Testament. When it is seen that the theme is so often referred to, either in the very words—"the kingdom of God"—or in terms with the same meaning, it is not surprising that the words do not always cover exactly the same contents. The general idea—a kingdom that is God's—is always there; but the sense in which it is His, and the extent of it, vary.

Thus in Psalm ciii. 19 we are told that "the Lord hath

established His throne in the heavens ; and His kingdom *ruleth over all*" ; and in Dan. iv. 3, 34, 35, that " His kingdom is an *everlasting kingdom*," is " from generation to generation ; and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing ; and He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth : and none can stay His hand or say unto him, What doest thou ? "

There are many such places, especially in the Old Testament Scriptures. These clearly show that the saints of those days had a clear faith in God as having always been, and as always being and to be, absolute King over all things, whether they are intelligent or inanimate, whether *willingly* subject to Him or not. In this sense, Hell itself is in God's Kingdom. As Milton has expressed it so felicitously :

" He, be sure,
In height, or depth, still first and last will reign
Sole King, and of His kingdom lose no part."

But alongside this universal and everlasting Kingdom of God there is another use of the term, so comparatively confined as to challenge our attention. Thus we read, in 2 Chron. xiii. 8, of " the Kingdom of the Lord in the hand of the sons of David." What is covered by the phrase is merely *kingship over the people of Israel*, as the words of verse 5 show : " Ought ye not to know that the Lord, the God of Israel, gave the kingdom over Israel to David for ever, even to him and to his sons, by a covenant of salt ? "

This Kingdom of God, which began at Sinai, over which Saul, David, and his sons were afterwards made vicegerents, was clearly a very, very limited kingdom as compared with God's Kingdom over all and for ever. But if *limited in extent*, the term is here proportionately *deepened in moral and spiritual value*. There can be little significance in claiming a place in God's Universal Kingdom when you remember that mere material things as much as intelligences ; Satan as much as Gabriel ; the most wicked nation as much as the most virtuous are all included.

Obedience to Himself was the ground on which God constituted Israel, in a special sense, His Kingdom. In Exodus xix. 5 we read : " Now therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me from among all peoples : for all the earth is mine : and ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation."

Thus we note that the term " Kingdom of God " is used in a broad sense, and also in a special sense. There need be no difficulty in this. The Psalmist regarded God's kingship *over all* as setting forth the greatness of the honour which His nation enjoyed in having the King of all the earth as in a *peculiar* sense their King :

" Sing praises unto *our* king, sing praises,
For God is the king of all the earth."

—Psalm xlvii.

We see that the honour which Israel could claim, of being in a special sense closer and dearer than others, the Kingdom of God, was based on obedience. Israel was distinctly told that this was so, and deliberately accepted the condition. After God promised to make them His nation in a peculiar sense, on condition that they obeyed His voice, " all the people answered together and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do."

We need not stop to prove that the Israelites failed miserably in rendering obedience. It is therefore in perfect harmony with all the facts that, just as Jeremiah announced a New Covenant when Israel had broken the First, so Daniel intimates that God would establish another Kingdom among men. Interpreting King Nebuchadnezzar's dream, which he declared to represent four great kingdoms (the last the Roman), the prophet said : " In the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed."

Here we have a third application of our term, the Kingdom of God. The first, *that* we have named Universal and Eternal,

had always been; *that* we may describe as the Kingdom of God over Israel, had already long been set up; so that this prediction of Daniel suggests another special kingdom of God as to be established before the Roman Empire disappeared. This is tantamount to a prediction that Israel would cease to be God's nation as a special kingdom—unless, indeed, He intended to have two special kingdoms at the same time! This is not likely, and as a fact in the New Testament we find both the commencement of a New Kingdom and the termination of the Kingdom of God over Israel.

The first point is proved by the cry of John the Baptist, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"; the second is found in Christ's words to the Jews: "Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."

Thus, then, God's Kingdom over all did not prevent Him having a special kingdom over one nation, nor superseding the latter by one which was established in the days of the Roman Empire. Nor was this the end. God has one increasing purpose; and even while Christians were spoken of as in the Kingdom of God, it was held before them as the end to aim at, to have richly supplied unto them an entrance *into the eternal kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ* (2 Peter i.). This and several other passages where the Kingdom of Christ or of God is mentioned, evidently refer to a still future and glorious dispensation of the Kingdom of God.

To sum up. We have four uses of the phrase "kingdom of God," or words of the same import:

- (1) The Kingdom of God universal and eternal.
- (2) The Kingdom of God before Christ.
- (3) The Kingdom of God from Christ's first Advent to His second.
- (4) The Kingdom of God in a yet future and glorious dispensation.

This comprehensive view of our theme is very useful. Christians whose minds are much engrossed by the Kingdom of

God yet future are apt to think all references to the kingdom of God are to this future kingdom, and to give unnatural explanations of those passages which refer to the past or present kingdom of God. There is no need for this. We can easily make room in our minds for all four applications of the title. God had the Hebrews as His Kingdom; He has also established a Kingdom of a higher order; and He will also yet establish a glorious and eternal Kingdom. Yet before any of these, and all the while, everything is ruled by Him: all laws, all intelligences, obedient or disobedient, in heaven, earth or hell, are ruled by "Heaven's exalted King."

Setting aside the *Universal and Eternal*, or general, kingdom, no doubt there is a fundamental unity in the other three, so that all three may be regarded as different dispensations of God's kingdom among men. Sometimes two of these dispensations may be seen in one Scripture. Thus the parable of the tares describes the present dispensation mostly; but the future perfect glorious kingdom is manifest at the end. After they that cause stumbling and do iniquity have been gathered out, THEN SHALL THE RIGHTEOUS SHINE FORTH AS THE SUN IN THE KINGDOM OF THEIR FATHER. Again the Hebrew kingdom and the present higher dispensation appear in Christ's application of the parable of the vineyard. The parable itself is just a picture of the Hebrew kingdom, similar to, perhaps an adaptation of, Isaiah v. It presents the wickedness of the Jews in successive generations, up to the climax in that generation and the putting to death of the Son. The parable here is almost literal history. Jesus at this point asks His Jewish hearers what they think the Lord of the vineyard—that is, the God whose kingdom He is picturing—will do. "They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those miserable men, and will let out the vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons." Jesus endorsed that as follows: "Wherefore say I unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."

Owing to this fundamental relation, sometimes it may be impossible to dogmatize as to whether a statement refers to the present kingdom of God or to the yet future kingdom, but the four-fold division set forth cannot reasonably be disputed.

Were we to attempt to present here a full outline of the teaching of Jesus Christ and His Apostles regarding the Kingdom of God in its present dispensation, we should require to include all that we call New Testament Christianity, for the Kingdom of God is a comprehensive title which takes in Christ Himself as its King, and the Church, its institutions and operations, as its executive. It is not necessary to attempt this, but only to state deliberately that other themes, yet to be outlined, are really parts of our present one.

II. THE NATURE OF THIS PRESENT KINGDOM.

In choosing to add something here on the nature of the present Kingdom we follow what we deem the emphasis of the New Testament itself. No doubt in some general notions the kingdoms of men give the starting-point for understanding the kingdom of God, yet the Saviour's chief teaching on the Kingdom was directed to getting, not its likeness to, but its difference from, all other merely human kingdoms understood. It may even be the true explanation of the fact that in the course of Christ's ministry and after Pentecost, the words *king* and *kingdom* were largely dropped, and other more specific words used, that the words *king* and *kingdom* were apt to make men think of worldly kingdoms, and to think that the Kingdom of God was a rival to the claims of Cæsar. (See John xix. 12; Acts xvii. 7.)

(1) *The spiritual nature of this kingdom is suggested by the qualifying words "of heaven" and "of God."*

No doubt Jesus used both these expressions; and, too, Matthew xiii. 11, and Mark iv. 11 are evidently two reports of

the same saying, and yet in one it is kingdom *of heaven*, in the other, kingdom *of God*. Daniel said the new kingdom was to be set up by the God *of heaven*. That itself was fitted to suggest a kingdom of a HEAVENLY character. "Heaven" is used as the place of God's throne and abode, and so as characterized by holiness and obedience to the will of God. It is significant that in the prayer Jesus taught His disciples, God is our Father, which art *in heaven*; and the prayer, "Thy kingdom come," is followed by "Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth." Thus "*of heaven*" should have directed the minds of His contemporaries from the worldly kingdom they expected to one of a higher, holier character. And "OF GOD" must have meant the same thing to Jesus, and to others as they came to know *His idea of God*—One who seeks men to worship Him in spirit and in truth, Love seeking to save a lost world. With that idea of God, the Kingdom *of God* would be understood to be a kingdom spiritual, holy, benevolent in its nature and aims.

(2) *What certain Passages express on the Nature of the Kingdom.*

Take the dialogue between Christ and Pilate (John xviii. 33-38). As Pilate is inquiring into a charge based on Christ's public teaching, there is no doubt the kingdom meant is that which Jesus had proclaimed and taught as the Kingdom of God. Note the words:

Not of this World.

The conversation suggests that in this Kingdom *Truth* held the place of the *Army* in the kingdoms of the world. Pilate gathered His meaning, and concluded Christ was no rival to Cæsar. Had Pilate known it, this power of *Truth* was, in another sense, a more powerful rival than the greatest army would have been.

So, too, in the teaching of Christ to His disciples on the occasion of James and John desiring chief places in the Kingdom, the impression is that of a contrast between Christ's

Kingdom and the worldly kingdoms these disciples had in mind. In the latter *might* was *right*, and kings enforced service; in Christ's Kingdom the highest were to minister to all, and this was embodied in the conduct of the King Himself: "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many."

In Matthew v. 3, 5; xix. 14; v. 20, the kingdom of heaven is composed of, and the possession of, the *poor in spirit*, the *child-like*, the *righteous*. Indeed the whole Sermon on the Mount is on the righteousness required in the citizens of the kingdom, intended to show the true moral character of the kingdom.

We must note Colossians i. 13, where the Father is thanked for having delivered them "from the power of darkness and translated them into the kingdom of the Son of His love." The words quiver with a joyous sense of the moral and spiritual nature of the kingdom. Note the contrast with heathen darkness! the possession in it of the remission of sins; and the *warmth* in the description of it as the kingdom of the Son of God's love.

Lastly, we add Romans xiv. 20, where the Apostle is urging it as the duty of Christians to deny themselves for the welfare of others. To enforce this he describes the kingdom as "not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." The statement obviously takes it for granted that all Christians were citizens of the kingdom—the plea is that standing on one's rights and acting with no regard for others was wholly out of place in the kingdom of God, whose citizens they were.

(3) *A New Birth required as a condition of Entrance.*

Perhaps even casual readers of the Gospel will recall the impression of importance and solemnity conveyed by Christ's words to Nicodemus: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Some years ago we read such volumes, and

parts of volumes as we could get, which dealt with the Kingdom of God, including Dr. Bruce's work on the subject. We were struck with the fact that this, the most emphatic word of the Master about entrance into His kingdom, was hardly touched on. Yet it was surely of the greatest weight in emphasizing the character of the kingdom of God. We fear that the fact that it is not easily to be set aside that the water here refers to baptism led these writers, in view of the controversy about baptism, to avoid our Lord's great statement. Yet all perceive that the conversation with Nicodemus and the insistence upon a new, spiritual birth—in other words, of *regeneration*, of a change of heart, goes to the root of the whole matter so far as the spiritual nature of the Kingdom is concerned. We must, however, deal separately with this condition of entrance, *the birth from above*.

(4) *Childlikeness required as a condition of Entrance.*

In Matthew xviii. 1-3 the emphasis on this requirement is very decided and absolute. The disciples, in their worldly, ambitious way, had been disputing about their respective places in the kingdom of heaven. They put their question to Jesus: "Who, then, is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" They took it for granted they should be IN the kingdom; the only question was who would be greatest. He puts a little child before them as an object-lesson, and assures them that without the humility, obedience, and freedom from ambition of a child, they could

Not even Enter the Kingdom.

Christ said, "Except ye turn and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter the kingdom of heaven." Note the word "*turn*." It expresses at once their unfitness as they were, and their responsibility for becoming fit. They are themselves to turn. Of course, Christ's presence, character, and words; His subsequent voluntary humility and obedience "even unto death, yea, the death of the Cross"; and the

work of His Spirit sent from the Father, were the divine power to turn them ; but even so, in the last resort, their own will must be exercised—*they* must turn.

In the Gospels there are statements, some of which speak of this Kingdom simply as “at hand,” so close that its nearness was the basis for John’s exhortation to repent ; and others which speak of it as already present. From the Pentecost after Christ was seated at God’s right hand, made both “Lord and Christ,” the Kingdom was fully established : no longer preached as at hand, but multitudes rejoiced in having been translated into it.

To-day it is a great Kingdom, and its unworldly character is recognized. Even the rulers of Japan and of China permit their subjects, without thought of being supplanted, to become also followers of

“A Different King—Jesus.”

Perhaps no man of modern times was more in the spirit of the old notion of kingship, to which that of Christ is so different, than the First Napoleon. We therefore value his appreciation of the difference between worldly kingdoms and that of Jesus : “Alexander, Cæsar, Charlemagne, and myself,” said Napoleon, “founded great empires : but upon what did the creations of our genius depend ? Upon *force*. Jesus alone founded His empire upon *love*, and to this day millions would die for Him.”

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CHURCH OF GOD.

IN dealing with the great themes of the New Testament, endeavouring to outline what is said of them in that book so as to be able to see and refuse what is merely modern in present-day views of them, there is great need to include in the number of those to be considered "The Church."

The modern use of the word "Church," as any English dictionary summarizes, is exceedingly varied, from its application to a *material building* to its application to such a world-wide and *highly organized community of people as the Church of Rome*. Whereas the New Testament use is exceedingly simple, many uses made of the word "Church" to-day being quite unknown to its pages.

At the same time the Church of God, or the Church of Christ, occupies a most conspicuous place in the New Testament; most weighty and impressive statements are made about it; and there can be no right conception of the New Testament faith and practice unless a generally correct idea is obtained of what is meant there by "The Church."

Some of these weighty statements may occur to the minds of our readers. One of them is the first passage in which it is mentioned and was uttered by our Lord Himself on the great occasion when the Apostles confessed that He was the Christ, the Son of the Living God. Speaking of His Church under the figure of a building, Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." This Church may be said to be the theme of Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians. Ellicott, in the introduction to his critical and grammatical Commentary on this Epistle,

says it "was designed to set forth the origin and development of the Church of Christ, and to display to the Christian dweller, under the shadow of the great temple of Diana, the unity and beauty of that transcendently more glorious spiritual temple of which Christ Himself was the chief corner-stone, and the saints portions of the superstructure." How full of privilege is membership, as shown figuratively in the passage alluded to: "So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit." *A holy temple, a habitation of God!*

Then what a mighty and beneficent purpose it serves: "To the intent that now unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenlies (or heavenly places) might be made known THROUGH THE CHURCH THE MANIFOLD WISDOM OF GOD."

This reminds us of another place (1 Timothy iii.) where the same writer, later in life, sets forth the place of the Church: "That thou mayest know how men ought to behave themselves in the house of God, which is *the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.*" *The Truth* supported in the world by the Church, as set forth in the next verse, is the Truth of the Incarnation and redeeming work of the Son of God. We close with just one more portion setting forth Christ's estimate and amazing sacrifice for the Church: "Husbands, love your wives as

Christ also loved the Church,

and gave Himself up for it; that He might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, that He might present the Church to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing: but that it should be holy and without blemish."

(1) It is hardly necessary to state formally that in the New Testament the word *Church* is always a *community*—human beings (if we may use so wide a term)—and never a mere material building. The word translated “Church” is *ekklesia*, and its derivation from *ek* (out of) and *kaleo* (I call) seems to suggest the voice of a person calling out of the mass of mankind some (in fact, “whosoever will”) to form them into a separate community. The word occurs about one hundred and fifteen times in the New Testament, and in the few occurrences in which it is not applied to the believers in Christ, it yet is applied there also to a body of people. Once it is applied to the children of Israel in the wilderness under Moses, who is described in Acts vii. 38 as “he that was in the Church in the wilderness.” It is rendered “assembly” three times in Acts xix. 32, 39, 41, where twice it is applied to the concourse of Ephesian citizens which came together through the opposition to Paul’s preaching, and once to the assembly which was, when properly convened, a *lawful* assembly of citizens to transact the affairs of the city. Lastly, there is the use of it in Hebrews ii. 12, where a portion of a Psalm is quoted to illustrate Christ’s true humanity. It is here rendered *congregation*, and in the Psalm has reference to a congregation of Jews, in the days anterior to Christianity, met for worship :

“ I will declare Thy name unto my brethren,
In the midst of the *congregation* I will sing Thy praise.”

With these few exceptions, *the Church*, often with some addition to make its application clear, as “the *Church of God*,” is used of what is a special institution that came into existence after Christ “had died, and risen and gone above,” and belongs absolutely to New Testament Christianity.

It is true that this institution, the Church, is sometimes, as we have seen, represented under *the figure* of a material building. But that is only another way of saying that *literally* the Church is not such a building; and in the passages where the Church is spoken of literally it is always a body of people

that is presented. Were we to go through every occurrence of the word, it would be seen that "*the Church*" is always composed of people. This seems unnecessary, but it may be well to take a few passages just as they occur in the New Testament. Thus in Matthew xviii. the offended brother, who has failed to get his fellow-member to right the wrong, is told to "tell it to the Church." This language makes us think at once of an assembly or congregation to whom the offended person can speak of his trouble. Then, in the next place where the word is used, Acts v. 11 (in ii. 47 it does not occur in the Revised Version), it is clearly applied to a body of people, for it is said that "great fear came upon the whole Church." *Fear*, of course, belongs to persons, and excludes all thought of *things*. When Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch we are told that they gathered the Church together in order to make report to them (Acts xiv. 27). In the next chapter we read that these two were sent up to Jerusalem, and that they were "*brought on their way by the Church.*" Using the word "church" for a material building, we may "go to church" or "come from" it, but it cannot "bring us on our way"!

But while every assembly is a Church in the general use of the word, every Church is not, of course, the Church of God which took form under the Apostles. The Church of Christ was an institution found in a great many places, and as such was distinguished from other congregations, whether mere promiscuous assemblies, or bodies of persons constituted of selected persons, organized and meeting periodically, such as the Jewish synagogues or the Roman and Greek guilds. The New Testament is the only book from which we can learn what kind of institution this Church was which Jesus loved and died for, what distinguished its membership, what were its work and aim, how it was organized, and what were the things that characterized it and separated it from the people among whom they lived, but who were not included in its membership.

(2) *The Church is a Local Institution*: that is, it is a simple

organization of those believers in Christ who can assemble for worship and work in one place. Though it may seem a contradiction to say so, the fact that the Church is capable of being realized in any *locality* where a few believers may agree to assemble is quite in harmony with its *universal* character and its *unity* in all the earth. But first note that its local character is seen in this, that often when used in the singular the place at which the Church is located is named. Thus the two Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians are addressed to the Church of God *at Corinth*; in Acts viii. 1 we read of the Church which was *at Jerusalem*; in Rev. ii. and iii. we have seven Churches, each addressed as the Church in its own city: for example, the Church *in Ephesus*.

This is not to be understood as meaning that each was a *portion* of the Church. Each of these communities, small or large—and they no doubt varied in size—was itself the Church in its own place or town.

In accordance with this is the use of the word in the plural. Each being itself a realization of "the Church," when several were spoken of they were called the *Churches*. Thus in Galatians i. we read of the Churches of Galatia, showing there were several in that province; and also of the Churches in Judæa, showing that the Church at Jerusalem did not remain the only Church of Christ in Judæa. Here may be mentioned the occurrence of the term "Churches of Christ" in Romans xvi. Paul doubtless had told in many Churches of his purposed visit to Rome, and so he knows he expresses the mind of all when he writes, "All the Churches of Christ salute you." The qualifying words, "*of Christ*," are implied when Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build *My Church*," the word "*my*" uttered by Christ being equal to "*of Christ*." Paul's example in this passage (Romans xvi. 16) shows that he would have called any one of the many Churches of God "the Church of Christ" in the place where it was situated. But the Apostle did not confine himself to one description. Usually he used *Church of God*. The fullest and most exact description is in

the very first of his Epistles, 1 Thessalonians, where he writes : "The Church of the Thessalonians IN GOD THE FATHER AND THE LORD JESUS CHRIST," thus combining the two divine names, as he does in reference to *the Kingdom*, when he writes of it as "the kingdom of Christ and God." Any of these Churches, then, may be called either the Church of *God* or the Church of *Christ*, and the whole of them, in a certain region, or in all the earth, may be called the Churches of *Christ* or the Churches of *God*.

(3) *Its Universality and Unity.*—When we define the Church of God as a *local assembly or community of believers in Christ*, persons accustomed to think of such an organization as *the Church of Rome* are apt to think this *local Church* is something of a very inferior kind. The vision of a great, world-wide community, no part of it independent, but all under priests of various grades, rising in authority till it reaches at the apex, over all, the Pope, is imposing, and at first overshadows the thought of a band of regenerated men and women meeting in some convenient centre to worship "by the Spirit of God, glorying in Christ Jesus," and working for Him. Yet the latter is "the Church of God" as we see it in the New Testament, and the former is, in that Book only as a subject of prophecy, and reprobated as a great apostasy.

Yet we must repeat that the fact that the Church is a local institution does not interfere with its *universality*. To prove this we have only to point to the history of the Church in the New Testament. The first Church of Christ was established, not at Rome, but at Jerusalem. It was formed by the preaching of Christ, as is seen in Acts ii. The first Church of *Christ*, or of *God*, was "the Church at Jerusalem." It was composed of the original band of Apostles and disciples, added to, *by the Lord*. Those added were those who believed in Jesus as *Lord and Christ*, repented, and were baptized. This history is typical of what was enacted wherever disciples, Apostles or not, went preaching Jesus. Hence the Church spread. At Antioch a sort of Foreign Missions movement

began. Paul and Barnabas went forth to preach Christ, and at each place to which they went those who believed and obeyed Christ were formed into "the Church" in that place. Each of these was complete and independent, owning only the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ and of His Apostles.

Its *universal* character is seen at once. Wherever there are human beings capable of "hearing, believing, and being baptized," as is said of the Corinthians, there the Gospel is to be preached, and there as a consequence the Church appears. But while thus as *world-wide* as the Church of Rome, the *completeness* of each little community, and its *independence* of any authority save Christ, shuts out that vast and complex organization, giving rise to priests of ever-rising and increasing authority, seen at its fullest development in the Church of Rome, but also in all similar organizations, as the Episcopal and Presbyterian systems. We cannot but admire the wisdom of the divine institution. It is adapted for all the world; it secures in every place the maximum of mutual help of believers among themselves, and of saving influence upon the world; yet it is adapted to preserve that unworldliness and simplicity which Jesus summed up when He said, "My kingdom is not of this world"—a simplicity impossible, from the very nature of the case, to any of the great organizations such as we have named. This is the Church which, as opposed to the notion of Established by the State, Silvester Horne has described as "Established by Grace." It is at once democratic and theocratic. The members in every place acknowledge in the affairs of *the Church* no human authority, not even of the other Churches, but they bow absolutely and from the heart to God's authority in Christ. To express it in modern form, the Church is a Theocracy, and Christocentric; but in apostolic form to the members of the Church the Apostle Paul said: "All things are yours . . . and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." In the Church "the head of every man is Christ," and "the head of Christ is God."

If, now, we turn to the question of *unity*, we again perceive

that the great worldly systems have an apparent unity the Church of God lacks. No portion of the Church of Rome is the Church of Rome : it takes it all to carry the conception. But each little band of regenerated men and women—that is, of members of that Kingdom of God which cannot be entered except by a New Birth—is “the Church of God,” and owns no authority except to Christ. Now that might seem to shut out *unity*. Yet, as an actual fact it is clear that the Churches among whom Paul laboured knew themselves to be a wondrous unity. They knew of each other’s existence, in many cases members of one Church visited other Churches, and in a case like the famine at Jerusalem, Churches aided each other even in temporal things. Some of these Churches helped to support Paul when labouring among other Churches (Phil. iv. 15, 16 ; 2 Cor. xi. 7, 8). Yet clearly these Churches in no particular acknowledged each other’s authority. Each, when organized, had its own bishops and deacons, who simply ruled in the local Church that recognized them, and were not bishops or deacons except to that Church.

Of what kind, then, was the unity? It was spiritual, and as much higher than this merely external organization as the living excels the non-living. What Paul said to the Ephesians brings out the unity which bound together the Churches of God. The Apostle speaks of keeping

“The Unity of the Spirit”

in the bond of peace—“one body and one Spirit, even as ye were called in one hope of your calling ; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all.”

We hope to speak of this “Christian Unity” afterwards, but meanwhile we suggest that any one of the living things of God’s creation may be referred to to illustrate the unity of the Church of God.

Walking along the street recently, the writer passed a vacant plot of building ground, the land on each side being

occupied by houses. On this plot some seeds of groundsel had fallen. Now it is covered with plants of groundsel. Each plant is *independent*. Yet their unity of nature is evident. Some few other plants grow there, but easily distinguishable. The unity of the groundsel plant was manifested in the similar form, leaf, and the tufted seed pods. And all the world over groundsel is groundsel, claiming a unique unity with groundsel wherever its seed has gone. If any one thinks this lowly weed too humble an illustration, let him take "*the oak*," or "*man*" himself. The specimens vary, but in the great characteristics there is a unity, not of man, but of God, never disturbing the independence of each specimen, easily seen, and proof of its divine origin. This unity is the unity of the Church of God. Indeed, the Church is the highest example of this unity of life; the type of it, we write with all reverence, is the unity of the Father and the Son—"That they all," prayed Jesus, "may be one; EVEN AS THOU, FATHER, ART IN ME, AND I IN THEE."

(4) *Organization* we mention here only in its relation to the defining of "*the Church*" as that institution is portrayed in the New Testament, purposing to deal with the subject of "*Ministry*" in another chapter. When we consider the Church as a local institution we expect to find that each would have its own officers. And this we do find. We would prefer to call these its ministers were it not that in modern times this word is often limited in meaning to one man, set apart and supported to minister to one Church, and who, if he resigns his office, is still called "a minister."

As a fact, the appointments made for any one of the "Churches of Christ" were always of more than one—a plurality. From *the seven* appointed to serve tables chosen by the Church at Jerusalem to the *elders* to be appointed in every city in Crete, the plural is used. One gathers that these elders were selected from the members of the Church they were appointed to serve. The Apostles appointed "elders in every Church" (Acts xiv. 23). These appointed "elders" were also called *bishops*, and so it is the same organization we see in

Philippi, which Church Paul salutes "*with the bishops and deacons.*"

There were, however, supernaturally endowed men whose authority and ministry were acknowledged "in every Church" (Eph. iv. 11; 1 Cor. iv. 17). Of these we know that the *Apostles* occupied a unique position, and their authority is continued through their writings. Just as Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church, so the Apostles are regarded as authoritative teachers. The Church is built on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone.

Had this conception of the Church as a local, independent assembly with its own officers been duly regarded, the supposed development of Church organization from Congregational successively to Presbyterian, Episcopalian, and Papal would have been seen to be contrary to its fundamental democratic basis. Each Church would have been efficient for the *spiritual service* it is designed through the Gospel to render to mankind, and the officialism which has given the dominant idea as *authority* where *service* should have been, would have been excluded.

(5) "*The Church*" when no actual local assembly is in view. According to our Revised Version the word "Church" is in the singular in Acts ix. 31: "So the Church throughout all Judæa and Galilee and Samaria had peace; and, walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, was multiplied." This, it is assumed, shows that the separate congregations were organized into one Church, so that, after all, each assembly was but a part of "the Church." If, however, the word "Church" denotes a well-known institution, which is seen from other occurrences to be an independent local society, this exceptional use must be explained, if possible, in harmony. Now we ordinarily use the singular of similar words to cover all, or a specified number of instances, but with no suggestion that all the individuals have lost their individual character. If we say, "The air being warmer, the oak grows better in the south than

in the north," no one thinks that we mean by "*the oak*" that by some miracle all the oaks have become one great oak; each oak is thought of as independent of every other, and yet every one is covered by the use of "*the oak*" in the sentence above. In like manner *church* is used here. The countries named contained a number of these local Churches. The cessation of persecution throughout the region, through Paul's conversion, gave each of them a more congenial environment. There is no suggestion of being organized into a great Church, but that each and every actual Church, embodiment of the institution called the Church, flourished.

In some passages where "Church" is used it is an ideal not yet realized, and for the future realization of which the Church in this dispensation is but preparatory, which determines the language; as, for example, the *glorious Church* of Ephesians v. and the Church of *first-born ones* in Heb. xii. To our mind it seems clear that the Church in this dispensation is, as defined, *a local community of believers in Christ*; and the future glorious Church is the consummation, and will be an actual assembly of glorified believers. It suggests itself that in some places both ideas may well be present. When Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it," His words suggest the Church in the world during this dispensation when opposition is rampant, but it may well be that here, too, is included the grand end, which inspired the joy set before our Lord leading Him "to love the Church and give Himself up for it." That "glorious Church" will be the final proof that the work of "cleansing" has, in spite of opposition, gone on during this dispensation, and found its grand completion in "the Bride, the Wife of the Lamb."

(6) *The relation of "Church and Kingdom."* If our chapter on "The Kingdom" and this on "The Church" are compared, it will be seen that the latter is included under the general idea of the Kingdom of God. The Church is an institution of the Kingdom, in which the citizens of the latter are associated to do

the work of their great Lord and King. This accounts for the word "church" evidently covering what is meant by the Kingdom. Substantially he who has the New Testament idea of Christ's kingdom during this dispensation in his mind will find that it is largely, at least, identical with the total of the Churches of Christ. But the latter is used in the plural, because each Church, while only a part of the Kingdom, is complete as an institution in itself, and is not a part of "the Church" as an institution, but a realization of it; on the other hand, the Kingdom of God, or of Christ, is never used in the plural, because it takes in, and is only complete when it covers, all Christ's people on earth.

(7) *The Church manifests the Social Aspect of Christianity.* The manifold wisdom of God is said to be made known "through the Church." In this day, when the question of the improvement and happiness of society occupies so much attention, we are convinced that no idea of the uplifting of society in grasping the problem is as true, or more wisely adapted to its solution, as that embodied in the Church of God.

It is not a nation. Whatever may be ultimately achieved by the way of the nation must come through the control of selfishness in human motives. There is a difficulty in human nature which makes reform by law disappointing. The idea of the Church of God is to look to *character*, not *nationality*. It stands, therefore, as the result of "the word of the truth of the Gospel," and holding forth that word of life as the means to regeneration.

It is not worldly in its basis. The fact is that if ever the material possessions of the world are to be rightly used, it must be by those who have motives not derived from them. Many systems expect us to get on very well, though there is no world better than this world, no higher Being than human beings, and no day but this day. The Church is differently founded. Its great words are *faith, hope, love*; these subjectively considered and implying the existence of the *realities of God and the world to come*. Its requirements for membership lead

it to ask, not, Of what nation or class are you ? but, What think ye of Christ? Are you born again? The Brotherhood it forms is the result of all being sons of God, by faith, in Christ Jesus. Its moral teaching and great truths fit its members to do their duty in the highest sense in all other not essentially Church relationships—as members of families, of professions, and of the State ; but its own proper work is to be “the pillar and ground of the truth”—the truth in Jesus ; its real victory is only in proportion as it can say, “I have begotten you through the Gospel.” “This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” Its aim as the sure way of social salvation and happiness is, “The whole wide world for Jesus.”

CHAPTER IX.

THE GOSPEL.

WHILE readers at all acquainted with the New Testament, knowing how important is the place of "*the Gospel*" in its pages, would agree that this theme must have a conspicuous place in this outline of "New Testament Christianity," they might also incline to think that, so far as the meaning of "the Gospel" is concerned, little need be said. The word is a favourite, we are happy to think, with nearly all religious people; and in their use of it there is a general assumption that everybody knows what is meant by "the Gospel."

In the New Testament, especially in the Epistles, the same easy use of this beloved word is seen. The first chapter of Philippians contains no less than five examples of Paul speaking of "the Gospel" without any explanation of the word. He speaks of "the furtherance of the Gospel," of his "defence and confirmation of the Gospel," of the "progress of the Gospel," again of his "defence of the Gospel," and lastly of striving for "the faith of the Gospel." In all these he clearly expects that his readers will understand what is meant by "the Gospel."

Yet the word translated "GOSPEL," namely, *euangelion*, was at first *generic* in its meaning. That is, it meant *good tidings*, but would apply to *any* good news, no matter what the news was about. In fact, the word was used just as we use GOOD NEWS in our language to-day. Thus, if to-day we saw a newspaper placard headed in big letters "Good News," and found it told of some threatened war being averted, we should agree "Good News" was rightly applied to such tidings. If, however, we saw the same words on another morning, even

if on the placard of the same newspaper, we would not at once conclude the "Good News" this time was on the same subject. If the news related to the discovery of a sure cure for rheumatism, or the ending of a great strike, the term "Good News" would be deemed equally applicable as when applied to the averting of a dreaded war.

Though in the New Testament the word is seen to have been generally applied by Christians to one announcement of good tidings, so transcendently good as to be called *the Gospel*, as if there was no other, yet sufficient examples of the general use are found to remind us that the word was originally applied to any good tidings, as well as to those about *salvation in Christ*. Thus the news of the birth of John the Harbinger is called by Gabriel *gospel (euangelion)*; and later Paul applies the word to the news of the fidelity of the Thessalonians (Luke i. 19; 1 Thess. iii. 6). No one will suppose that the Gospel to be believed in order to salvation is meant in these two passages.

If this general character of the word "gospel" is kept in mind, it will prepare us to observe that, even in the sphere of "redemption," the word may not always refer to or cover exactly the same items of news or matter of announcement. For example, the word "gospel" appears to be applied in Mark i. 14, 15, to the announcement that the Kingdom is at hand. We read: "Now after that John was delivered up, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe in the Gospel."

That the Kingdom of God was at hand was, of course, good news. But the very message implies that it could not be preached always—only until the Kingdom came. When the Kingdom actually came, then the good tidings of a Kingdom approaching must change into the still more joyful tidings of the establishment of the Kingdom and the invitation to become its citizens. As a matter of fact, we have no preaching, "the Kingdom of God is at hand," in the Acts. This general

meaning of "gospel" makes it possible that what was preached as *gospel* before Pentecost did not exactly coincide with what was preached as *gospel* after Christ had died and risen, and been seated at the right hand of God.

But it may be said, if the word "gospel" could be applied to any good news, and actually was used, now of this announcement and now of that, how is it that Paul so often uses it, as if the word covered one particular thing and no other? Well, how is it that we speak of *the moon*, although each of the exterior planets is accompanied by satellities or moons? The fact is that we so constantly in ordinary conversation refer to the earth's moon that there is no danger of being misunderstood if we simply say *the moon*. In the same way we are in no danger of being misunderstood if we say "the sun," although there are "other planets" that "circle other suns." So after Pentecost the Apostles proclaimed a certain body of facts and truths which came to be spoken of as *the Gospel*. Those who had heard this Gospel, believed and obeyed it, knew, of course, what exactly was covered by the word. It was because a certain set of related facts and truths was so pre-eminently *good news* that the Christians came to speak often of it, and understood each other when they called it simply *the Gospel*.

Still, just because the word in itself did not define any of the facts or truths of the pre-eminent Gospel, or even of the leading circumstances connected with it, we might expect to have qualifying or defining words employed along with it, whenever it was desirable to recall to the mind the reality, or part of it, the word "Gospel" had come to be used to designate. Hence we have such phrases as "*of God*," "*of Christ*," "*of the grace of God*"; thus we read of the Gospel of God, the Gospel of Christ, the Gospel of peace, and so on. Then, in addition, we have longer passages where "*the Gospel*" is explained more at length, as, for example, Rom. i. 1-4 and 1 Cor. xv. 1-4. None of these defining phrases would have been necessary had the word been specific, and applied

necessarily only to one thing ; and these phrases and explanations ought all to be taken note of, if we would know the joyful message, if we would conceive aright the Gospel preached by the Apostles and the leading truths concerning it.

In order, then, to secure this desirable end, let us note the phrases and explanations which are added to define *the Gospel*. They help us to know : (1) The origin of the Gospel : (2) The blessings of the Gospel : (3) The incomparable Person and facts regarding Him through whom these blessings come.

I.—THE ORIGIN OF THE GOSPEL.

When we read of *the Gospel of God*, the meaning may be that the good news is concerning God, or that it comes from Him. In all such matters no hard and fast line can be fixed. The context and general fitness, all things considered, must ever determine. There would be no error in saying the Gospel tells about God. We think that the more usual way in the New Testament is to present the Gospel as coming *from* God, and being *about* the Son of God. But even so, the Son reveals the Father, so that ultimately the Gospel is about God. Still, one can see that usually the thought to be conveyed by "*of God*," when added to "*the Gospel*," is that the latter is of divine origin. Thus in 1 Thess. i. three times the writer speaks of the *Gospel of God*. He says, "We waxed bold in our God to speak unto you the Gospel of God," he had "imparted" to them "the Gospel of God," and he had laboured night and day not to be a burden while he preached to them "the Gospel of God." One can see that the thought in his mind, expressed by the recurring phrase, *of God*, is that the Gospel he preached was a divine message. We are not surprised, therefore, when finally the thought finds more explicit mention. "For this cause," he continues, "we also thank God without ceasing, that when ye received from us the word of the message, even the word of God, ye accepted

it not as the word of man, but as it is in truth, the word *of God.*" The Gospel, then, is a message from God. It originates in Him. All things in the new creation are of Him. And when the contents of this message are known, there is nothing in Creation or Providence which so strongly moves our gratitude to cry, Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy Name! Nor is there anything else whose sublimity and beauty so fully attest its divine origin, and awe us with the sense of the presence of God, until we say, "Speak, Lord, Thy servant heareth," and we treat the message not as the word of men, but *of God.*

II. THE BLESSINGS OF THE GOSPEL.

We now turn to additions to the term "the Gospel" in the New Testament which describe the blessings which it announces as available for mankind.

Joy is one of the first-named blessings of "the Gospel." When an angel of the Lord appeared to the shepherds they were sore afraid, "and the angel said unto them, Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good tidings *of great joy*, which shall be to all the people: for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

Good tidings here translates *euangelion*, and the words following show that the joy which the birth of Jesus gave to the shepherds the news of that birth would give to others also. It is here the birth of Jesus that is named as tidings *of great joy*, but all we know about Jesus—His life, death, burial, and Resurrection—all may be so-called, for all, rightly understood, give joy. Joy, all joy, exceeding joy, results from believing "the Gospel." Thus we read,

"There shall be the root of Jesse,
And he that ariseth to rule over the Gentiles;
On him shall the Gentiles hope.

Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace *in believing.*" Paul speaks not only of the progress but also of the

joy of faith. Peter, speaking of Christ Jesus, says, "On whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." Because *the Gospel* is a gospel of great joy we may speak of *the great joy* of the gospel.

Righteousness is a blessing of the Gospel upon which the Apostle to the Gentiles lays great emphasis. To see this, we have but to quote those words from the first chapter of Romans, of which that wonderful treatise is simply the exposition and defence :—

"I am not ashamed of the Gospel; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first and also to the Greek. *For therein is revealed* a righteousness of God by faith unto faith."

There is much to be gleaned about the Gospel here, but the chief point is this, that unless "The Gospel" reveals the righteousness of God, it is not the power of God unto salvation; it is a thing to be ashamed of; it is no good news at all. As one reads the Epistle he gets to understand this "righteousness of God." It is justification. It is the state of the man, the blessedness of the man, unto whom God reckoneth righteousness apart from works. That is, a sinner whom no one can prove innocent has his sin pardoned, and righteously pardoned, by God, upon the basis of the propitiation of Christ. When any one finds himself being led to take the view that some not yet realized kingdom, or earthly inheritance, is "the Gospel" Paul was not ashamed to preach in the metropolis of the Roman Empire, let him read the Epistle to the Romans, and he will see that this righteousness, justification through faith and in Christ, is the very centre of the Gospel, without which it is no gospel, and which other blessings, such as adoption, holiness and glory, necessarily accompany and follow.

The grace of God is another description of the contents of the Gospel, of the blessings it imparts. We shall hear our Apostle on this also :—

"But I hold not my life of any account, as dear unto myself, so that I may accomplish my course, and the ministry

which I received from the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the grace of God."

It is usual to say that the grace of God is the *favour* of God. If so, it will be seen that at bottom "the righteousness of God" and "the grace of God" refer to the same thing. The reality under both expressions is the remission of sins and the consequent fellowship with God. The believer in Christ is able to say, "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." We are not only justified by faith, but have access into this grace wherein we stand—we are reconciled and adopted. Let any one glance his eye through the occurrences of the word *grace* in the New Testament and he will see that if "*the Gospel*" was the Gospel of the grace of God, it must have been so because of its announcement of a provision for forgiveness and acceptance with God through Christ.

Peace and salvation, also, are added to "the Gospel," to express its contents. Thus we have, "The word which he sent unto the children of Israel, preaching good tidings of *peace* by Jesus Christ." "In whom (Christ) ye also have heard the word of the truth, the gospel of *your salvation*," expresses the thought that the Gospel tells of salvation. This word is wider than "justification," but includes it as a principal part. The sanctification and glorification which justification makes the way for, as well as justification itself, are all embraced in this word—salvation.

Hope, to mention one more of the inestimable blessings of the Gospel, is shown to be included in the joyful tidings by the following:—

"Because of the hope which is laid up for you in the heavens, whereof ye heard before in the truth of the Gospel." And again we read that "*Life and incorruptibility* are brought to light by the Gospel."

Joy, justification, grace, peace, salvation, hope—the Gospel is the Gospel of all these. We learn thus that this Gospel of God is a message which tells of all these blessings being

bestowed, according to gracious arrangement, upon sinful men. We have pointed out, in some measure, and doubtless the reader sees still further for himself, that these terms somewhat coincide. As in the language of Acts of Parliament words almost synonymous are used, that anything not fully covered by one may be taken in by another, so in the language of the Gospel there are various words to describe the fulness of the blessing of Christ. But even when the same reality is referred to, that reality is described from another point of view, whence a new blessedness can be discerned in it. Thus *joy* is general, and how the Gospel gives joy may best be discerned from the specific blessings that follow. *Justification* and *grace* go well together; both have substantially the same blessing in view, but justification describes it from the point of view of the broken law of God—we are set free from the penalty of sin by pardon bestowed through Jesus' blood; grace describes the beauty of this arrangement, it is graceful; of all that God has wrought, there is nothing so beautiful to the justified sinner as the Gospel, and nothing that so reveals to him the beauty of God.

The Kingdom of God is another phrase which stands for the grace and truth that came by Jesus Christ. Thus we read, in Acts viii. 35, that "When they believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women." Paul also preached the kingdom of God (Acts xxviii. 31). We have no discourse in which special mention is made of the kingdom of God. In all discourses recorded in the Acts, what is spoken of is the Lord Jesus Christ and salvation through Him. We know, however, that the Apostles both regarded all Christians as having been translated from the power of darkness into the kingdom of the Son of God's love, and looked forward to a future glorious dispensation of the kingdom. This explains why the kingdom is not specifically mentioned in the discourses. In all that preaching about the Lord Jesus Christ, they were really preaching the kingdom of God. Those who are in Him

are in the Kingdom. The blessings of the Gospel we have looked at, the happy communion of the pardoned and sanctified and adopted in the Church of God, all belong to and constitute the kingdom of God, in its present dispensation, while the hope of the Gospel is coincident with the yet future everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. In other words, the Gospel of the kingdom of God, in its fullest sense, embraces all blessings we have already set forth, described, not as chance but as a beneficent rule and reign of God over men in Christ. The Gospel, then, is *of God*, as to *its origin*; and it is *of great JOY, of RIGHTEOUSNESS, of GRACE, of PEACE, of SALVATION, of HOPE, and of the KINGDOM OF GOD as to its blessings.*

We have now to note a class of Scriptures which seem to us to indicate the very heart of the Gospel, the fountain from which all these blessings spring. These Scriptures define the contents of the Gospel as being—

III. AN INCOMPARABLE PERSON, AND FACTS CONCERNING HIM.

Sometimes it is simply the Person who is represented as the gospel preached. We see this in the record of Philip's evangelistic work. We read, "And Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture preached unto him Jesus" (Acts viii. 35). The word translated preach here may be fully represented to the mind by the device, "preach-as-gospel." Philip preached as gospel—JESUS.

Again, "But there were some of them men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Greeks also, preaching *the Lord Jesus.*" They preached as gospel, the Lord Jesus.

Sometimes the Gospel is the truth they set forth concerning Jesus. Thus there is this fine summary of the Apostles' preaching: "They departed therefore from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonour for the Name. And every day, in the temple and

at home, they ceased not to teach and to preach *Jesus as the Christ*" (Acts v. 42).

This shows us more fully the form in which Jesus was preached. It is evident that Philip also presented Jesus in this way. He "proclaimed unto them the Christ" (Acts viii. 5). The statement, "he preached unto him Jesus," in verse 35, is in a context which shows the form his teaching took. He commenced at Isaiah liii., and he showed that Jesus was the One this prophet and other prophets had promised and described—that is, he preached that Jesus is the Christ. And as we read the accounts of Paul and Apollos, we see that they sought ever to convince their hearers that Jesus was the Christ.

What a glorious and comprehensive subject! They had all the Messianic passages, not Isaiah liii. only, to draw from. The Old Testament had promised a Saviour who should be "the Son of man" of Abraham's and David's line, but also the Son of God, David's Lord as well as David's Son, David's Root as well as Offspring, the Angel of the Covenant, whose goings forth had been from everlasting. And the word "Messiah," *Christ* in Greek, *anointed* in English, pointed to Him as divinely appointed *Prophet* like Moses, *Priest* like Aaron and Melchizedek, and *King* on God's holy hill of Zion.

Doubtless the Apostles did not dwell equally on all sides of the character and work of the Messiah, but now emphasized one point and now another, as the hearers required. For instance, in one passage, in which Paul describes somewhat fully the Gospel he preached, the divinity of the Christ is prominent; in another, the work He did.

The divinity is strongly stated in Romans i. 1-4: "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the Gospel of God, which He promised afore by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures concerning His Son, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, who was declared to be the Son of God, with power, according to the Spirit of Holiness by the resurrection of the dead."

Observe several general features present here which we have seen elsewhere. (1) The Gospel is *of God*; (2) It is the fulfilment of the Old Testament predictions, this is the same as saying that Jesus is the Christ; (3) It is about the Son of God—He, this wondrous Person, forms the contents of the Gospel. Then he names the two requirements of those foregoing promises—His humanity and His divinity. The description contains a number of contrasted particulars—

HUMANITY.

1. Born
2. Seed of David
3. According to the flesh

DIVINITY.

1. Declared
2. The Son of God, with power
3. According to the Spirit of holiness,
By the resurrection of the dead.

The greater fulness of the particulars regarding His being the Son of God is seen in the above table. Just as Jesus in the Gospels claims to be the Son of God in a sense that included Him being truly divine, so the Apostles would not have regarded their Gospel of Christ as worthy of the name—the Good News—had they not been sure that He was One who had shared the Father's glory before creation, had deemed His equality with God not to be grasped at, but had emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men. It was this nature of the Christ that Paul specially prized, and which gives to all his references to the work of Christ the right point of view from which to understand the value of that work, and the gratitude it evoked from the heart of Paul—"The Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." At this point we may fitly introduce the passage in which Paul emphasizes the facts done by Christ and their purpose (1 Cor. xv. 1-4)—

"Now I make known unto you, brethren, the Gospel

which I preached unto you, which also ye received, wherein also ye stand, by which also ye are saved; I make known, I say, in what words I preached it unto you, if ye hold it fast, except ye believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received, *how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried; and that He hath been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.*"

Although the Apostle's sentence does not end here, but proceeds to enumerate the appearances of Christ after His resurrection, we can see that these are introduced in subordination to the mention of the resurrection. They are important as proof that "the Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared unto Simon," and not to Simon only, but to all the Apostles, to five hundred disciples, and to Paul himself.

We are confirmed in our partial separation of the three first-mentioned facts, from the appearances to the chosen witnesses, by other portions, for it is upon the death and resurrection of Christ that attention is generally concentrated.

Thus the persons that are justified are described thus: "Unto whom it (righteousness) shall be reckoned, who shall believe on him that raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up for our trespasses, and was raised for our justification" (Rom. iv. 24, 25). Timothy, Paul bids to remember Jesus Christ risen from the dead, according to His Gospel (2 Tim. ii. 8).

Let it be carefully noted that the passage from 1 Corinthians gives no countenance to any presentation of bare and arbitrary facts as the Gospel. The death is distinctly stated to be for our sins, and the resurrection is said in Romans to be for our justification. Indeed, these words, pointing out the purpose of Christ's death and resurrection, are essential to a coherent grasp of the truth of the Gospel. The death of Christ is the divinely set forth propitiation. On the ground of it God reconciles the world to Himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses. Hence we see the unity of all we have looked at.

The Gospel is concerning God's Son ; it presents to us this wonderful personality, God manifest in the flesh ; this One, in His state of voluntary humiliation, bears our sins in His own body on the tree, "Him who knew no sin, God made to be sin on our behalf" ; He rises, proof that His death is a propitiation, which permits God to be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. Hence this Gospel—*of God*, because all proceeding from Him—*concerning Jesus—the Christ—the Son of God—His death, burial, and resurrection*—is also the Gospel of righteousness, grace of God, peace, joy, hope, salvation, and the kingdom of God, because all these flow, a stream of living water, from the cross of the Son of God, or rather from the throne of grace, in the midst of which is a "Lamb, standing as though it had been slain."

We have thus got the main feature of "the Gospel," from the New Testament particular descriptions. There are more general descriptions, which must be understood to refer to the Gospel as thus defined : which, therefore, add nothing new, except giving one an idea of how the early Christians spoke of "the Gospel."

There is, for example, the first verse of the Gospel according to Mark : "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God." This suggests that the titles given to the four first books of the New Testament are a right expression of how these books were from the beginning regarded. Each of them is a memoir of Jesus. Each of them shows reason to regard Him as the Christ, the Son of God. Each of them gives special prominence to His death, burial, and resurrection.

There is the summary of the Gospel in Acts viii. 12 : "But when they believed Philip preaching good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ they were baptized, both men and women." This is very suggestive. There were not two Gospels, a Gospel of the Kingdom of God and another concerning the Name. No, there was but one Gospel, in which were two topics

distinguishable yet interpenetrating—the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ. Observe the result of this preaching, “They were baptized, both men and women.” This was just what might be expected. If Philip spoke of Jesus Christ, he would tell of His death and resurrection, and also of His commission to the Apostles—“preach the Gospel to every creature, he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” Hence, if they believed, it was just what we expect, that they would be baptized. And speaking of the kingdom would take Philip over the same ground, and was also calculated to lead to submission to Christ in baptism. The Kingdom of God is the Kingdom of the Son of God’s love, and men and women who accept Him as the Christ—the anointed King—are translated out of darkness into that kingdom. The King had said, “Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John iii. 5). No wonder that when they believed Philip preaching-as-gospel concerning the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

By reference to one more interesting general description of the Gospel, this chapter may take an end. “They, therefore, that were scattered abroad went about preaching the word.” Preaching-as-gospel “*the Word*.”

“*The Word*” is usually used for all the Bible, and we might easily regard a person as preaching *the Word* if he took a text of Scripture and expounded it, however remote his talk might be from the Christ. Now we too hold the Bible to be the Word of God, but we deny that speaking of topics remote from the Christ is preaching-as-gospel the Word. Jesus is the Alpha and Omega of the Bible, the theme in it that gives its saving power, and the Gospel as we have seen it defined in Scripture may be said to be in a very real sense the Word. Hence the Apostle Peter, referring to the new birth and new life of the Christians, identifies for saving purposes the Word and the Gospel of God. “For—

“ All flesh is as grass,
And all the glory thereof, as the flower of grass ;
The grass withereth, and the flower falleth,
But the Word of the Lord abideth for ever.”

And this is the Word of Good Tidings which was preached unto you.”

CHAPTER X.

CONDITIONS OF SALVATION.

IN these summaries of the outstanding subjects brought before us in the New Testament we have noted some eight different themes, as follows: (1) God; (2) the Word of God; (3) the all-important Place occupied by Jesus Christ; (4) the Central Truth—Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; (5) the Central Fact, the Resurrection of Christ; (6) the Kingdom of God; (7) the Church of God; (8) the Gospel of God.

This last topic, “the Gospel,” a word meaning a *message* of a winsome, joyful, or beneficial character, may be said to be *related* to all the preceding, and to *focus* them in one blaze of glorious light before the gaze of needy man for his enlightenment, grateful acceptance, and salvation.

(1) *The Gospel is a message that presents all saving truth.*

The Gospel tells of *God* in Love saving mankind; of *the Word of God*, claiming that *Jesus* is its very essence; of *the all-important place* occupied by Jesus, whom it proclaims as *all in all*; of the *Central Truth*, Jesus is the Christ, which it demonstrates; of the *Central Fact*, the Resurrection of Christ, which is its main proof; of *the Kingdom of God*, in which Jesus is Prophet, Priest, and King; and of *the Church of God*, which is Christ's Body.

(2) *It presents this for Man's Acceptance and Use.*

That is the very point in its being a Message. “Repent ye and believe the Gospel,” said our Lord Himself; and the Commission to preach the Gospel given by Him to the Apostles

had in it conditions. Paul also said of himself, as the Apostle born out of due time, "We received grace and apostleship *unto the obedience of faith* among all the nations."

This is a crucial subject—this giving of a place for man's WILL to be exercised. Whatever Gospel theme we may take up, we always find, in examining the whole of what the New Testament says about it, a place where the perfect provision made by God may be rejected by man, by the very creature for whom that provision has been made! "Ye will not come to me, that ye may have life," sorrowfully said He who came to give life. "Seeing ye thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles," said Paul to the jealous Jews at Antioch of Pisidia.

It is, indeed, a theme to give us pause, the most awful and the most splendid fact in human life, that after man's ill-use of his freedom of will has brought ruin and shame, even God's power to save—the Gospel—*can be refused by him!* Well might Phillips Brooks exclaim, "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not"; these words are an assertion of the

Awful Ultimateness

of the power of the free will in man."

As our course will now have more to do with this side of the plan of human renovation, we may here look at the subject in general, and say, once for all, what might be said in reference to many special arrangements. There are three points claiming our attention: (1) The indisputable fact that conditions are named; (2) the reasonable character of the conditions; and (3) the harmony of such conditions with the Master-truth, Salvation is not of Human Works, but is of Divine Grace.

I. THE INDISPUTABLE FACT THAT CONDITIONS ARE REQUIRED.

"The

Excepts of Jesus Christ"

is, if memory serves correctly, the title of a book we saw

advertised lately. Though we have not seen the book, we can easily guess that its author must have been struck with the decision with which Jesus Christ names conditions necessary to reach some blessing made available to us by the divine goodness and love. Thus "except" introduces three conditions necessary for entering into the Kingdom of God: "Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees"; "except ye turn and become as little children"; "except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God."

But the same thought was expressed in many forms. Conditions, and especially the great condition covered by the word *faith*, were named as necessary for us to receive the fulness of His blessing in all the relations which He sustains to us. From the similitude of the Two Builders with which He closed the Sermon on the Mount, right on to His words to His own on the night of His betrayal, "If ye know these things, happy are ye *if* ye do them," He set forth in unmistakable terms the necessity of obedience. The difference between Destruction and Ruin, between Wisdom and Folly, is deliberately shown by the *one* little word "*not*." The Foolish and the Wise *both hear* His words; but the Wise does them, the Foolish does them *not*.

The commission Jesus as Lord gave to His Apostles had conditions attached to the proclamation of the Gospel—"Preach the Gospel to every creature, he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned."

Questions, asking to be told what conditions were required, were put both to Christ Himself and afterwards to His Apostles. These questions were never reprovèd as unsuitable, but promptly and gravely answered: "They said, therefore, unto Him, what must we do that we may work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent" (John vi. 28, 29). "Now when they heard this" [that

Jesus was Lord and Christ] “they were pricked in their heart and said unto Peter and the rest of the Apostles, Brethren, what shall we do? And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts ii. 37, 38).

In the Epistles to those who had accepted Christ by obedience to such conditions as are named in the two passages just quoted, there are further conditions required such as suited their Christian life; and upon their response to these requirements their progress in grace depended. The beginning of Peter's Second Epistle is an excellent example of what is meant. After recognizing the happy state his readers were already in by “a like precious faith,” he enumerates virtues to be cultivated; urges them to “make their calling and election sure”; and concludes, “For if ye do these things, ye shall never stumble: for thus shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

Indeed, in the Epistles one sometimes finds in a single statement a reference to some obedience rendered at the very beginning of the Christian life, to which is added some requirement for the present and the future of that happy and growing new life in Christ. Thus we have: “As therefore ye *received* Christ Jesus the Lord, so *walk* in him,” etc. (Col. ii. 6).

“Received” is past, “Walk” is Present.

The great thing for us is to meet each of these requirements with a glad obedience, and at the stage in our progress where it fits us. It is possible to distinguish those conditions which stand at the beginning, and are to be obeyed in order to entrance into union with Christ, from those which apply to those who are already reckoned “alive unto God in Christ Jesus.” “*Received*” and “*walk*” in the above may be said to furnish an example of each. The few conditions which come

under the description of "receiving Christ Jesus as Lord" are Faith, Repentance, Confession, and Baptism, of which we treat in separate chapters; those which apply to the Christian cannot be written of in detail, for they are legion, but they will be seen in general under the head of the New Life in Christ.

II. THE CHARACTER OF THE CONDITIONS.

When we come to consider the conditions required from man, we find nothing of that *arbitrary* character which sometimes marks the conditions imposed by men when they lay down conditions on which they will pardon offenders against them who have come to be at their mercy. A giant's strength is exercised with all a giant's cruelty, and conditions made, obedience to which is not beneficial to either the conquerors or the conquered, but only serves to make a show of the victory of the conquerors and to make painfully apparent the subjection of the conquered.

The conditions which the Gospel requires are only such as belong to the nature of the case and are needful to the salvation of those to whom the Gospel is preached. Thus *faith* is required—"The Gospel" is the power of God unto salvation to every one *that believeth*—because, for one thing, manifestly the change of heart which is the chief part of salvation, cannot be produced by the Gospel unless it is received into the heart, and only by faith can it be so received.

Believing that all the divine conditions are such only as the work of salvation requires, we no more complain of them as arbitrary and tyrannous requirements than we would complain of the conditions that obtain in the natural world, such as that seed, if it is to increase, must be put into the soil; or if the body is to be healthy, we must have good air, food and exercise. These are conditions, but they are necessary, not arbitrary; their being commanded is on God's part an act of the

same gracious character as His gift of His Son for our redemption. So with all the commands of Christ—they are not grievous, but joyous, because they are the will of One supremely loved, and because they lie in the direct and necessary route of our attainment of perfection of character and, consequently, of happiness.

It is held among men in many relationships that implicit obedience is due—due even where the reason for the command is not known. The following is a curious instance by way of example : Count Bismarck, when he was in Russia in the year 1860, was one day walking with the Tzar, when they came to a lawn, in the centre of which was a sentinel. Bismarck permitted himself to ask why the sentinel was there. The Tzar did not know ; nor did the adjutant who was with the Tzar know. They asked the sentinel—he did not know ; all he could say was, "*It stands commanded.*" The adjutant was despatched to the officer—he did not know. He then made inquiries from officers of higher rank, but all in vain. They consulted the books, but all they could find was, "*It is commanded.*" There had always been a sentinel there, but no one knew of any reason why. At last an old footman was found, who remembered that his father, who had also been a footman, told him that one day the Empress Catherine had found on this lawn an early snowdrop, and gave command to place a sentinel to watch that it was not plucked nor crushed. The order was not countermanded, and so for the greater part of a century a sentinel had been kept there for no reason whatever, but because it was so commanded.

Now if such obedience is commendable in some relations of man to man, where it may not unjustly be suspected there is no good reason for the command obeyed, how much more should our obedience be implicit and ready to the commands of the Christ, when in most cases we can see the reason for the condition, a reason that makes the condition essential to our own highest good, and in all cases we may be sure such a reason exists? "If man did but know it," said Carlyle, or

words to this effect, "what he needs is to give implicit obedience for perfect guidance." Not less true, if more homely, was the command of the mother of Jesus to the servants at the wedding, "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it."

Let it be added that every act of obedience we yield, from the initial faith in Christ on through every added grace, as in 2 Peter i., is but "*our reasonable service.*" This is a constant view of the Christian's obedience. That obedience is his response to God's "great love wherewith He loved us." As the Apostle reckons, those who believe the Gospel ought henceforth not to live unto themselves, but unto Him who for our sakes died and rose again.

A pleasing expression of this is naming man's response as

Our "Amen to the Glory of God."

This use is made of *Amen* in 2 Cor. i. 19, 20. There we read: "For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us . . . was not yea and nay, but in him was yea. For how many soever be the promises of God, in him is the YEA. Wherefore also through him is the Amen unto the glory of God through us." Note especially that God's "Yea" (what God did for us through Christ) is the *cause* of the Amen from us. God first loves the sinner and gives His Son, and that Son shows the love of God by His sacrificial death. To this the sinner responds, so that our obedience is itself a product of the grace of God—it is a response, an Amen through Christ unto God.

III. THE HARMONY OF SUCH CONDITIONS WITH THE MASTER-TRUTH THAT SALVATION IS NOT OF WORKS, BUT OF GRACE.

Although it might seem that if salvation is of God's GRACE, conditions to be fallen in with by sinner and saint could not harmoniously be expected, yet the New Testament everywhere calls on both sinner and saint to do something in this transcendent work of grace. This acquiescence and active

co-operation of man is needed, because man, being a free agent, cannot be saved except he is willing.

It must be observed, however, that the conditions required under the Gospel are quite distinct from the works of the law, of which the Apostle teaches us that such works and grace exclude one another. "To him that worketh," he tells us, "the reward is not reckoned as of grace, but as of debt"; and again, "If it is by grace it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace." That is to say, the theory of salvation by keeping the law, was that the doing of the works of the law was the ground on which the man who did the works of the law was *entitled* to life—"shall live thereby." But the conditions of the Gospel, such as faith, repentance, confession, and baptism, are in contrast to the above theory, for these are the conditions by means of which the sinner manifests his acceptance of salvation through seeking union with Christ and His saving work. In one passage the Apostle puts the laver of regeneration in direct contrast with "works done in righteousness which we did ourselves." The passage is one of the brightest gems of the New Testament, and we quote it in full, commending it to the careful attention of the reader. In deep humility Paul writes: "We also were aforetime foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures. But when the kindness of God our Saviour, and His love toward man appeared, not by works done in righteousness which we did ourselves, but according to His mercy, He saved us, through the washing (or laver) of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, which He poured upon us richly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being *justified by His grace*, we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." The same thing holds of those "*good works*" we do as Christians. They are essential to our calling, for a tree made good must bring forth good fruit; but we are distinctly taught we are not saved *by* them, but *for* them. Our doing them at all is a proof that God is working in us to will and to do His good pleasure. "By grace are ye saved though faith, and that [salvation] not of

yourselves : it is the gift of God ; not of works that no man should glory. For we are

His Workmanship Created

in Christ Jesus *unto* good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them."

There is something final about this. Not only are we not saved *by* good works, but we are *created* for them ; and even the opportunities to do good works are all prepared by God.

There are, then, conditions of entering into Christ and pardon in Him ; there are conditions for continuing in and growing up into Him ; and there are conditions of entering into glory : but all of these are only the necessary means or channels by which the unlimited grace of God reaches and pardons, sanctifies and glorifies us. They are means of grace.

" Grace taught our wandering feet
To tread the heavenly road ;
And new supplies each day we meet
While pressing on to God.

" Grace all the work shall crown
Through everlasting days ;
It lays in heaven the topmost stone,
And well deserves the praise."

CHAPTER XI.

FAITH.

IN the preceding chapter we have seen that the Gospel has conditions of salvation, and that these are quite harmonious with the great feature of Christianity—salvation by grace ; that these conditions are not arbitrary, but each is necessary in the nature of salvation. To speak of being saved without complying with these conditions is the same as, in natural life, to speak of living without breathing ; or being healed by a medicine without taking or using that medicine. The great thing, of course, is not our understanding of the need for the conditions, but our complying with them ; yet what we say of the first of these—faith—we have so arranged as at once to show (1) *faith is required*, and (2) *the reason for its being so*.

I. WHEN SALVATION FROM SIN IS IN VIEW, FAITH IS ALWAYS THE CHIEF CONDITION OF SALVATION.

John's Gospel is full of it, from the first chapter, where we read that, "To as many as received Him gave He the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on His name," to the twentieth chapter, where Jesus says, "Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed." The Apostle tells us, also, that His whole narrative was written that its readers might "believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing they might have life in His Name" (John xx. 31).

When Jesus was asked, before His death, "What must we do?" He replied, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent"; and after His death and

resurrection, in the great commission given to the Apostles, He said, "Preach the Gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Here faith is the first requirement.

In the Acts of the Apostles, inspired preachers often name faith as if it were the only condition of salvation. Thus Peter said to Cornelius and his friends, "Through His [Christ's] name every one that believeth on Him shall receive the remission of sins." So, too, Paul at Antioch in Pisidia said, "By Him [Jesus] every one that believeth is justified from all things, from which He could not be justified by the law of Moses."

In the Epistles the same primacy is given to faith. Paul discusses justification in the five chapters (i.-v.) of Romans, and the condition he names is ever *believing*. The Gospel he declares to be "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth . . . for therein a righteousness of God is revealed *by faith* unto faith." So in the great charter of salvation (Rom. iii. 19-31), the condition on man's side is *faith*. Thus we are told that the righteousness of God, that is, *justification*, is *through faith* in Jesus Christ unto all them *that believe*. Christ Jesus is "a propitiation, *through faith*." God is the justifier of him that "*hath faith* in Jesus."

To the same effect is the constant habit of the Apostle of calling the Christians, "the *faithful* in Christ Jesus"—"the *believing*"—"them *that believe*," and the like. Nothing could better show that to him what gave the disciples of Christ character and standing and salvation, and distinguished them from the unsaved, was obedient *faith*.

Let me name finally the Epistle to the Hebrews as throughout insisting on this great condition of believing. The climax is reached in chapter xi. "We are not," says the writer, "of those that shrink back unto perdition, but of them *that believe* to the saving of the soul." And then he proceeds to exemplify from the Old Testament the power of faith. We shall refer to this chapter again, but here conclude this glance at the

emphasis placed on faith as a condition of salvation, by quoting a well-known statement which occurs in this chapter, "Without faith it is *impossible* to be well-pleasing unto God."

Now, why is this prominence given to *faith*? We have seen that the "pre-eminence" is given to Christ; but we see good reason for that. We have seen, too, that the Resurrection has the chief place among proofs of Christ's divinity and authority and the Father's acceptance of His sacrificial death; but here, again, there is nothing arbitrary—the fact in itself deserved to be selected for special prominence. One quite expects, therefore, to find that there is something in the nature of faith itself which fits it also for the important place it occupies; that here, too, we shall find that God is not arbitrary in insisting that we "believe on Him whom He hath sent." Because there was a necessity in the nature of things, faith is required in order to salvation. To show this, consider

II. THE NATURE OF FAITH.

Well, now, what is faith? We need not waste words. Faith in Christ is just the same as faith in anything or any one else. I suppose we all know what it is to have faith in any one. We *trust* him. A father one day was asked by his little girl what faith was. He placed her on the sill of a window, and standing below with his arms open, bade her leap into his arms. She did so at once. She trusted him to catch her in safety. He told her that faith in Christ was just to trust in Christ as she trusted in her father.

We exercise this trust in our fellow men every day. We rush to the railway station, get our ticket, and are presently being whirled through the country at express speed. It seems wonderful that we should have such *confidence*—another word that gives the essence of faith—in railway companies. Yet this great faith is exercised every day.

Faith is trust. But, of course, this faith or trust in a person will be in proportion to what we are assured of about him.

Hence there are certain *statements* about Christ which are to be believed; we are asked to have faith in them. There is one which is prominent as a summary of the truth about Him. John the Apostle said he wrote his book of signs that we might believe that *Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God*. When a statement is in view, faith is *belief*. In English we say that we *trust a person*, but that we *believe in a statement*. So we might say that *faith is trust in a person, or belief in a statement*. But we see that in reality there is no difference. It is trust or confidence in both cases; and when statements are about Christ, telling who He is and what His work is, to say that we believe these statements, is to say that we believe in Him, trust Him. Why do so many people think that faith as a Gospel condition is something different from this everyday faith such as we have in our fellowmen? Partly, at least, because it is seen that faith in Christ saves, and faith in no one else, or nothing else, can save. Yet that very statement shows that we should seek the difference, not in the *nature* of the faith, but in the *object* of faith. It is because faith *in Christ* is faith *IN THE SAVIOUR* that this faith saves.

There is a likeness between faith and sight which helps to illustrate this important truth—that faith in Christ is the same as faith in any one else, but that the difference lies in the person believed in. To-day I meet a lion, escaped from some menagerie; the sight fills me with dread. To-morrow I meet a dear friend not seen for many years; the sight fills me with delight. Why this difference? My eyes are the same; the atmosphere is the same! The different effect in me is due to the different objects seen, not to any difference in the seeing.

Faith, then, is familiar to us in every-day life, is trust in a person, or belief of a statement. We can now proceed to consider:—

III. REASONS FOR GOD REQUIRING FAITH AS THE PRIMARY CONDITION OF SALVATION.

Note first how our refusal to believe in Christ would place

us with relation to God. The Epistle to the Hebrews says that "without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing to God"; the Apostle John shows this specially in relation to Christ. He says of Jesus, "What he hath seen and heard, of that he beareth witness; and no man receiveth his witness. He that hath received his witness hath set his seal to this that God is true." Now, the opposite is, of course, implied—he that does not receive the witness of Christ rejects God's gracious provision for our salvation. He makes God a liar. Suppose you were seriously ill, and some wealthy and good-hearted man sent to you the only specialist who could cure you, and you were to refuse to trust that great physician. The cure is shut from you by your lack of trust, and the good-hearted friend is not well-pleased, but grieved. One sees here the need of faith. It is, remember, the object of faith, Christ and this Revelation of God and His atoning work, which saves, but only by faith can these reach and change the heart.

Again, other conditions can only be acceptable as conditions of salvation, when they are obeyed by *believers*. Their obedience must be, to use Paul's pregnant phrase, "the obedience of faith."

There *are* other conditions, as we shall see in the succeeding chapters on Repentance, Confession and Baptism. Meantime we refer to Mark xvi. 15, 16, where baptism is linked with faith as a condition of salvation; to Acts ii. 37, 38, where *repentance* is prefixed to baptism as a condition of remission of sins; and to Rom. x. 8-10, where confession of Christ as Lord is declared to be "unto salvation." We see, then, that no one can scripturally say that faith is the only condition of salvation.

But faith is the chief condition, because neither repentance nor baptism could be conditions of salvation unless they were the repentance and baptism of *believers*, and are themselves caused by, and are the obedience of, faith. What would repentance and baptism, as conditions of salvation, mean to one who does not accept Christ as Saviour? Why, they

would mean that by rendering obedience in these the sinner was *meriting* salvation. The repentance and baptism would be in the position in which the works of the Law were to the Jews. By such works Paul declared no flesh can be justified. Or again, on this supposition, repentance and baptism would be in the same position as are works of penance in the Roman Catholic system, in contrast to which Luther, *rightly*, for he followed Paul, declared that faith alone "saved." But for the believer all such views of repentance, confession, or baptism, are shut out by his faith in Christ. Christ is the ground of his salvation, and his repentance and baptism are simply results and expressions of his faith in Christ.

This primary character of faith underlies the fact that, though the early converts evidently obeyed the commands requiring repentance and baptism, they are not called "repentants," nor "baptized believers," but simply "*believers*," "*the faithful*," or "*those that believed*." When Paul discusses justification in Rom. i.-v., he never mentions baptism. This was, of course, because baptism from this point of view was understood as having no value except as an act of faith, and is therefore regarded as covered by the one condition—faith.

On the other hand, it was also taken for granted that a believer had been baptized. Thus when Paul at Ephesus found certain disciples, he said unto them, "Did ye receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed?" and receiving the reply, "Nay, we did not so much as hear that the Holy Spirit was given," he did not say, Well, then, you must not have been baptized! What he asked was, "Into what then were ye baptized?" He took it for granted, and in fact was right in doing so, that when they believed they were immediately baptized. The one was involved and implied in the other.

Some readers may have heard the objection to "the Churches of Christ" that they make too much of baptism. One thing about our practice which refutes that charge is this. We never baptize infants, who cannot believe, or knowingly,

unbelievers. We teach that baptism is no condition of salvation except as the act of a man's faith submitting, in complete acknowledgment of his need of a Saviour, to Jesus Christ as the God-provided and only Saviour of sinners. His position, and ours in baptizing him, is the New Testament position. Our faith in Christ involves our unqualified reliance on Christ and His blood for remission of sins, and our repentance, confession and baptism are but the divinely required expressions of that trust or faith in Christ which makes both them and us acceptable to God.

Another reason for the prominence of faith is that without it we cannot realize the blessedness Christ gives. Peter says, "To you that believe is the preciousness." Accordingly the poet rightly says :—

" How sweet the name of Jesus sounds,
 In a *believer's* ear !
 It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,
 And drives away his fear."

As a simple fact the name of Jesus is this to the believer only. But the more we know of Jesus, believing it all true, the more do we realize that it can be said of us *now*, as Peter said of those believers long ago ; when, referring to Jesus Christ, he said, "Whom, having not seen, ye love, on whom, though now ye see him not, *yet believing*, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." Paul also speaks of joy *in believing*. These descriptions are true to experience ; and if there were no other reason why *faith* should be required, this one were enough ; the inestimable treasures of comfort and inspiration which are in Christ are like a landscape to a blind man's eye to the man who does not believe. Thus Tennyson, addressing the "strong Son of God, Immortal Love," says :—

" Whom we, that have not seen Thy face,
 By faith, and faith alone, embrace."

Following this a step farther, we find *faith* thus realizing the treasures in Christ, leads on to *hope*. "Faith leads to

hope and is indispensable to it," is a summary of Heb. xi. This chapter has for its theme the relation of faith to hope. "Faith," it declares, "is the assurance of things hoped for, the proving of things not seen"; that is, the man who trusts God looks hopefully for the fulfilment of His promises.

But the climax still remains, *Love to God* arises through faith. It is when we believe God to be, and to have done, as set forth in Christ, that we "love him who first loved us." An Apostle has put this in a concise form when he speaks of "*Faith working through love*" (Gal. v. 6).

Indeed for the Apostles the *whole life* of the Christian was the outcome of faith; faith begat hope, and love. Sometimes these are placed together, as when we read of "the work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope"; or in the grand summary of the "*love chapter*," 1 Cor. xiii.: "Now abideth faith, hope and love, but the greatest of these is love." *Love* is *greatest*, but faith is *first*; and when it is desired to refer the whole new life to one of these, *faith* is named, because it is from it that our hope and love arise. Exact, therefore, not less than striking, is Paul's account of his Christian life: "That life which I now live in the flesh, I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me."

This is as much as to say, "My *faith* inspires my *love* because I believe in Christ's love." There is no contradiction between saying that, of faith, hope, love, LOVE is *greatest* and that faith is all-important. Love is of God, for God is love. The great importance of faith, indeed, is partly due to the fact that it is a cause of love. For if we did not believe, the pure flame of God's love would not enter our hearts and kindle there a responsive flame. As we have seen, faith is so emphatically insisted upon because it is out of faith that obedience and hope and love arise.

It is much the same thing if, finally, we note that John and James both regard faith as all-important because of the operations it incites. Says John, "This is the victory that hath

overcome the world, even our faith," and James will not allow the reality of an alleged faith that does nothing. "Show me," exclaims he, "thy faith apart from thy works, and I by my works will show thee my faith." Faith, apart from works operated by it, is no more faith, than a corpse, apart from the spirit that animates it, is a living man. So writes James (James ii. 26). How beautifully harmonious is the plan of salvation! How sweetly reasonable are all God's requirements! Considering that salvation implies that man must freely come into loving harmony with God, and that such harmony could not be unless man's mind and heart could be *persuaded* and changed, there was no other way but that God first speak and act so as to reveal His great love, and then also provide the evidence which would carry conviction of this revelation home to the human mind and heart. To these requirements God graciously adapts His means. First the revelation is made in *Christ, God's beloved Son*, who by His divine nature, character, and self-sacrifice even unto death, makes known the Father; then, that faith in this revelation of God in Christ might be ensured, God raised Him from the dead, and an overwhelming body of evidence was made available that this demonstrating and confirming miracle had actually taken place. Paul, literally rendered, states that in raising Christ from the dead, God gives faith itself. "He hath given faith unto all men, in that he hath raised Him from the dead," Acts xvii. 31. That can only mean that God, by giving the *evidence*, has made it possible for any one, for all men, to have faith. May we all be wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

CHAPTER XII.

REPENTANCE.

WE deem it well to define here what is intended by “conditions of salvation,” as we are now considering them. Faith, described in the preceding chapter, is, of course, required all through the Christian life ; and repentance, our present theme, is, unhappily, also required, from time to time, during that life. But we are now treating of faith and repentance as required at the very start, at the time when a hearer yields to the preaching of the Gospel.

To make this quite clear we quote a few passages. The risen Christ gave His Apostles this commission : “ Preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved ; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned.” This is evidently a present salvation entered into when Christ is accepted as Lord ; and faith, or believing, it will be seen, is required as a condition of entering into that present salvation.

In the same way, repentance is named as a condition of enjoying the present blessing in Christ through the Gospel. In the commission, as given by Luke, the Lord Jesus said : “ Thus it is written that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day ; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.” When this beginning was made, not many days later, as recorded in Acts ii. the multitude, hearing and believing the Gospel, cried out, “ What shall we do ? ” The Apostle’s answer is recorded as follows : “ Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins ; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” Repentance, also, then,

is one of the conditions required in those wishing to possess this present salvation of which a chief element is the remission of past sins.

This initial faith is not different from the faith required all through the Christian life ; nor this initial repentance from the repentance required sometimes. Hence what we have already said regarding faith, and what we purpose now to say regarding repentance, is true of faith and repentance in all circumstances ; but we wish to have it kept in mind that we are dealing with them here because they are conditions without which we cannot even enter the New Covenant sealed with the precious blood of Christ.

I. WHAT IS REPENTANCE ?

Although the words *repent* and *repentance* are frequently used in the New Testament, there is no passage which defines what exactly these words cover. Assuming that the word *repentance*, used in the Common Version and continued in the Revised, is the same in meaning as the Greek word *metanoia* it is used to translate, we turn to our English, the Standard, Dictionary, and find *repentance* is "A turning with sorrow from a past course ; sorrow for something done or left undone, with desire to make things right by undoing the wrong, or doing the right ; sometimes, loosely, regret or contrition." This last clause, "sometimes, loosely, regret or contrition," leads us to remark that in a loose way *repentance* is used also sometimes as if it meant a reformed life. On account of this *looseness*, it may be well for us to show that although the New Testament gives no definition, the actual usage of the word enables us to see that *repentance* in itself includes no more than "A change of mind or purpose," though it may be said to *imply* reflection upon and sorrow for the past, and a changed life as *a consequence*.

To see that sorrow or regret is not *repentance*, we have but to read carefully a portion of 2 Cor. vii. Verse 8 reads,

“For though I made you sorry with my epistle, I do not regret it, though I did regret”—we pause here to ask the reader to note in passing that, though the common version has “*repent*” here, the revisers have changed to “*regret*.” Why? Because another word occurs here in the Greek which does not mean *repent*. But if Paul had meant by the word translated repent, simply sorrow, contrition or regret, he would have used the word rendered repent here. That, then, is a first proof that the word rendered “*repent*” does not simply mean *regret* or “*to be sorry*.” Verse 8 concludes thus: “For, I see that that epistle made you sorry, though but for a season.” We see then, Paul sent an epistle to Corinth; after it was gone, he regretted sending it; but later his regret vanished, when he heard that the epistle was properly received and made the Corinthians sorry for their past conduct. But he was pleased with the sorrow not for its own sake, but because it led to *repentance*. That is what Paul goes on to say: “Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye were made sorry *unto* repentance. . . . For godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation, a repentance which bringeth no regret: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.” We conclude then that sorrow and repentance are distinct; not every kind of sorrow, but *godly sorrow* works, produces, is a cause of, *repentance*. If we read on we should find that this repentance was a change of mind, a *determination* to act differently, but we leave that to appear from other places.

Just as we distinguish repentance from its *cause*, godly sorrow, so we must distinguish it also from its *consequence*—a reformed life. Thus the Baptist said to the Pharisees and Sadducees, “Bring forth therefore fruit worthy of repentance.” This and the Corinthian passage suggest comparison to a tree, godly sorrow is the root of repentance; the tree itself, repentance; the fruit, the consequence of repentance. The same distinction is found in Acts xxvi. 20; Paul declared . . . to the Gentiles “that they should repent and turn to God, doing works worthy of repentance.”

It is plain, then, that repentance is neither godly sorrow nor a virtuous life, but lies between the two, the result of godly sorrow, the cause of good works. What else can it be but change of purpose, determination to "cease to do evil and learn to do well"? The same distinction of repentance from its consequent better life, is seen in that it is recorded as rendered in not more but less time than a single day. We have already quoted Peter's instructions to the people who cried out, What shall we do? They were urged to "*repent and be baptized.*" We are told, in effect, that three thousand were baptized that day. If repentance included the works or fruit meet for repentance, then the baptism was attended to before the repentance was rendered; but if repentance was simply a change of purpose the time required was but a moment, and doubtless all those baptized had determined to live a new life for God.

It is pleasing to observe that the conclusion now arrived at, that repentance in the New Testament is a change of mind, a determination, is in exact harmony with the definition of the Greek word given by Liddell and Scott: *μετάνοια, after-thought: change of mind on reflection, repentance.*

Just one word more. Though repentance is a change of *mind*, and such a change is possible in reference to matters of mere opinion, repentance is so used, in the New Testament, as to warrant us thinking of it only as referring to *moral* subjects—the conduct, things we call right or wrong. Jesus said He did not come to call the righteous but *sinners* to repentance, He even said that the righteous need no repentance. When the subject reflected on and repented of is named, it is always something in thought or deed which was sinful, "Repent of this thy wickedness," "repented not of the uncleanness," are examples. Hence repentance, a determination to give up sin, is followed by *remission of sins*. In this connection one recalls that repentance is "towards *God*," while faith is "towards the *Lord Jesus Christ*." We think the following from Isaac Errett, a teacher much appreciated, who lived and wrote in America,

is very happy and clear, and we conclude what we have to say as to what repentance is by quoting it: "The Greek word translated 'repentance' indicates *change*—conversion. It imports *change of mind* or disposition, and that, too, for the better. We have, indeed, more than one Greek word translated by this term 'repentance.' One of them indicates a change whether for better or worse. But that word expressing the will of God concerning us, uniformly in the New Testament, denotes a change for the better. We are sometimes asked, What is the difference between faith and repentance, since they are both expressive of change? We reply that the idea of change is not contained in the word *faith*, although it usually implies a change; it is rather expressive of rest, of trust, of simple confidence. But the word 'repentance' is expressive of change. Faith respects that which is *true*; repentance that which is *right*. Faith looks away from falsehood and error to the truth; repentance looks away from sin to righteousness and holiness. It is repentance from dead works to serve the living God (Heb. vi. 1)."

II. HOW IS REPENTANCE PRODUCED?

There is a great degree of consideration and reasonableness in the way these "*conditions*" are regarded in the New Testament. Evidence or testimony is necessary to faith; hence men are not expected to believe until the testimony is given. Reasons, or motives, are necessary to repentance or change of will; hence men are not expected to repent without these, and are regarded as deserving blame for being unrepentant in proportion as the reasons given to lead them to repentance are strong.

Beings morally healthy would, we suppose, if they were sinning in ignorance, repent at once if shown that they *were* doing wrong. That would be reason enough for such beings; and, of course, in the case of morally biased, unhealthy souls, to be convinced that they have sinned is necessary. But in

the case of fallen beings, such as we are, it is a matter of daily experience that they sin and go on sinning though well aware that they are doing wrong. The law showed men that they were sinners ; and all moral truth, such as Gentiles who did not possess the written law of God nevertheless possessed, did convince of sin. But such conviction did not usually lead to repentance.

We know, indeed, that both before Christ came, and since, some have been moved to sorrow and regret. Yet there was a strange weakness which kept them from repentance, to a change of will leading to a reformed life. We may feel our conduct degrading ; we may perceive it working us moral ruin and fear its unhappy results ; and still not be moved to repentance. Perhaps all such sorrow for sin, due to reasons founded on our relation to the world, to our fellow-men especially without thought of God, is what the Apostle means by the sorrow of the world which works death. Such regret was that of Judas who, nevertheless, instead of repenting, went and hanged himself.

We do not for a moment desire to suggest that such unrepentance was excusable in God's sight. Still the God who knew how weak sin had made man, graciously supplied reasons stronger than a simple knowledge of what was right and what was wrong had proved to be ; and it is when to these stronger reasons men refuse to open their hearts and change their wills that impenitence is regarded as doubly blameworthy. These stronger reasons being supplied by God and often arising out of His gracious efforts on the sinner's behalf, produce the sorrow in which the heart melts, the will is changed and the sinner turns in obedience to God. On this account this sorrow might well be called *godly* sorrow. The reason of its being called godly is that the subject of these influences is consciously brought to *think of God*, for the Greek word rendered godly means reverent. The prodigal put his sin against God first : " I have sinned against Heaven and in thy sight," he said to his father. Reflection which thinks of

the world only produces the sorrow of the world only ; and does not work repentance, but death. It is sorrow which feels ashamed before God's *goodness* which produces repentance.

To the point here is Rom. ii. 4 : " Or despisest thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and long-suffering, not knowing that *the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance*, but after thy hardness and impenitent [unrepentant] heart treasurest up for thyself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God ? " So, too, the Apostle Peter : " The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness ; but is longsuffering to youward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." This repentance being necessary to salvation accounts for the statement in verse 15, " Account that the long-suffering of God is salvation."

In general it is enough to say that it is the revelation of God in Christ which is regarded as affording the supreme reasons for repentance. " Repent ye," cried John, Jesus, the Twelve, and the Seventy, " for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand." It was to be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah than for those cities where Jesus appeared and did His gracious and great works, demonstrating the presence of God. Timothy is only bid to follow the divine example when, in dealing with certain opponents, he is urged to be gentle, forbearing, correcting in meekness, if, by such means, " peradventure God may give them repentance unto the knowledge of the truth." And so the full revelation in Christ of God's love and wish to save men being given, we see that God looks for repentance as He did not do previously : " The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked ; but now He commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent " (Acts xvii. 30).

One need hardly say that while the death of Christ was absolutely necessary to enable God to be just and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus, it is the proof of God's love for man which the death of the Son of God affords that melts the heart ; for it is seen that, this sacrifice being necessary,

God freely gave even His own Son, and that Son as freely "gave Himself for our sins." Hence Paul, aware that neither law nor philosophy could change the heart, determined not to know, even in philosophic Corinth, anything among them "save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."

We close under this head—How repentance is produced—by a portion of a parable written years ago by Mark Guy Pearse : "Once I went forth to look for *Repentance*. I sought her day and night in the city of Mansoul. I asked many if they knew where she dwelt, and they said they had never seen her. I met one, grave and scholarly, who told me what she was like, and bade me seek her earnestly ; but he did not tell me where she was to be found. Then, all sad at heart, and wearied with my search, I went forth without the city walls, and climbed a lonely hill, and up a steep and rugged way, until I came in sight of the Cross, and of Him who hung thereon. And, lo, as I looked upon Him, there came one and touched me. Then instantly my heart was melted, and all the great deeps of my soul were broken up.

" ' Ah, Repentance ! I have been looking everywhere for you,' I said.

" ' Thou wilt always find me here,' said Repentance, ' here, in sight of my crucified Lord. I tarry ever at His feet.' "

III. WHY IS REPENTANCE NECESSARY ?

That repentance is necessary is clearly set forth in some passages, and as clearly implied in others. In the Commission, in Luke xxiv., our Lord says repentance and remission of sins are to be preached among all nations. *Repentance* being a condition to be supplied by the sinner, and *remission* a bestowment of blessing, one naturally understands that the meaning is : Repentance is to be preached in His name, as a *condition* of remission of sins. Indeed, the margin tells us that some Greek MSS. read "repentance unto remission." That is exactly what the Apostle Peter

announced at Pentecost, "Repent ye and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins." This sets before us repentance as unto, that is, leading *into* the enjoyment of, the remission of sins. Then when it is said that God wisheth not any to *perish*, but that all should come to repentance, it is clearly implied that repentance is necessary to being saved, that is, to escape from *perishing*.

If we now ask, "*Why?*" it must be understood that the necessity may be there, *is* there as revealed, even though we cannot see the reason. Every one knows that we must breathe to live, but not every one could explain why.

It may seem to some that if Christ's work is all-sufficient for man's salvation, that He tasted death for every man, it follows all must be saved unconditionally. That is clearly not so, for these *conditions* ARE required. We must adjust our thoughts to the facts, not the facts to our thoughts. Endeavouring to do this, we are led to remember that neither faith nor repentance is of any avail apart from the saving work of Christ. Hence repentance as a condition of forgiveness in the name of Jesus is a gift of God (Acts v. 31, xi. 18). Just as the propitiation was necessary before God could Himself be righteous, and the One making righteous those who believe in Jesus; so repentance, however deep and real, could not have been a ground on which God could pardon and receive the sinner, *apart from the work of Christ*. That is where the primary and absolute importance of the Incarnation and the Atonement stand out like a great mountain on a plain, alone and impressive.

It is no contradiction of the above to add that, in the very nature of the Holy God and the fact of sin, though Christ's divine Nature and work made it possible for God to forgive every one who in faith and repentance comes to Christ for forgiveness, there is nothing in that precious Name or work to make it possible or desirable, not to say compulsory, for God to pardon the disbelieving and unrepentant. That would be to put a premium on sin, not to save from it!

What is salvation? Is it not that a man once at enmity with God, unhealthy in his moral nature as a consequence of his alienation from the life of God, comes to be at peace with God and lovingly obedient to Him? That being so, why need we ask further, why a sinner must repent, that is, determine to abandon sin, and live as God desires him? If salvation is union and harmony with God, a change of will is inevitably necessary! He who has his face to the North, and is minded to go, and is actually going, in that direction, must *turn* before he can have his face to the South and go in that direction; and before he *turns* he must *determine* to do so. Hence the Scriptures require only what is inevitably necessary when it says to one who believes in Christ, "REPENT AND TURN."

CHAPTER XIII.

CONFESSION.

IN the preceding two chapters we have seen that faith and repentance are conditions of the enjoyment of a present salvation, a salvation embracing a change of heart, the forgiveness or remission of past sins, and restoration to fellowship with God.

We find closely connected with faith in Christ and repentance towards God, and before baptism into Christ, "Confession with the mouth." "With the mouth confession is made unto salvation," writes the Apostle Paul in Romans x.

The idea of confession is not unfamiliar as a feature of modern religious parties. There is the auricular confession of sins to a priest in the Church of Rome ; there is the confession of sins made in the way of giving an experience in public, of which General Booth said, "That confession we have long imposed on all our converts, and it is the only confession which seems to us to be a condition unto salvation"; there is also the reciting of Creeds, such as the Athanasian, in the Church of England, which ends : "This is the Catholic Faith, which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved."

In these chapters we are concerned with the New Testament order of things, and we desire to lay before our readers what the confession with the mouth unto salvation *was*, and *when* it was made, in apostolic days ; but we may remark here that in the New Testament Church the priest was not known, and Christians were enjoined to confess their faults "*one to another*," not to a priest ; the practice of public confession or relating of experience in public was as unknown as the Salvation Army ; and so was the reciting periodically of any Creed such as the

Athanasian. Nor, of course, could belief of the Athanasian Creed be required for salvation, seeing that that Creed itself was not yet written.

I. THE CONFESSION UNIVERSALLY MADE AFTER BELIEVING IN CHRIST WAS, AS MIGHT BE EXPECTED, A CONFESSION OF CHRIST AND WHAT WAS BELIEVED ABOUT HIM.

To assure ourselves of this we will examine the places in the New Testament where this "Confession with the mouth" is named. Let us begin by looking at the context in which Paul's words, *confession unto salvation*, are found. Reading Romans x. we find the writer contrasting the simplicity of salvation through Christ with the rigorous requirement of the Law. In verse 5 he says, "For Moses writeth that the man that doeth the righteousness which is of the law shall live hereby." This hard commandment was impossible of fulfilment by fallen man. Paul goes on to show that Christianity asks something which man can easily do. "The righteousness which is of faith saith thus. Say not in thy heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down), or, Who shall descend into the abyss? (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead)." Superhuman conditions like these, impossible of fulfilment, are not attached to salvation by the Gospel. What, then, is required? Paul continues: "The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith which we preach; because if thou shalt confess with thy mouth JESUS as LORD, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved, for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Surely this is easy and simple enough—to believe with the heart and confess with the mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord. The confession unto salvation, then, is neither more nor less than a confession of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself—to confess about Him that we believe Him to be Lord. We confess JESUS as LORD.

Let us notice the other places where there is proof that it was customary for those who accepted Christ to confess Him as they did so. Among these a first place should be assigned to the two occurrences of "the good confession" in 1 Tim. vi. 12-13. The whole section is very solemn and impressive and should be read, but we need quote these two verses only: "Fight the good fight of the faith, lay hold on the life eternal, whereunto thou wast called and didst confess the good confession in the sight of many witnesses. I charge thee in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and of Christ Jesus who before Pontius Pilate witnessed the good confession."

Paul is here speaking to his son in the faith, Timothy. Note that he is recalling some one past incident in Timothy's life—a great occasion when Timothy was called to eternal life, and when he made *the good confession*. Mark the definite article—"the good confession." He evidently has in mind some well-known confession; a confession that was usually made at the beginning of the Christian life, in Timothy's case distinguished by the fact that it was made "in the sight of many witnesses." Now with Rom. x. in mind, the question at once occurs whether this is a reference to the "confession unto salvation," which we saw to be a confession with the mouth that *Jesus was Lord*. The next verse decides that question in the affirmative. It enables us to fix on the contents of the good confession that Timothy had made. It tells us that Jesus Christ Himself made the same confession, "the good confession," before Pontius Pilate.

This reference to Jesus Christ before Pontius Pilate helps us greatly. It takes us to our Lord's trial before Pilate. The facts of His trials, first by the Jewish authorities, and then by Pilate, make it plain that the whole matter was determined by the circumstance that Jesus confessed that He was the Christ, the Son of God; the Messiah, the looked-for King. To see the full force of the evidence, one must notice that in the trial before the Jews the case seemed likely to break down. As the witnesses spoke Jesus held His peace, and the witnesses

contradicting each other, the Council could not convict Him. "Then the high priest said unto Him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, *Thou hast said.*" That claim or confession thus solemnly made was the decisive evidence. He was judged to be blaspheming, and sentenced to death.

If now they lead Jesus to the governor, Pilate, it is only because the Jews had not the power to execute the sentence. It is true that to Pilate they accuse Him as claiming to be King of the Jews, putting His claim in this form as giving ground for them to charge Him with being a rival to Pilate's master, Cæsar. The same feature is noticeable in this second trial—that to minor charges Jesus made no answer, "held His peace," until Pilate marvelled. But to the question, "Art thou the King of the Jews?" which Jesus knew really embraced the question of His Messiahship and of His being the Son of God, "Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest." That Pilate, too, understood that the question really covered whether Jesus was the Christ, is clear from his subsequent questions to the Jewish authorities, "Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?" And, later, "What then shall I do unto Jesus, which is called Christ?" It is therefore clear that to all the parties, Jesus, the Jews and Pilate, the confession made before Pontius Pilate was the same in substance as that before the Sanhedrin, He claimed to be the Christ, the Son of the living God. This, then, was "the good confession" made by Jesus Himself, and which it is said Timothy made in the sight of many witnesses. It was a confession that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah the Jews had been led by their Scriptures to expect.

There are a number of other places which speak of the Confession, the substance of which was Jesus and what was believed about Him, but instead of introducing them here, I will ask the reader to note them as introduced under the following sections.

II. THE CONFESSION UNTO SALVATION WAS NOT COINED ALWAYS IN THE SAME WORDS.

This variety in the language is no doubt a safeguard against the tendency there is, when the same formula is always used for the same truth, for the language so to speak, to petrify—to cease to have a living meaning in the mind and heart. Hence we have the confession of the fundamental truth of Christianity expressed, sometimes briefly, sometimes more at length; at one time using as the predicating term *Christ*; at another, *the Son of God*; at another, *Lord*; at another, *King*; and sometimes combining two of these.

A few examples may be quoted here. We have already indicated that our Lord's claim before Pilate to be "the King of the Jews," was the same in substance as His previous confession before the Jewish Sanhedrin that He claimed to be "the Christ, the Son of the Living God."

A word more should be said here on the identity in meaning of the descriptions, King of the Jews, the Christ, and the Son of God. "King," in this connection is, of course, *the* one anointed of God to be King, in other words, it is the kingship of the Messiah—to say that Jesus is the King of the Jews is to say that He is the *Christ*. But, further, to say that Jesus is *the Christ* is to say that He is *the Son of God*, and *Lord* also. Our Lord's use of the 110th Psalm is sufficient to show that this was His view. The question between Him and the Pharisees was just this, does the term, *the Christ*, include being *the Son of God*? In order to show that it does, He asked them, "What think ye of 'the Christ,' whose son is He?" They answered, "The Son of David." Jesus in effect, replies, "That is true, but not all the truth. For David called the Messiah LORD, evidently regarding Him as of a higher nature than himself." Now when we note that in John's Gospel the main reason the Jews had for refusing to accept Jesus as the Christ was that He claimed to be the Son of God, Jesus can be understood, in

Matt. xxii., in no other sense than as meaning, "If you understood the description of *the Christ* given in your Scriptures, you would see that He is to be *the Son of God* as well as the Son of David."

Hence the identity of meaning of these terms. *King of the Jews* includes *the Christ*; *the Christ* includes the *Son of the Living God* and also *Lordship*.

Hence the whole truth is told, inherently, by any one of these alone—as by "*the Son of God*" in 1 John iv. 15: "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God," etc.; by "*the Christ*" in 1 John v. 1: "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God"; by "*Lord*," as in Rom. x. 9: "Because if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

It will be seen that, according to the foregoing, in the formula for *the Confession* most used in the Gospels, namely, "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God," the last few words, "the Son of the Living God," is a kind of defining phrase added to show that the confessor uses "*Christ*" in our Lord's own sense, as including divine Sonship as well as human. It confirms this when we observe that it is in the Gospels only this combining of *the Christ* and *the Son of God* takes place; for there it is that there is need to distinguish the true meaning of *the Christ* as including *divine Sonship* from the Jewish erroneous meaning of Davidic sonship merely.

It is interesting to note that when Paul preached to *Jews*, he proved to them from the Scriptures that Jesus is the *Son of God*, the *Christ* (Acts ix. 20, 21); while among Gentiles, he seems to have found the word *Lord* the best, as presenting all that Jesus the Christ claimeth to be, a divine Saviour, with sovereign power. We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus *as Lord* (2 Cor. iv. 5).

III. WHEN IS THIS CONFESSION MADE?

There can be no doubt that believers in Christ are called

upon to confess their faith whenever their doing so will honour Christ, or their not doing so will amount to a denial of Him. This may happen any day. To such confession, confession in some cases where "the wicked count it shame," Jesus appears to refer in the striking words, "Every one therefore who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before My Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven" (Matt. x. 32, 33).

But the "Confession unto salvation" of Romans x. cannot be confession in this general lifelong sense. Salvation there is evidently justification, which is enjoyed by every one who is "in Christ." We note that belief with the heart is coupled with confession with the mouth very conspicuously in the passage itself. Hence it is a probable inference from this place alone that when men believed in their hearts that *Jesus was Lord*, at the production of which belief we have seen Paul's preaching aimed, that before baptism into Him, into His sacrificial death, and so into the remission of sins, they confessed with the mouth in words their faith in Christ. Indeed such a confession must have been made; for faith was a pre-requisite to baptism (Mark xvi. 16) and the candidate could only make his faith known by "confession with the mouth."

It is true that in the Acts it is rather the fact of believing than of confessing the faith that is recorded. But, of course, wherever it is said that men believed and were baptized they must have made known their faith to the baptizers.

The only passage where it is recorded that the convert previous to baptism, and with a view thereto, confessed, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God," is the case of the Eunuch in Acts viii. 26-40. If we accept the common text here, then we have one clear case of the confession with the mouth unto salvation. If even we regard verse 37 as an interpolation, as suggested by its being found only on the margin of the Revised Version and the reason there given, yet the case is not materially altered. Indeed, an important

addition is made. If the verse was added by a later hand than Luke's, it must have been very early, for it is found in some "ancient authorities." Suppose, then, some one at the close of the first or in the second century put in that verse. He saw, of course, that the narrative was incomplete, as we all see. If the eunuch asked, What doth hinder me to be baptized? Philip must have said something in reply. Wishing, then, to fill in the vacuum, the interpolater must have done it from what was usual at the time when he made his addition. So that the verse testifies that at the early date at which it was written it was usual to require a confession from the candidate of the faith, that "Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

We conclude that both the nature of the case and the Scriptures we have quoted indicate not uncertainly that the confession was made "with the mouth" before baptism into the name of Christ. The Epistles contain incidental references to *confession* as having, in a constitutional way, been made by every Christian; it must, therefore, be placed at the beginning of their union with Christ, otherwise there would have been some in every Church who had not thus made confession. Chief among these passages we place that from 1 Timothy already fully dealt with. When Paul says that Timothy witnessed "THE good confession," and in the same breath refers to Christ also witnessing "THE good confession," he not only indicates, as we have seen, that the confession was that Jesus was the Christ, but also, by the use of the definite article, that this confession was a well-known institutional confession.

Finally, we may mention the three occurrences of "confession" in the Hebrews. Christ Jesus is called "the Apostle and high priest of our confession" (iii. 1); that Christians have such a high priest, "*Jesus, the Son of God,*" is called their confession (iv. 14; see also x. 10-23). The confession being an acceptance of Jesus as the sent of God, the great high priest, the Son of God, that confession implied the duty of faithful adherence to Him; hence, "*hold fast the confession of our hope*" (x. 23), would remind them of that all-important crisis when

they confessed faith in Christ, and put Him on in baptism (Galatians iii.) ; and would also remind them of the consequent life-long duty of obedience to Him whom they confessed as Lord.

The thought may arise that it seems remarkable that the sinner confessed the divinity of the Saviour, but not his need of such a Saviour. But surely that need was implied sufficiently in the very fact of having believed that "Jesus died for our sins," and in the repentance, and in the desire to be buried with Christ in baptism to rise to walk with Him in newness of life. Further, experience shows that it is not morbidly looking within at our sins, but looking at the Son of God on the cross, which at once most deeply brings home the heinousness of our sins, and the debt of gratitude we owe to our Redeemer. No better proof, therefore, can be offered, that a sinner knows the greatness of his need, than a truly heart-felt, intelligent confession that the Saviour who gave Himself for him is

"The Christ, the Son of the living God."

The intelligent reader will have remembered the all-important place Jesus Christ occupied as set forth in previous chapters, the centre of the whole Bible, the object of the Faith that saves, and the foundation of the Church.

With this agrees all that the Scriptures have shown as regarding "confession unto salvation." Jesus was the only Creed. Dr. Denney, in his masterly study of New Testament Christianity, "Jesus and the Gospels," well shows that there was but one article in the Creed of the early Christians, namely, that Jesus was the Son of God. He says significantly : "What for theology or metaphysics is involved in this is a proper subject for theological or metaphysical study ; but it ought not to have a place, and if Christians are ever to unite it will not have a place, in the confession of faith in which they declare the attitude of their souls to Him."

As we have seen, this was the very thing that obtained in

the New Testament order. The penitent believer confessed the faith in Christ, which was the one thing insisted upon, and without which he could find no place in a Church built upon the good (and great) confession, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Indeed, if what is believed in order to salvation is concerning Jesus Christ the Lord, it would have been inconsistent and inharmonious if the "confession unto salvation" was not also concerning this same central and all-important Person.

CHAPTER XIV.

BAPTISM—ACTION, SUBJECT, AND DESIGN.

WE speak of the ordinance of Baptism in this chapter from the point of view of its being a condition of salvation—the present salvation, as explained in the foregoing chapters, in which a chief element is the remission of past sins.

After Jesus Christ arose from the dead, and during forty days before He ascended to the right hand of the Father, He appeared to His disciples and gave them His commandments for the great work now to be carried on in His Name. These instructions were given at various appearances, and we have them reported to us at the close of each Gospel. Jesus appears to have repeated the instructions not always in the same words, and we require to compare the Great Commission in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, so as to have the full account. It is found the evangelists do not contradict, but complement and throw light upon, each other. In Matthew the Apostles are instructed to “make disciples” and to baptize these disciples into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, which is expressed in Mark thus: “Preach the Gospel to every creature, he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned.” Thus baptism as a condition of salvation, or as Matthew, to the same effect, reports, baptism *into* the Divine Name, comes before us in the Great Commission itself.

The ordinance has given rise to much controversy, owing to the fact that in Christendom there has come to be much diversity of thought and practice in relation to this ordinance. *Baptists* get their name from the fact that they hold that the

word means to immerse ; and many others not called Baptists yet practise immersion. But most of the great religious communities sprinkle water on the candidate and call it baptism. There are differences also regarding the proper subject of baptism, and also regarding its purpose.

One good result of all this discussion is that a unanimity prevails as to what are the points which need discussion.

Some few have thought that the baptism referred to in some places, such as Romans vi., where Christians are said to have been "buried with Christ by baptism," is baptism in the Holy Spirit and not baptism in water at all. This conclusion seems plainly wrong. Water is distinctly mentioned in Acts viii., where the eunuch is recorded as being baptized in water, and in Acts x., where Peter, sanctioning the reception of the first Gentiles, asks, "Can any man forbid the water that these should not be baptized?" Paul in Ephesians iv. says there is *one baptism* ; we therefore conclude that this "one baptism" is that baptism in water which we see practised in the Acts of Apostles. Moreover, Jesus commanded the Apostles to baptize the believers or converts. This, as baptism *in water*, they were familiar with through John's baptism and their own practice under Christ's direction (John iv. 1, 2) ; they would understand Jesus, therefore, to refer to baptism in water ; and they *could* baptize the converts in water, while only Jesus Himself could baptize them in the Holy Spirit. Therefore, it is generally agreed that this one baptism is in or with water ; it is further agreed that three points need to be decided : (1) The Action of Baptism ; (2) The Subject of Baptism ; and (3) The Design of Baptism.

I. THE ACTION OF BAPTISM.

Jesus, as we have read, commanded His Apostles to make disciples and to *baptize* them. By the *action* of baptism we simply mean, the act which was to be done to these disciples. The usual thing, when we do not know the meaning of an

English word is to turn it up in an English dictionary. The "Standard" defines as follows: "*Baptism*: The act of baptizing; a sacrament, ordinance or rite commanded by Christ (Matthew xxviii. 19), in which water is made use of, to initiate the recipient into the Christian Church, or to symbolize purification or spiritual burial and resurrection with Christ, or to signify or seal union with Christ as Saviour and Lord, or to acknowledge consecration to Christ." This is followed by a note to intimate that there is disagreement about the act as to whether it means immersion, effusion (pouring), or sprinkling. This is really all that could be done; for as different people use it to denote different acts, what could an English dictionary do, but reflect this want of agreement?

Now at this point we do well to remember that the thing that is really important is the meaning of the *Greek* word Jesus employed. If we can ascertain that, then we know what act our Lord commanded. The two principal Greek words involved are the noun, *baptisma*, and the verb, *baptize*. If the reader has the means of doing so, he should turn these up in a Greek Lexicon and he will find that *immersion* is the act meant, the verb meaning, *to dip*.

With this meaning, *dipping or immersion*, all the *circumstances* mentioned in connection with the ordinance in the New Testament agree. We may dwell on this a little, as some who do not feel confident enough to go to Greek Lexicons may easily satisfy themselves that baptism was immersion by looking at the Scriptures where baptism is mentioned.

Take first Rom. vi. 3: "We were *buried* therefore with Him through baptism unto death; that like as Christ was *raised* from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life." Here, then, baptism is spoken of as suggesting a *burial* and *resurrection*. No doubt there is more meant here than what outwardly meets the eye. Whether we think of baptism as sprinkling or immersion, we are all agreed in thinking there is an unseen reality. But the

Apostle saw in what took place outwardly, a picture of the unseen change. It was as if the baptized was dead and in baptism was being buried with Jesus and was then raised out of the grave with a new life. Now, in sprinkling, does anything meet the eye which suggests this burial of the old man and resurrection to a new life? The answer must be, No! On the other hand, when a person is *immersed* one sees the body disappear in the water and then reappear—the scene is suggestive in the highest degree of burial and resurrection.

The reader will do well to look through all the places where baptisms are recorded, and he will find many circumstances which fit in with immersion but not with sprinkling. Thus, in Matthew iii., we are told of John baptizing in the river *Jordan*—the people resorting to him there from all parts. In John iii. 23, we are even told that the reason why the Baptist baptized in Ænon near to Salim was that “there was much water there.” Now, in our day those who practise immersion find it necessary to have a large baptistry or go to a river or stream; but to sprinkle, so doing is not necessary and so is never done. This fact intimates that John immersed.

Again, we are told that Jesus when He was baptized came up out of the water; and, in Acts viii., that the eunuch went down *into* and came up *out of* the water. Now it is most improbable that people went into the water to sprinkle; but to immerse this going *into* and subsequent coming *out of* the water would be necessary. We once read a quaint incident which occurred at a Union meeting in America, where many were yielding to Christ. Among them an elderly negress desired to be baptized. The preacher asked in what manner, for it being a united mission, the converts were either sprinkled or immersed as they desired. To several inquiries the candidate avoided choosing, but always said, “I want to be baptized as Jesus was.” At last one of the preachers, somewhat testily and in true American style said, “I guess we’ll need to go to the river.” No doubt, if the baptism Christ

submitted to was immersion, the baptism He commanded was immersion.

In Mark x. 38, 39, our Lord refers to His sufferings under the figure of a baptism. He describes those sufferings in the words, "The baptism that I am baptized with." No one can think that if baptism was *sprinkling*, our Lord would have likened His approaching sufferings to it. But if baptism was immersion how apposite it was to speak of his sufferings as a baptism! To do so was sure to give a vivid idea of the greatness and, as it were, the overwhelming force of the sufferings of Gethsemane and Calvary. Our conclusion, therefore, is that the New Testament is everywhere strikingly in harmony with the idea of immersion as the action of Baptism.

II. THE SUBJECT OF BAPTISM.

This relates to the person qualified to be baptized. Is it scriptural to baptize an infant; or must the subject be one who has heard and believed the Gospel? Many baptize infants who cannot hear the Gospel, and who have no wish, will, intention or hope in connection with it; others baptize only those who have heard and believed the Gospel, and who come to baptism desiring to yield to Christ as Lord, and are conscious of aspirations and intentions to live a new life. What saith the Scriptures on this point?

The reader cannot do better than examine such a Scripture as Romans vi. Here you have an Apostle writing to Christians referring to their baptism. It will be seen that he assumes that all of them came to baptism with a clear conception of what they were doing; with a serious moral and spiritual intention.

In this chapter Paul is answering an objection to his previous teaching. This objection he first states as follows: "What shall we say then; shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" In answer, he appeals to a past experience he

and his readers could alike look back upon: "We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein?" Note well what is implied, namely, that all of them could remember a time when they were active in sin, and also a change which he describes as having "died to sin." I need not say that he is not speaking of the death of the body, or natural death; but he is figuratively describing the literal fact, which was that their mind had been changed, they had ceased to live in and practise sin. This he describes as dying to sin. He carries the thought out by referring to their baptism as a *burial*. We do not bury the living. It was only when dead to sin that they were buried in baptism. "We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life."

The Apostle not only appeals to the memory of his readers as to their death to sin, and their burial through baptism, but also to *the expectation they had when baptized*. The whole experience here depicted is impossible in the case of any, such as infants, who are incapable of being conscious of sin—of change of mind—of definitely ending or putting off an old, and commencing or putting on a new, life. If now we turn to other places where baptism is mentioned, do we find this view of conscious moral and spiritual convictions and intentions on the part of those baptized confirmed? We do. The baptism of John was administered to those who confessed their sins and who could understand John instructing them to believe in the Coming One. The baptism commanded by Jesus was evidently for those who believed the Gospel: "Go ye unto all the world and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, he that disbelieveth shall be condemned" (Mark xvi. 15, 16). By this "Great Commission" Baptism is for believers of the Gospel, and so infants and unbelievers are excluded.

Pass on to the Acts of the Apostles, and this view of the Commission is confirmed. In the second chapter it is they

who are *pricked* to the heart and who *receive* the Apostle's word that are baptized. And so all through. The case of the Corinthians is typical. Of them we read: "Many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed, and were baptized."

Reference has been made in support of infant baptism to some households who were baptized. Dr. Beet, the great Wesleyan commentator, who therefore would naturally welcome proof that infants were baptized in apostolic days, in commenting on 1 Cor. i., writes: "That Paul is said to have baptized the three households of Lydia, and the gaoler (Acts xvi. 15, 35), and Stephanas, has been appealed to in proof that he baptized infants; on the ground that these three families probably contained infants; and that when Paul baptized the households he must have baptized the infants. But that these three persons, one a woman in business of whose husband nothing is said, had infant children, is far from certain, and a very unsafe basis for argument." After further remarks he sums up, "Consequently, these passages render no aid to determine whether the Apostles baptized infants."

We conclude that the New Testament is fairly represented by Romans vi., not only on the Action but also on the Subject of Baptism, in exhibiting that the Action is immersion or a burial and resurrection, and the Subject a penitent believer.

III. THE DESIGN OF BAPTISM.

It is well to remember that there are several baptisms mentioned in the New Testament, because we are only concerned here with what Paul speaks of as "one baptism." We have already shown that the "one baptism" is an immersion in water, and not in the Holy Spirit. We may now add that, although John's baptism was in water, it was not the "one baptism." The Apostle Paul, in Acts xix. 1-7, explained that John's baptism was obsolete, and certain disciples who had known only of John's baptism were re-baptized. The one baptism now in force is the baptism commanded by

Christ in His instructions to the Apostles, and might be distinguished as "Christian Baptism."

We have, in Chapter XII., dwelt on the fact that none of these "conditions of salvation" required in those who are the recipients of the grace of God in Christ Jesus are arbitrary, and we have seen that *faith* is absolutely necessary to bring the Gospel into operation in the heart of man, which is one reason, among others, for its being required. "Repentance," or a change of will, is obviously required in the nature of the case; as to pardon and receive into His fellowship sinners who persist in sin would be to *encourage* sin and not *to save* from its power. Of *confession with the mouth*, which is also "unto salvation," it is obvious that a man's faith can only be known by him voicing it in clear words, and so confession is clearly involved in the primary condition—Faith.

Coming now to baptism, we might on general principles have inferred that there is a use for it, that it would not be arbitrarily required; but we are surprised to find that there is remarkable expression given in the Word of God to the *end* to which baptism introduces the penitent believer. This "end" is "remission of sins" or "salvation." This is so prominent that in the chief creeds of Christendom this end or design is attributed to baptism. This is done even when baptism is administered by sprinkling, which we have seen is not baptism at all, and when the subject is an infant, for whom baptism was not intended. But if it be noted that the scriptural act is immersion, and that the subject is a penitent believer, it seems to us that the Scriptures support the usual view, as expressed in the creeds and formulas, namely, that baptism is for or unto the remission of sins. Dr. Beet says, commenting on 1 Cor. vi. 11: "Only thus, in ordinary cases, could men obtain salvation (Mark xvi. 16; Acts ii. 38)." The Baptists, right in the Action and Subject, are the only noted religious community who object to regarding the baptism of a penitent believer as a condition of remission. The reason of their attitude seems to be a fear of attaching too much importance

to an outward rite, and also an idea that if you make it a condition of salvation you make baptism a meritorious act, and encroach upon the doctrine of "salvation by grace."

What the Scriptures teach is of infinitely more importance than what we think about that teaching, so we first give examples of the Scriptures that speak of the relation between baptism and salvation or remission. We note the following: "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven" (John iii. 15); "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned" (Mark xvi. 15, 16); "And Peter said, Repent ye and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, unto the remission of your sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts ii. 38); "Which also after a true likeness doth now save you, even baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation of a good conscience toward God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter iii. 21).

In Acts ii. 38, where repentance and baptism are enjoined "*unto* the remission of sins," the Greek word, rendered "for" in the C.V. but "unto" in the R.V., is *eis*. This word is usually rendered "*into*." No doubt *unto* suits our English speech better in some conditions, but the meaning is the same as "*into*." We mention this because this little word is used in several places as indicating where *into* baptism introduces the penitent believer ending in him being there *in*. We quote the more important: "Go ye therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them *into* (*eis*) the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. xxviii. 19); "And when they heard this, they were baptized *into* (*eis*) the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts xix. 5); "Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized *into* (*eis*) Christ Jesus, were baptized *into* (*eis*) His death" (Rom. vi. 3); "For ye are all sons of God, through faith, *in* Christ Jesus. For as

many of you as were baptized *into* ($\epsilon\iota\varsigma$) Christ did put on Christ."

If to any one who remembers that Christ said that His blood "was shed for many unto ($\epsilon\iota\varsigma$) the remission of sins," it seems strange that the baptism of a penitent believer is also "unto remission of sins," the above passages suggest the right view, and show that they all increase rather than diminish emphasis upon the all-sufficiency of the blood of the New Covenant. If baptism inducts the believer or disciple into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; into the name of Christ (the only saving name, Acts iv. 12); into Christ Jesus and into the death of Christ, and into sonship, it is a simple matter of necessary inference that baptism is into the remission of sins, for, of course, there can be no remission *out of* the divine Name, *out of* Christ Jesus, and *out of* His death for our sins. So that if Acts ii. 38 were expunged, these passages just quoted would place the same emphasis on baptism as the appointed ordinance to introduce the penitent believer into the privileges and blessings which are *in* Christ Jesus our Lord. All the merit is, of course, His alone; and salvation is ours (not as an equivalent for our faith, repentance, confession, and baptism), but as the free gift of God *in* Christ Jesus our Lord.

The fact is that it is the all-sufficiency of Christ's work which gives all the importance they possess to the steps by which the sinner enters into union with Christ. One who believes that *faith* is the only condition of accepting Christ, while he insists on the necessity of faith, does not for a moment intend to divide the merit of saving men between the Son of God and the sinner. So with us who with the Scriptures say that faith, repentance, confession, and baptism are conditions of salvation, of remission of sins, steps *into* Christ Jesus. All these conditions look to Christ as the all-sufficient Saviour, and baptism obviously so, for it is an acknowledgment of Him as Lord, a putting of Him on (Galatians iii. 27), a clothing of ourselves in Him. "As many of you as were baptized into Christ

did put on Christ.” Looked at in this, the Apostle’s way, *there is a fuller acknowledgment of the all-sufficiency of Christ’s redeeming work in receiving Him, in being united to Him, by faith, repentance, confession and baptism than by faith alone.*

CHAPTER XV.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND HIS WORK.

IN the Bible God is *gradually* made known. The fulness of revelation is contained in the New Testament, where a great deal is said about the Spirit of God or the Holy Spirit. Neither what is said about the Son of God, nor what is said about the Spirit of God, as persons distinct from the Father yet one with Him, is in contradiction to the Old Testament; yet without the New even *the anticipations* of this full revelation of the Name of God contained in the Old would have been very imperfectly perceived. It will be enough for us to consider here three features of the New Testament references to the Holy Spirit and His work, I. His Personality; II. The New Birth of the Spirit; III. The Dwelling of the Holy Spirit in the believer.

I. THE PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Each human being, himself a person, knows intuitively what is meant by personality; yet it is well for us to try to get that intuition expressed in words. *Consciousness* of our own existence, such as a stone or even, as we suppose, a tree has not; *intelligence*, the power to know and reason about things; *will*, the power to determine to do or not do, implying freedom of choice. Even in fallen man this power to determine to do, great and characteristic of the greatest, is still possessed, though the power actually to do as he wills is feeble. "For," says the Apostle, "to will is present with me, but to do that which is good is not." So that these three attributes at least combine

in a person and constitute his personality—consciousness, intelligence, will.

As we read the New Testament we find many statements made regarding the Holy Spirit which imply that He is a Person; and sometimes in such a connection as to show that as a Person He is distinct from Jesus Christ the Son of God, and from Him who is called the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Matthew x. 20 reads, "For it is not you (the Apostles) that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you." Here the Spirit is spoken of as undertaking to *speak*, but to do so more wisely and effectually than the disciples could speak unassisted. Speaking, and the thinking necessary thereto, are impossible without personality. In Matthew xii. 24-32, the Jews grant that the miracles performed by Jesus imply the presence in Him of a great Person, and name as that person Beelzebub. Jesus accepts their assumption that a greater than human power is needed to account for the miracles, but affirms that power to be, not Beelzebub, but the Spirit of God. That is, He speaks of the Spirit of God as a distinct personality with self-activity and will. This impression is strengthened by what follows in verses 29-32, for therein He speaks of the Holy Spirit as One who can be *blasphemed*, and of that sacrilege as greater than blaspheming the Son of man. But most clear and convincing is the language of the Great Commission in Matthew xxviii. 19: "Baptizing them [the disciples] into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." It is incredible that Jesus should thus join as, so to speak, three syllables in One Name, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, if He did not regard the Holy Spirit as possessing a like distinct personality to that possessed by the Father and by Himself. We do well on this subject to abide by Scripture language, but we can see that justice is not done to the Scriptures unless we think of each as a Person. Tillotson has a very sensible remark at this point: "The Scriptures, indeed, nowhere calls them PERSONS, but speaks of them as we would do of several persons; and therefore that word is not

unfitly used to express the difference between them, or at least we do not know a fitter word for that purpose."

Space will not allow further quotations from the Gospels, but John xiv. 16, 26 ; xv. 26, 27 ; xvi. 7, 14 should be carefully read and thought over. Jesus calls the promised Spirit *another* Comforter, whom He will send, and who will proceed from the Father, thus distinguishing the personality of each.

We cannot *lie* to a mere attribute as in Acts v. 3 Ananias is said to lie to the Holy Spirit. We cannot *grieve* any but persons, and in Ephesians iv. 30 we are besought not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God. The whole of Romans viii. may be read on this theme, noting that in verses 14-16 the Spirit *leads* and *bears witness* ; in verses 26-27, the Spirit is seen as aware of our infirmity, helping us and making intercession for us. It is evident that that Holy Spirit who comforts and advocates, to whom we can lie, who leads and bears witness, who is distinguished from our Spirit "the *Spirit Himself* beareth witness with our spirit," who helps and intercedes, is not an impersonal attribute but a PERSON.

II. THE NEW BIRTH OF THE SPIRIT.

Every one is aware of the importance attached to the words addressed by Jesus to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John iii. 5). We have here evidently a general law—a law, too, which has no exception. It concerns us all then to know what is meant by this New Birth without which no one can enter into the kingdom of God.

Although the Spirit was promised by Jesus to His disciples, He distinctly said "the world," that is the unbelieving, unregenerate portion of mankind, could not receive the Spirit, John xiv. 17—"whom the world cannot receive." In John vii. 39, it is "they that believed on Him" ; in Acts v. 32, they that "obey" the Gospel who receive the Spirit. In Ephesians i. 13, great emphasis is laid on the fact that the Gentiles first

heard and then "also believed" the Gospel before they were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise ; and Galatians iv. 6 says, "*Because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father.*" Such Scriptures prove that regeneration, or the bringing of sinners to a New Birth, is not the work of the Spirit by indwelling in the sinner, but through some agency.

We may ask first, What is meant by "the kingdom of God" in this important "law of the kingdom"? We may refer to the chapter on "The Kingdom of God," but we would especially warn against imagining that heaven itself is meant. Thus in a hymn on the necessity for the New Birth we have—

"Ye must be born again !
Or never enter heaven ;
'Tis only blood-washed ones are there—
The ransomed and forgiven !"

Now without giving any opinion as to the relation of the new birth and heaven, let it be noted that Jesus never said, we must be born of water and the Spirit or "never enter heaven." As we have shown, "the kingdom of heaven," or, as here called, "the kingdom of God," is not heaven but a Kingdom established among men here on earth. In fact, the whole Gospel history is full of anticipation of a Kingdom just at hand. There is an air of expectancy over it all. Even in Acts i. that expectation is still found ; but in chapter ii. it disappears. The cry the Kingdom of God, or of heaven, is at hand, is no longer heard ; but preachers, henceforth, speak of "the things concerning the kingdom," and Christians are said to have been "translated into the kingdom of the Son of God's love." The inference is that when Christ sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, His reign began ; that the coming of the Holy Spirit was the proof that God had made Jesus both Lord and Christ ; and that those converts to Christ who were made from Pentecost onward were subjects of the new Kingdom—the Kingdom of God and of His anointed. Let this

conclusion be kept in view, and the Acts of the Apostles will be seen to be a helpful commentary on the meaning of our Lord's words which require, in order to entrance into the Kingdom of God, a birth of water and the Spirit.

We reason thus: If those converts became subjects of the kingdom, they must have been born again. If then we examine what took place when they were added and identified with the Christian community, we shall be sure to find exemplified the great process which Jesus described as being born *anew*, as a birth of water and Spirit.

To begin with the water, we ask, Was there any water used when men were "turned to God" on Pentecost and after? We are distinctly told (Acts ii.) that when the multitude pricked to the heart, cried out, Brethren, what shall we do? Peter said, Repent ye and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Three thousand, we are told complied, and were baptized. Now it is true, water is not mentioned. But all the previous history leads us to think of immersion in water; and that the baptism regularly administered to the converts was in water, is seen in the case of the eunuch (Acts viii.), and from Acts x., where Peter asks, "Can any man forbid the water that these should not be baptized which have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?"

We ask then, are not these facts—that the early converts to Christ were all baptized into Him as soon as they believed, and that Peter regarded baptism as the appointed way of receiving converts—a clear proof that the water of baptism and the water of John iii. 5, are the same?

As a fact the "*water*" was universally understood to refer to the ordinance of baptism until comparatively recent times. To take "*water*" here figuratively confuses the passage, for "*and*" then joins *water*, used figuratively to *Spirit*, used literally; and as *of the Spirit*, in the judgment of all, refers to the Spirit's influence on the heart, of *water*, used figuratively, must mean the same, and so the same idea is given twice! Further,

if the word "*water*" is understood of baptism, the passage has its parallels in Titus iii. 2, "laver of regeneration"; and in Eph. v. 26, "the washing of water, with the word." Bishop Westcott, in his commentary, says, "The two [water and Spirit] are co-ordinate, correlative, complementary. Hence all interpretations which treat the word water here as simply figurative and descriptive of the cleansing power of the Spirit, are essentially defective, as they are also opposed to all ancient tradition."

Let us now inquire whether any light is thrown by Acts on the other factor in the new birth—the agency of the Spirit. Many people have thought that in the production of the new birth—in other words, in regeneration—the Holy Spirit of God acts *directly* on the human heart and changes it. But that conclusion is contrary to Paul's statement that "the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation," and to his statement that he *begat* the Corinthians "through the Gospel"; and also to Peter's statement that Christians had *been begotten through the word of God*; and, lastly, is opposed also to the beautiful statement of James—"Of His own will He brought us forth *by the word of truth* that we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures."

If these passages are to be held true, as they must be, then a place must be found in the new birth for the word of the truth of the glad tidings. Turn now to the Acts. The disciples wait as commanded, until the Holy Spirit is poured forth, and they are baptized in the Spirit, are filled with the Spirit. In Peter's first Epistle we read of men "preaching the Gospel by the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven," and on Pentecost we see this done most evidently. Peter never could have preached that Gospel-sermon recorded in Acts ii. but that he was filled with and inspired by the Holy Spirit. The faith and repentance of the multitude were produced by the Gospel thus preached, so we may say, in Peter's own words in his Epistle, they were begotten by the Gospel *preached to them*; and seeing that Peter was the preacher, we may say in Paul's way,

that Peter had begotten them *through the Gospel*; and, lastly, as, but for the inspiration of the Spirit, Peter had never thus presented the Gospel, we may say of the baptized believers, according to our Lord's words, that were *born of water and the Spirit*.

We cannot but admire the beautiful harmony, undesigned by the human writers of the New Testament, though not undesigned by its all-wise divine Author, which we thus behold between the Gospels, the Acts and the Epistles; and the mutual support and illumination which they give to each other in this important subject of the new birth.

III. THE DWELLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE BELIEVER.

We have seen that in the Upper Room, the Holy of Holies, our Lord indicated to the disciples that "the world" could not receive the Spirit, whom He was to send to be *another Comforter and Advocate*. On the other hand, however, He assures the disciples that the Spirit who had already been *with* them should be *in* them. It was their blessed qualification, as those who had received Him and His word, to receive the Spirit to dwell in them; and this indwelling of the Spirit was to be the cause of *unity*, so that, as He and the Father were one, so the disciples would be brought within the circle of unity, Christ in them and they in Christ. But of this we must speak in dealing with the all-important question of *Christian Unity*.

We recall two previous occasions on which our Lord spoke to the disciples regarding the gift of the Spirit and His indwelling. Encouraging the disciples to pray by the readiness and wisdom of earthly fathers to give good things to their children, He concludes, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" On the other occasion Jesus marked with special emphasis the coming of the Spirit after He Himself should be glorified. We read, "Now on

the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried : If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake He of the Spirit, *which they that believed on Him were to receive*; for the Spirit was not yet given ; because Jesus was not yet glorified." In accordance with the above, the *Acts of the Apostles* narrates how the Holy Spirit came on Pentecost and filled the waiting Apostles. There does not seem any care to discriminate the reception of the Spirit to give miraculous proofs of His presence and confirm the truth of the Gospel, as referred to in Heb. ii. 4, and the indwelling of the Spirit to aid the believer in his new life ; but with the Epistles to guide us we conclude that the promise of Acts ii. 38, where the instructions to repent and to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of sins is followed by the words, "*And ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit,*" was intended for all who "received his word." As showing that the Spirit as a gift was limited to those qualified by their acceptance of Christ as Lord we have also Peter's words in Acts v. 32, where, after narrating the Gospel facts to the Sanhedrin, Peter said, "And we are witnesses of these things ; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God hath *given to them that obey Him.*"

In the Epistles, no passage contains so full a statement of the fact and purpose of the Spirit's indwelling as Rom. viii. That there is "no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus" is accounted for by the operation of the Spirit : "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death." The word "*law*" is used here, as a study of the preceding chapter shows, much in the way that science to-day uses it to denote a certain inevitable sequence. The law of sin and of death was such a law in Paul's members, and the slavery he suffered was transformed to liberty by the indwelling Spirit of God.

The following is a list of things in the believer's experience attributed to the indwelling Spirit :—

- (1) Makes the believer free (verse 2).
- (2) Dwells in him (verses 9-11).
- (3) Shall quicken his mortal body (verse 11).
- (4) Sons of God are those "led by the Spirit" (verse 14).
- (5) Enables the believer to call God—FATHER (verse 15).
- (6) Bears witness with the believer's spirit (verse 16).
- (7) Helpeth our infirmity (verse 26).
- (8) Maketh intercession for him (verses 26, 27).

How fully this indwelling was accepted as part of the unique and sublime condition of the Christian is seen from Paul's use of it in urging *purity* upon the Corinthians: "Or know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God? And ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body" (1 Cor. v. 11).

This gives a sanctity to the body of the believer. Through this indwelling of the Spirit is realized the fact that the Church is "the House" or "the Temple" of God. In 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17 we read these solemn words: "Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man destroyeth the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." To the same effect are the last words of Paul's description of the church under the figure of a building in Eph. ii. 22: "In whom ye also are builded together *for a habitation of God in the Spirit.*"

It is necessary to observe that this indwelling of the Spirit was, in New Testament days, the heritage and enjoyment of all Christians; but that, even in those days, miraculous, inspired teaching and writing were thought of as the gift of certain chosen and endowed disciples only. Thus to observe will save us from extravagant views which have made certain teachers write as if the writings of some now-a-days were as much the work of the Spirit as the writings of Apostles and Prophets in the New Testament. On the other hand, we should beware of the Rationalism which practically excludes

the Spirit of God altogether. Some seem as if they believed that the Spirit of God was everywhere except in living touch with the spirit of the believer. But if there is any life in which the Spirit will be disposed to dwell it is surely the life of the believer in Christ Jesus. We have outlined what we perceive in the New Testament not because we think it reasonable, but because we are seeking for the actual teaching of this book. All the same, what we have found commends itself. We have not found the Spirit's power in the believer to be such as to practically make the revealed Word of God unnecessary. The New Testament gives the inspiration of Apostles and Prophets as an experience apart; and through them we have "the faith *once for all* delivered to the saints"; and not being constantly added to by men moved by the Spirit as were the Bible writers of old and the Apostles and Prophets who with Jesus Christ Himself as the chief corner-stone, form the foundation of the New Testament Church. But our reason finds no difficulty, or rather, finds a suitability, in the thought that the Spirit should be the welcome guest in every believing heart; that unbelief should make such an indwelling impossible, so that Jesus should say, "Whom the world cannot receive," seems in harmony with the nature of fellowship between spirits; but that, once the unbelief is removed by the Gospel, the Spirit of God should delight to dwell in our hearts and keep our spirits to such an extent as He deems wise, not interfering with the freedom of the believer nor superseding the revealed will of God in the Bible, is what God's grace leads us to anticipate. To such fellowship we suppose to refer the last clause of the apostolic benediction: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and communion (*koinonia*) of the Holy Spirit be with you all."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE NEW LIFE.

“‘**H**E that hath not the Son hath not the Life.’ Now it is this great law which finally distinguishes Christianity from all other religions. It places the religion of Christ upon a footing altogether unique. There is no analogy between the Christian religion and, say, Buddhism or the Mohammedan religion. There is no true sense in which a man can say, He that hath Buddha hath Life. Buddha has nothing to do with Life. He may have something to do with morality . . . But Christianity professes to be more. It is the mental or moral man *plus* something else or some One else. It is the infusion into the spiritual man of a new life, of a quality unlike anything else in nature. This constitutes the separate kingdom of Christ, and gives to Christianity alone of all the religions of mankind the strange mark of Divinity.”

This extract from Henry Drummond’s “Natural Law in the Spiritual World” may serve to introduce a subject as distinctive of the New Testament as any we have considered. Prof. Drummond did good service when he directed attention to the extent to which the language of the New Testament is the language of biology. “*Regeneration*,” “*being born of God*,” “*sons and children of God*,” even “*a new creation*,” with numerous other phrases, gave him ample foundation on the ground of which to speak of Christian life in the language of science, and especially of biology, the science of life.

I. THE NEW LIFE IN CHRIST AS A FACT.

We wish to urge, in the first place, that what is called *New Life*, or simply *Life*, in the New Testament is not to be

regarded as a mere figure of speech for a reformed life. Jesus said that He had come that men might have life, and might have it abundantly. "I am," He said, "the way, the truth, and the *life*." He added words which shew His idea of *life*, "No man cometh unto the Father except by Me!" He regarded it as life that is life indeed, *to come unto the Father*. So He said, "This is life eternal to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." He evidently conceived our ordinary natural life as a temporary unreal thing, and union with God through Him as true life. John's account of the purpose of his Gospel takes the same view: "These signs are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have *life in his Name*."

In the Epistles, especially, it is constantly affirmed that believers are quickened to a new life, and the fact is regarded as an unspeakably wonderful and blessed work of divine power, the basis for much exhortation to live as those who are "dead indeed unto sin but alive unto God in Christ Jesus." Paul says, "If any man is in Christ, there is a *new creation*, the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new." Perhaps the strongest statement is made by Paul of himself, and all men have felt and still feel that his career confirms it as an undeniable fact: "I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

This new life of the Christian, sometimes called the *new man*, with the prospects which it opens, is the grand end which the whole system of facts and truths called Christianity aims to produce; by this new life it is justified as a supernatural system; its beauty, value, blessedness and glorious destiny throughout the ages of the ages, is the test of the claim of New Testament Christianity upon the attention of mankind.

In several places the old life, or old humanity, alienated

from God, is described in contrast with this new life or new humanity. One of these, which designates this new man as the "*Truth in Jesus*," written to some who had lived both lives—the old and new—we quote from Eph. iv. 17-24 : "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye no longer walk as the Gentiles also walk, in the vanity of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening of their heart ; who being past feeling gave themselves up to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But ye did not so learn Christ ; if so be that ye heard Him, and were taught in Him, even as truth is in Jesus : that ye put away, as concerning your former manner of life, the *old man*, which waxeth corrupt after the lusts of deceit ; and that ye be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the *new man*, which after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth."

Note two points here especially. First, the new type of man is seen in Christ ; secondly, this new humanity is in the image of God—in righteousness and holiness of truth.

(1) This emphasis on one person is the great feature. He speaks as if "*the Christ*" was the text-book of this art of life : "Ye have not so learned the Christ, if so be that ye heard Him and were taught in Him, even as truth is in Jesus."

JESUS—the apostle does not often use the personal name Jesus alone. When he does, he intends to specially throw the mind upon the person, Jesus, rather than His office as the Christ. In the midst of that weary, sinful, pleasure-sated world, Jesus is pointed out as a new beginning ; holy, guileless, undefiled, presenting a perfect type of what a man should be. This new man was taught and "learned" with Jesus as the object lesson, the living text-book.

(2) In this new manhood presented in Jesus, we have *the image of God*. There can be no doubt this is Paul's thought. "Be ye renewed," he exclaims, "in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man which after God has been created in

righteousness and holiness of truth. In "*the Christ*," in "*the Jesus*" (the article is with both names in the Greek) we have a perfect man in the very image of God, and through Christ's power on those who believe in Him, that image is restored in them also.

For our present purpose it is enough to have this new man before us in a general way. The cross of Christ, where Jesus died for him, has caused godly sorrow for sin, and a sense of gratitude which urges him to live henceforth "for Him who died for him and rose again." He exclaims—

"Hung on Thy cross 'twixt earth and heaven,
I saw Thee Son of God, Divine ;
To Thee the bitter pain was given,
But all the heavy guilt was mine."

He abhors that which is evil ; he cleaves to that which is good. The love of Christ constrains him. There is a new creation, the old things pass away, behold they become new. The glory of the cross is twofold ; on the one hand, it supplies that propitiation for sin without which God could not be just and the justifier of the sinner—that is (for God could not be unjust) without which God *could* not justify the sinner ; on the other hand, the cross, the love of God there displayed, melts the sinner's hardness of heart and transforms him to one who longs to do, as it is done in heaven, the will of God from the heart. Now this effect on the sinner was as necessary before God could receive the sinner as that atonement should be made for his sin ; and, in effecting this change of heart and will, the cross accomplished what neither the law of God, nor the philosophy of man, could accomplish.

II. THE NEW LIFE IN CHRIST PROVIDED FOR.

The wisdom of God is seen in the exquisite harmony which is found to characterize all His works. Part fits into part ; the due proportion of one thing to another is maintained. Every creature has its needs of body or mind. God openeth His

hand and supplieth all these needs. This principle is so admirably observed in New Testament Christianity that nothing but disaster can follow when any part is neglected or altered ; and the full wisdom of no part of it can be realized unless the end for which it is designed is understood. But once we get a right conception of any principal part we soon see with delight how adapted to it are other arrangements.

Taking the fact of a people who possess the new life as a central part of Christianity, we perceive that while the New Testament, and its ordinances, are not such as the carnal mind would deem the best that God could have given us, yet they are exactly suited to the sustenance, and to aid in the development of, the new man.

Remember that the new life is the result, not of law or philosophy, but of contact with a unique personality—the Lord Jesus Christ, and note a few things that just suit that life.

(1) *The Gospels.*

When Jesus would train men to carry on His work, He called and appointed twelve Apostles, “that they might be with Him.” Day by day their love and admiration was fed by His presence. There was nothing of the modern college arrangement. They were “with Him in the way.” As incidents happened they saw how He dealt with them, heard His comments, felt His heavenly disposition. The continuance of that plan, so effective ultimately in the case of the early disciples, is provided for in these Gospels. They do not present the closely arranged, digested, stereotyped teaching about Christ and His will which modern educational systems demand. But they do exactly what the new life requires. They keep the Christian near the Person of Jesus, near the original source of their new life, and a great body of “manifold wisdom” is received by them while, like the disciples of old, “they are in the way with Him”—is received by them with appreciation because it comes from Him whom they love supremely.

The marvel of these Gospels appears greater the more the facts about them are considered. Small indeed in comparison with learned Lives of Christ, written with them as the source of information; small, too, in comparison with notes and comments upon them, there is something so direct and vivid in the presentation of Jesus in these records, that here alone we "behold" and realize "His glory" and feel the need of the Christian fully met.

(2) *The Epistles.*

One might be pardoned if, at first thought at least, he concluded that in these Epistles, written specially for the Churches, some closely articulated moral system would be found. But the same care is taken here to keep the heart warm and responsive, and though precepts are given, they take the second place, and are clearly intended to supplement and regulate the moral force, not to create it. How often we find these Epistles divisible into, doctrinal and hortatory! Take the Epistle to the Romans. Eleven chapters lead one over all the wonders of God's plan. At chapter xii. the exhortations and moral instructions begin, building upon the foundation of Gospel grace—"We beseech you therefore, brethren, *by the mercies of God,*" etc. And there is no attempt to lay down an exhaustive set of precepts, to be mechanically followed. The teaching assumes the new life and its holy impulses, the faith working by love—love that works no ill to its neighbour and fulfils, as by an intuition, *the law*, that was impossible of fulfilment when there was no spiritual life. The great thing, it is assumed, is to keep the heart responsive to God's love in Christ.

(3) *The Church of God.*

The new man, like the old one, is social. He is no mere student whose needs can be supplied by a book, however adapted to his life in Christ. Hence Christ provides for

redeemed men as requiring, to fulfil their joy, the fellowship of kindred spirits. To satisfy man's social nature God has provided the *family*; and, in like manner, to satisfy the social spiritual nature of twice-born men, God has provided the family of God, the household of faith. In a preceding chapter we have written of this institution, and a following chapter deals with its "*Mutual Ministry*." The ideal of the organization of this church is the human body. In 1 Cor. xii.-xiv., we see how the members were to mutually assist, honour, love, and suffer for, each other. The conception was not new in the world, it is the ideal of most social systems. The great hindrance to its realization among men has ever been selfishness. The possibility of attaining to this ideal depends on the extent to which this inordinate love of self can be annihilated and a sufficient bond of union provided. The Epistles show that the Apostles knew that the Church would not realize it either, except as the new life is there and is constantly fed by contact with its source. Take Phil. ii. as an example. There is an appeal for unity of mind or disposition grounded upon experience of *comfort in Christ*. Then there is a description of the outward manifestation of the one mind: "Doing nothing through faction or through vainglory, but in *lowliness of mind* each counting other better than himself; not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you to the things of others!" Then what began by appealing to Christ as a source of comfort, closes by referring to *Him* as the supreme example—"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus," and then follows the wonderful description of Christ emptying Himself and of His voluntary humiliation "even unto death, yea, the death of the cross," for us men and for our salvation. It is the new life which the cross creates and sustains that makes the ideal of a community living "each for all and all for each" possible.

True, some unhappy things in the Epistles show that this ideal was not perfectly attained. We must remember, however, that the purpose of writing was often largely to correct

such things, not to describe the fulness of social advantages enjoyed. The reality must have been much better than appears. We catch a glimpse of their meetings for worship and their contrast to heathen assemblies in such an exhortation as: "Be not drunken with wine wherein is riot, but be filled with the Spirit; speak one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; subjecting yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ." Note how the Lord Jesus Christ is referred to—without Him and the love for Him, this beautiful "fellowship of saints" would not be possible; but with these the assembly is a "heavenly place" and the poet's words are justified:

"No place there is on earth more sweet,
More rich with pure delight,
Than where our Father's children meet
To worship Him aright."

(4) *The Lord's Supper and the Lord's Day.*

Not the least of the examples of the adaptation of New Testament Christianity to the needs of the new life in Christ is found in these two institutions. That from the beginning the disciples of Christ, or Christians, honoured the first day of the week and met stately thereon is not doubted by any; yet there is no recorded command to do so. Probably such a command was given by Christ during the forty days in which Jesus appeared to the Apostles whom He had chosen and gave them the needed instructions. But even if the command was thus given, it remains a noteworthy proof of the fact of the resurrection, how thoroughly these Jewish disciples, accustomed to regard the seventh day as the Sabbath, came to transfer this traditional reverence to the first day, or at least to show it similar regard. No reason for their doing so is discoverable except that Christ rose on the first day of the week triumphant over death and burst the barriers of

the grave. It seems fitting that their thus honouring the day should appear as due not so much to authority as to love for Christ. And what the love of Christ led them so readily to accept, their keeping the day as *the Lord's Day*, would interact upon that love and tend to its sustenance and increase. As the Church apostatised it introduced, or changed heathen festivals into, yearly commemorative feasts. One of them continues as Easter. They seem to have lost sight of the fact that every first day was originally the Lord's Day, sacred to the memory of the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. We need not point out how congenial and helpful to the new life it was, and is, to have a seventh of our time reminding us of Him whom we receive as our Redeemer and confess as our Lord.

But the effect was still further impressed by the Lord's Supper, the occasion on which the disciples remembered their Lord's death. We see that this was *statedly* observed from the beginning by the words of Acts ii. 42 : "They continued *stedfastly* in the Apostles' teaching, and the fellowship; in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers." And that they observed it every first day is indicated by Acts xx. 7 : "And upon the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed with them, intending to depart on the morrow." "*The first day*" we would take as *every* first day, just as we know the Jews took "the seventh day" as meaning every seventh day was to be a Sabbath. The context, too, suggests that Paul and his company had arrived at Troas too late to meet with the disciples there on one first day, and tarried seven days to be present with them on the following recurrence of it, though, as "ready to depart on the morrow" seems to show, Paul was wishful to get on to Syria.

The Lord's Table as often as the Lord's Day, seems to have been the rule. That modern Christianity so largely departs from stedfast observance of the Lord's Supper is, we think, to be regarded as a departure from Apostolic arrangements. We do not doubt that it is to its own spiritual impoverishment.

If we have rightly conceived that the great power in the new life is the power that created it, Christ and Him crucified, then it follows that most distinctly for the highest welfare of the Christian is this remembrance of Christ in His own appointed way. Let any one examine 1 Cor. xi. 17-34, and he must see in Paul's correction of the practice at Corinth his recognition of the value of the appointment when properly attended to. Note the touching words, "the night in which He was betrayed," which are not a mere chronological note, but a reference to the love of Christ in thinking of His disciples at such a time. Note, too, the words, "For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till He come."

Yes, indeed, however highly we think of the preaching of Christ by words, it is a great impoverishment to restrict for it this silent, solemn, joyous proclamation, as the assembly pass from hand to hand the emblems of their Lord's death.

"No Gospel like this feast,
Spread for thy Church by Thee,
Nor teacher nor evangelist
Preach the glad news so free."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE BLESSING OF CHRIST.

IN any attempt to set forth the prominent features of New Testament Christianity, a place must be given to the blessings, privileges and immunities bestowed by Christ; for a large amount of space is given to these in references and direct statements. When Paul wrote to Rome, anticipating the visit he hoped to pay the Church there, he wrote: "I know that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of Christ" (Rom. xv. 29, Revised Version). Let us look at this phrase.

CHRIST—the BLESSING that comes from Christ—the satisfying FULNESS of that blessing. These are the three parts into which the Apostle's phrase naturally falls. *Christ*, the *last* to be mentioned, is *first* in thought. He is presented as the source of all the benefit; the *cup*, filled to the brim, that contains the blessing; the

"Never-failing *Treasury* filled
With boundless stores of grace."

What Paul calls "the fulness of the blessing of Christ," we, in our modern way, would name, "the blessings of *Christianity*." The Apostle, however, prefers to use the word *blessing* in the singular. He would have us regard the many blessings as a unit, manifold indeed, but one, because they all come from Christ. He prefers also the word *Christ*, the name of his Lord, to a cold, abstract term like *Christianity*.

I. A GENERAL VIEW.

But while the blessing of Christ is *one*, it is also *many*. Regarded as to its origin and general character, it is one; but

regarded in itself and in its purpose, it is many—as many as the needs of mankind. This is implied in the word *fulness*. Assuming that our *needs* are many, this word “fulness” would be unsuitable if there were any need Christ could not meet. When Jesus went about healing, had some come to Him whom He could not restore, His blessing of healing would not have been the *fulness* of blessing. But there was no such disappointment. We read that, “He healed *all manner of* disease and *all manner of* sickness,” and that “*All* the multitude sought to touch Him; for power came forth from Him and healed them *all*.” If one man of the five thousand had been unprovided with food, though it would have been marvellous that four thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine had been miraculously satisfied, we could not have spoken of the *fulness* of food. But there was left no hungry man, woman or child. “They need not go away,” Jesus said to His perplexed disciples; and how true that was the sequel shows. Not only did they *all* eat and were *filled*, but of that which remained *over* they took up twelve baskets full.

Like to this is the *fulness* of the blessing of Christ to meet the needs of our moral and spiritual nature. None sick at heart, none who hunger and thirst after righteousness, need go away. In Christ there is

“Enough for all, enough for each,
Enough for evermore !”

From first to last, the New Testament *abounds* with history and exposition revealing the manifold blessing of Christ. There is the **PHYSICAL** and **TEMPORAL** blessing produced by the **MIRACLES** of Christ and His Apostles. The evangelists must have been divinely restrained from dwelling upon the joy of the individuals healed by Jesus as He went about doing good, and the joy of those who loved the healed ones. In Acts, after recording Philip’s miracles of healing, Luke adds : “And there was much joy in that city.” Such comment is not conspicuous in the Gospels, there is only enough to remind us of its existence; yet our experience, when one of

our loved ones recovers from illness, enables us to realize the greatness of the joy and home-delight which Jesus caused in the villages and cities of Palestine.

The miracles ceased, but not the blessing of Christ. The benefit of which Paul speaks in Rom. xv. 29, may, in distinction from the Physical and the Temporal, be called the Spiritual and the Eternal. This twofold division is convenient, but not absolute. There is no great gulf fixed, as between Lazarus and the rich man, so that the physical benefit cannot reach the spiritual. Rather they act and re-act upon each other. Christ's temporal gifts led to the recipients being prepared for the more valuable spiritual gift; and the spiritual benefit has a direct influence for good upon the health of the body, the happiness of the home, and the elevation of society. To those who seek primarily the kingdom of God, the temporal things are added. But as the miracles ceased, and as the temporal benefit of Christ *now* results from the spiritual, it is with the latter, in itself and in its results, we have here principally to do.

We are not long in the company of Christ before we learn that He does not think the temporal fit to be compared with the spiritual blessings He came to procure and bestow. The miracles were ever made to subserve the success of the preaching. When He made a summary of His wonderful works, saying, "The blind receive their sight and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up," He added, as the last and greatest, the climax of all—"and the poor have good tidings preached unto them" (Matt. xi. 2). To this spiritual blessing such general terms as "*the Gospel*," or "*Good News*," "*Salvation*," and "*the grace of God*," which light up like sunshine the whole New Testament, principally refer. To lead men to this, forth to the world the preachers were sent, that men might turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they might receive the remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith which is in Christ (Acts xxvi. 18).

This spiritual good is of the mind and heart, of the will and life, of the relationship to God and eternal things, and it filled the first Christians with an intense enthusiasm. The light is described as *marvellous* light (1 Pet. ii. 9); the gift and joy as *unspeakable* (2 Cor. ix. 15; 1 Pet. i. 8); the riches of Christ as *unsearchable* (Eph. iii. 8); and the life is life *indeed*.

To set forth this fulness of blessing nature is laid under contribution. It is noteworthy that in the Gospels the healing of the body is described by the same word, *saved*, which is usually employed for deliverance from sin. This suggests that the miracles of healing are *pictures* of what Christ does for men spiritually in the region of the mind, heart, will, and life. This idea is confirmed when we observe how, in the Gospel of John, Jesus Himself follows the miracle of feeding the five thousand by announcing that He is the Bread of Life. In this way bodily weakness, blindness, and especially leprosy, have been used as means to present man's spiritual needs. So by Christ the soul is "made whole." So, too, no doubt, the effect of Christ's miracles on the body suggest the gratitude and devotion we owe for the healing of our souls. The cured demoniac begging to go with his deliverer, the leper returning, Samaritan though he was, to throw himself in gratitude at Jesus' feet; the cured lame man walking and leaping and praising God, and many others, are all pictures of the experience of those who live the new life by the faith of the Son of God, in whom they "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

Another mode in which the New Testament seeks to set forth the unspeakable gift, is *the copious employment of comparisons*. Jesus is the Light of the world, the Bread of life, the Water of life, the Good Shepherd, the Vine, the Bridegroom. At bottom, parables setting forth the value of the Kingdom, such as THE HIDDEN TREASURE, THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE, and THE GREAT SUPPER, all owe their suitability to Him. "My oxen and my fatlings are killed," is a parabolic representation of preachers announcing the fulness of the

blessing of Christ. He, too, as the Epistle to the Hebrews so fully sets forth, is the anti-type of the types of the law. The sacrifice, and the priest that offered it, and the altar on which it was offered; the shewbread and the ark of the Covenant overlaid round about with gold, all find their reality and their fulfilment in Him.

Then in addition there is the *literal* description, which is found in every book of the New Testament. Some of them, as Romans, Ephesians, Philippians, and Hebrews, were written expressly to exhibit the various excellencies of the "Preciousness" which believers enjoy in Christ, and in the New and Better Covenant which He mediates. Some of these literally-named blessings may be set down: Forgiveness of sins; rest and peace; sonship or adoption; liberty, life, and truth; God's house, a holy nation, a spiritual priesthood, and other privileges of relationship and service to God; the promise of the life that now is, as well as of the life which is to come.

This brief survey shows our theme is like that river which Ezekiel saw issuing from the Temple of God, which, from a river to wade in, grew gradually deeper till it was a river to swim in, and of which it was said, "Everything shall live whithersoever the river cometh."

II. SOME SPECIAL VIEWS.

How characteristic of the New Testament is the setting out of this blessing in Christ is seen in the fact that all through we come on portions which are devoted to a direct statement of this blessedness from some special point of view. We only reach Matthew v. when we find Jesus begins His great Manifesto by an octave of beatitudes. We take these to be pronounced on eight classes in form only. In reality they are pronounced on one class—the citizens of the kingdom of heaven, who possess certain qualities of character. Each characteristic has pronounced upon it a blessing suitable for it. The poor in spirit have as their portion the kingdom of

heaven; mourners, comfort; the meek, the earth; those desiring righteousness, their desire; the merciful, mercy; the pure in heart, the vision of God; the peacemakers, the rank of sons of God; and, as if to show the one character is now complete, those who suffer for the sake of righteousness receive, like the first, the kingdom of heaven. These are our Lord's beatitudes, and through Him this character is formed in His disciples, and its blessings enjoyed.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus introduced His kingdom by a series of beatitudes, and it is suggestive that when at Nazareth He introduced Himself *as the Messiah*, then also, He did so by a reference to blessings which, it had been predicted, He would bestow. On that occasion He read a portion of Isaiah lxi., and then began to say, "To-day hath this Scripture been fulfilled in your ears." That Scripture describes "the blessing of Christ" as, above all, *Liberty*—

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me,
Because He anointed Me to preach glad tidings to the poor;
He hath sent Me to proclaim release to the captives,
And recovering of sight to the blind,
To set at liberty them that are bruised,
To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."—Luke iv.

Jesus claimed to give freedom worthy of the name. He said, on one occasion, "The Son abideth for ever. If therefore the Son shall make you free, ye shall be *free indeed*" (John viii. 35, 36). This freedom the early Christians enjoyed; witness such statements as, "With freedom did Christ set us free"; "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death."

Returning to Matthew, we cannot omit to quote Christ's gracious invitation to come to Him and find *rest*, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light."

If we mistake not, these words have an attraction and a

soothing balm-like influence upon the minds of all who read them. Note in them three main elements. First, the important place Christ Himself occupies—"Come unto ME"; "I will give you rest"—"Take My yoke"—"Learn of ME"—"My yoke is easy"—"My burden is light." Secondly, Christ's conception of the need of mankind, and His claim to meet that need. The invitation is addressed to men as *labouring and heavy laden*, and the promise is, "I will give you rest. Thirdly, Christ's recognition of the need of man's own agency. He evidently regarded mankind as needing to do a part, would they enjoy promised rest. Note the commands, "*Come—Take—Learn.*"

This "*rest*" reminds us of "*peace*" which is very frequent as naming a blessing prominent in the Christian treasury. Peace was predicted as a great Messianic characteristic—

"He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass;
As showers that water the earth.
In His days shall the righteous flourish;
And abundance of peace, till the moon be no more."

Isaiah names Him the Prince of Peace, and says of the increase of His government and of peace there shall be no end. "Peace among men of good will" was the herald angel's message, and our Lord's legacy was peace: "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give unto you."

The full meaning and value of the peace of Christ which rules in the heart was not fully revealed until Christ died and that death was seen to be a propitiation; enabling God to be Himself just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus. Hence comes "the Gospel of peace by Jesus Christ." In His death for our sins, the difficulty of reconciling mercy and integrity is overcome, and the Psalm fulfilled which says—

"Mercy and truth are met together;
Righteousness and peace have kissed each other."

Fulfilled, too, is that pathetic touch in Isaiah liii. which says, "The chastisement of our peace was upon Him."

Our space will soon be covered and we have but drawn a cupful from the refreshing river of Grace which flows through the New Testament. We hasten to draw special attention to a passage in Romans, where its writer deliberately marshals some of the blessings which he realized believers possess in Christ. We have seen that, near the close of this Epistle, he informed the saints at Rome that, on his way to Spain, he hoped to give them a call ; and, added he, " I know that when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of Christ."

That hope was realized ; but if Paul had never visited the Christians at Rome they would have learned from this Epistle much about the blessing of Christ. Almost every page has some reference to the rich enjoyment and privileges which those possess who accept the Gospel ; and, if all that he says be considered we may claim that the Epistle comes to *us* as the Apostle hoped to come to the Roman Christians—"in the *fulness* of the blessing of Christ."

This is particularly true of chapter v. 1-11. Here we are furnished with a list at once apostolic and enthusiastic—glowing with heart-felt fervour.

The first blessing mentioned is JUSTIFICATION. " Being therefore justified by faith," are the pregnant opening words. That " therefore " refers to the preceding exposition. In the four chapters Paul has shown the impossibility of being justified *by works*. He summons the whole human race before the judgment-seat of God. It is a Great Assize. Every member of the human race has it " laid to his charge that he is under sin." The writer grants if one of these could prove the charge untrue he would be justified by works. But no one can. Every mouth is shut. Then the Apostle explains the Gospel's power to justify. Man must be forgiven. But God cannot forgive except some way can be opened to enable Him to forgive *justly*. The way was found by God's love. Paul's thought-laden words by which he explains this are these—

" BEING JUSTIFIED FREELY BY HIS GRACE THROUGH THE

REDEMPTION THAT IS IN CHRIST JESUS : WHOM GOD SET FORTH TO BE A PROPITIATION, THROUGH FAITH, BY HIS BLOOD. . . . THAT HE MIGHT HIMSELF BE JUST AND THE JUSTIFIER OF HIM THAT HATH FAITH IN JESUS."

What great conceptions are here ! God's grace ! Redemption in Christ Jesus ! The blood of Christ as a propitiation ! The final result—sinners made righteous, justified, on the condition of faith !

This, in brief, is what is meant by "being justified by faith." All who thus believe are "justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses." The Christian, then, first of all, enjoys the Remission of sins. His is the blessedness David pronounced when he sang:—

"Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven
And whose sins are covered :
Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not reckon sin."

The second blessing mentioned is PEACE WITH GOD. On internal grounds we prefer the margin to the text of the Revised Version—*We have peace* and not *let us have peace*. But even if the Revised rendering is as Paul wrote, the meaning is much the same—it is an exhortation to enjoy the peace available now we are justified. Christianity has that in it which reconciles man to man, and so produces "peace on earth among men of good will"; but its primary peace is peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ—the peace of God which passeth all understanding.

The third blessing is ACCESS INTO GRACE. "This grace wherein we stand," says Paul. The expression covers generally all the privileges of sonship. Delivered from the present evil world, from the power of darkness, we are translated into the kingdom of the Son of God's love; are blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.

The fourth blessing is REJOICING IN HOPE OF THE GLORY OF GOD.

“ How happy is the Christian’s state,
His sins are all forgiven :
The cheerful ray confirms his hope,
And lifts his thoughts to heaven ! ”

The fifth blessing is REJOICING IN TRIBULATIONS. The Apostle’s thought is that we know that these tribulations are serving a beneficent end, preparing us for the inheritance. James takes the same view : “ Count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into manifold trials,” says he, and explains that these trials evolve patience and patience perfects character.

The sixth blessing is THE CERTAINTY OF HOPE. Incidentally the writer names also the reception of the Holy Spirit ; but the main thought of verses 5-10 is that on the ground of what God *has done* we build surely our confidence in Him for what He will in the future do. Note how he reasons from the past experience to the certainty of hope ! “ For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, *much more*, being reconciled, shall we be SAVED BY HIS LIFE.”

The seventh blessing, and the last in this paragraph, is, REJOICING IN GOD. It may not appear at first that this is the true climax of Christian blessings taken from any point of view ; whether we think of the promise of the life that now is or the promise of the life which is to come. However, not only is God the source of all, but God is also more and better than any one or all of His gifts. Our highest dignity is that we are a people for His own possession—His jewels—“ His inheritance in the saints.” “ Every good gift and every perfect boon is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning. Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that, we should be a kind of first-fruits of His creatures.”

CHAPTER XVIII.

MINISTRY.

ON several grounds it is extremely desirable that in the matter of organization and ministry Christendom should return to the simple, but sufficient and effective, order found in the New Testament. It is desirable, for one reason, on the ground of *unity*. We find, for instance, that in all questions as to unity in which the Anglican Church and Non-conformist Churches are concerned, the so-called "Historic Episcopate" stands in the way. It is desirable, also, on the ground of efficiency. When even these Nonconformist bodies are considered, we find, not only much deference paid to men who have been *ordained* to what is called "the ministry" (to which if the deference were given because the men are specially holy and devoted no one can well object), but also we find certain parts of the work of the Lord are in many cases done by them exclusively, as if some divine arrangement would be violated, as when Uzzah put forth his hand and took hold of the Ark of the Lord, if other believers, however able and devoted, should serve in these particulars.

Yet when the matter is judged by the New Testament, which alone all parties profess to regard as authoritative, even the scholars of the Anglican Church have to confess that their views about bishops and clergymen are at best only faintly suggested. We may mention an example we have lately happened to come across. In his very spiritual and helpful book entitled "Philippian Studies," to quote the title-page, "the right Rev. H. C. G. Moule, D.D., Lord Bishop of Durham," translates verse 1 as follows: "Paul and Timotheus, bondservants of Christ Jesus, to all the holy ones in Christ

Jesus, who are living at Philippi, overseers, workers, and all"; and, giving the Greek words rendered, in the Common version, "with the bishops and deacons," he adds in a footnote: "I render the words as literally as possible, not to discredit the distinctive functions of the Christian ministry, but to remind the reader of the natural origin of the titles by which Christian ministers are designated. And it is important here to remember that our word *bishop*, while derived from '*episcopos*,' cannot properly translate *it as it is used in the New Testament*. For '*episcopos*' is not used there as the special title of a superintendent pastor set over other pastors." We do not quote his further sentences, which affirm that such superintendents *are* found in the New Testament, as that would take us too far aside. The concession is definite enough, and having said that Bishop Lightfoot held the same views, he concludes by saying that he personally knew these views were held by Lightfoot to the end. We would go further and say that such titles as we have quoted above, and the restricting of work to certain ordained men, is in contradiction to both the letter and the spirit of New Testament Christianity.

I. MUTUAL AND GENERAL MINISTRY.

When we speak of the ministry of the Church, our minds go off at once to preaching or teaching or administering baptism and the Lord's Supper, or other similar ministry. But just as our word ministry is a general word, and covers giving refreshment to a weary or sick man quite as accurately as it does preaching, so the words of the Greek usually rendered by minister and its derivatives are general and apply to all sorts of service. The context may indicate that one kind of service is meant in any passage, but the limitation is not conveyed by the word itself but by the context. Thus *diakonia* and its verb *diakoneo* mostly rendered ministry and minister, is used by Peter, in Acts vi. 2-4, first to cover the ministry he wanted

to be relieved of, and then of the ministry he wished to concentrate on. The one he described as to minister tables, the other as the ministry of the Word. The noun *diakonos*, from which comes our "deacon," is used of one who renders any service, whether accounted *lowly*, for those who filled the waterpots are named *deacons* (John ii.), or *exalted*, for Christ was a *minister* of the Circumcision and Paul in preaching (Eph. iii. 7); *political*, for the civil officer is called a minister or deacon of God; or *religious*, for Epaphras was a minister or deacon of Christ; *infernal*, for Satan has his ministers or deacons (2 Cor. xi. 15); or *supernal*, ministers of God, as already quoted, or of *righteousness*.

Hence we call attention to the fact that the ministry of the Church, in the New Testament, is mutual and general, it is a ministry in which the members minister, according to gift or ability to each other's good, and a ministry in which each and every member is to participate. Thus in Rom. xii., after a call to his readers to present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, their reasonable service, Paul appeals to every man of them not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think but so to think as to think soberly, according as God had dealt to each man a measure of faith. This *sober* thought, or literally sanity of thought, is the estimate of one's powers for service which is neither too high, urging to do what one has not the ability to do; nor too low, leading one to depreciate his powers and to remain idle, ministered unto but not ministering.

"FOR," says the apostle, "EVEN AS WE HAVE MANY MEMBERS IN ONE BODY, AND ALL THE MEMBERS HAVE NOT THE SAME OFFICE: SO WE, WHO ARE MANY, ARE ONE BODY IN CHRIST, AND SEVERALLY MEMBERS ONE OF ANOTHER."

We give this quotation in strong type, for the ideal it presents—every member his or her work, is repeated again and again. It is mutual and general ministry, embracing within it, of course, special ministry of various kinds. In 1 Corinthians Paul uses the whole human body, including the

head, as a figure for the Church ; but in Eph. iv. and Col. ii. he lets the head set forth Christ while the body only represents the Church :—" But speaking truth in love we may grow up in all things into Him, who is the Head, even Christ ; from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love " (Eph. iv. 16). " Not holding fast the Head, from whom all the body, being supplied and knit together through the joints and bands, increaseth with the increase of God " (Col. ii. 19).

It is clear, of course, that Paul had no idea of this general ministry as being confined to such work as we sometimes sum up as "*the Ministry.*" He did not think of a few members doing everything, nor of those who had no aptitude for doing so teaching and preaching. Indeed, his idea was to have every member confine himself to what he *could* do, and would do all the better if he concentrated on that work—became, so to speak, a specialist.

This idea the Apostle himself applies in Rom. xii. After the passage likening the Church to a body in which each member has an office, but not the same office, he proceeds : " And having gifts differing according to the grace that was given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of our faith ; or ministry, let us give ourselves to our ministry ; or he that teacheth, to his teaching ; or he that exhorteth, to his exhorting ; he that giveth, let him do it with liberality ; he that ruleth, with diligence ; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness." Quite in harmony with this idea of mutual ministry, even in the highest kinds of ministry, as we are apt to think the ministry of the Word is, is a verse touching the subject casually and undesignedly, when, towards the end of his Epistle, he treats of personal matters : " And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another."

We have perhaps quoted Scripture enough, but we feel drawn to enrich our pages with an extract from 1 Peter iv. 7-11, in which the same spirit of mutual encouragement and love, and the same teaching on mutual ministry, come to us from the "primary apostle": "But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore of sound mind, and be sober unto prayer: above all things being fervent in your love among yourselves; for love covereth a multitude of sins: using hospitality one to another without murmuring: according as each hath received a gift, ministering it among yourselves, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God; if any man speaketh, speaking as it were oracles of God; if any man ministereth, ministering as of the strength which God supplieth: that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, whose is the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

In St. Paul's Cathedral lately Canon Scott Holland spoke quite openly of this mutual ministry and, though in some doubt of its being practicable in our day, expressed his appreciation. As they may express what many feel, we quote some of his words: "Is it any good at all to recall an ideal which has long ceased to be conceivable? Will not the very irony of the contrast between what it supposes possible and what actually is the case unnerve and kill us? How can we bear to listen to language so ludicrously, so painfully out of scale? Will it not deepen our depression to realize the scorn and ignominy with which the splendid rehearsal of this last hope covers our contemptible situation? So we might ask ourselves as we read this passage of St. Paul, chosen for the Epistle of to-day, and recognize all that it intends and involves.

"'Having, then, gifts differing according to the grace that is in us.' You see, he assumes for a certainty, without question or proof, that every single believer has, of course, a special aptitude for some particular service to be rendered to the Body of Christ. This is bound to be the case by virtue of the condition of things into which we have entered by baptism. Each one has a gift, a use to be put to, a function

to fulfil. Each brings a personal contribution to the common stock of resources. Each is definitely and deliberately wanted for the exercise of a talent which the welfare of the whole community requires for its perfection.

“This is the plain assumption on which the Apostle can count. The life of faith presupposes it to be true. You cannot believe in Christ without by that very fact passing into His service. For you have come to take your place in a busy household, turning all the wealth entrusted to it to usury for the Master’s good. And the work is urgent; all must set themselves to it. One has ten talents, and one has five, and one has two. And there is some one to bring in the food at the proper time, and some one to watch as porter at the door. So our Lord has pictured its rhythmic punctualities.

“So again it is to be conceived of as a living Body into which you are knit up. This vital organism can admit of no dead material. Every fibre, every nerve, every muscle, every organ, must be in full functional activity. There can be no useless stuff.”

Further on he adds: “And yet this is just the ideal which never presents itself to us in the Church. We hardly know what it means. It sounds like a far-off dream, that mocks us with futile allusions. ‘Having, then, gifts differing, and every one his own gift.’ ‘Members one of another and every member its own function.’ How unreal! How inconceivable! How false to facts as we know them! So we are bound to feel as the brave words fall upon our ears.”

The speaker seems in despair! Yet before he finished he refers to “the Church of England Men’s Society” as inaugurating a better state of things.

The preacher inquires at some length why to modern “Churchmen” this mutual and general ministry of the Church seems so impossible of realization. One reason occurs to us, which, from the circumstances, does not occur to him. It appears to us that the distinction between what are called clergy and laity, the erection of a priesthood other than the

priesthood of believers, has invested the ministry with such a hands-off air that ordinary believers could not touch the work if they would, or would not if they could. Up to now special licences to serve, even as laymen, hedge the service around. We think the Canon's lively account of the progress of a recent movement goes to show distinctly that men only need the liberty to minister and they will gladly do so. We hope that as time goes on less trust will be put in the chain of Apostolic Succession, with its broken links, and more in the rights of those possessing the new life in Christ, offering themselves unto God as alive from the dead, and their members as instruments of righteousness unto God. After giving two reasons why the apostolic order seems so impracticable Canon Scott Holland goes on—

“Is not that the real confession that so many of us have to make? You see, dear people, where we are. Our first difficulty lies in this, that the Church did not want us; and the second was this, that there was nothing in us for it to want. Let us take these two charges, two complaints, in order.

“As to the first, its worst day is over. It has been true, dreadfully true, for many a long year. But it is not wholly true now. There is a visible, and tangible, and standing disproof of it before our eyes. You know the Church of England Men's Society has sprung into being throughout the length and breadth of the land. It has now immense numbers. It spreads faster than we know how to gather it up.

“Now, how did this happen? What was its motive force? Well, it exists entirely in response to the Church's demand for active service in all its members. That is the good news which has broken out upon our laity as if it had been a new gospel. It was a new gospel to learn that every communicant by going to Communion is pledged to give out in service what he takes in by grace; and that you cannot eat of the Bread at the altar without undertaking a ministry on behalf of the Body. That is the one principle of this Society of ours. That is its one appeal. That is the sole motive by which it has grown. For

years we could not get this clearly understood. We used to sit quite desperate in the Central Executive of the Church of England Men's Society, doubting whether we could really last another year. Funds were failing; no one joined. Nothing happened. We were a total failure. Suddenly, this law of service got itself altered; got itself heard. Men understood at last that they were invited to give, not to take; to live for others, not to find peace and comfort for themselves. They were wanted by their Church. They could be put to work. Belief in Jesus Christ was a missionary activity; it was a vocation; a call to put your gift to profit on behalf of the whole body."

Just so; "men understood at last"—it no doubt took time for these laymen to realize that the clergymen calling them to service were in genuine earnest. We believe that the exclusiveness of the orders of the priesthood, and even of the Nonconformist ministers, stands in the way of the New Testament mutual ministry being realized.

II. A SPECIAL TEMPORARY MINISTRY.

We have seen that "each man his work" involves and implies many kinds of specialists, the manifold or variegated grace of God in the Church. But we refer now to a quite special ministry distinguished from all the rest as being *non-local* and *supernaturally endowed or gifted*. A list of these is given in Eph. iv. 11. After describing Christ's ascension to glory Paul says, "And he gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers." Also in 1 Cor. xii., where the writer discusses the spiritual or supernaturally endowed ministers of the Church, he gives a similar list: "And God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, divers kinds of tongues." Other references are found, such as the words in the opening thanksgiving of this Epistle, "In everything ye

were enriched in him, in all utterance and all knowledge ; even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you : so that ye come behind in no gift " (1 Cor. i. 5, 6). These spiritual gifts being spoken of as " confirming the testimony of Christ " reminds us of another reference : " How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation ? which, having at the first been spoken by the Lord, was confirmed unto us by them that heard ; God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will " (Heb. ii. 3, 4).

This was, of course, in the planting of the Church an all-important ministry. The present writer has written somewhat of it in a pamphlet entitled " The Apostles of Christ. " Here we must be content to name a few distinctions of this ministry.

(1) *It was supernaturally endowed.*

The above quotations prove this. Apostles were marked by power to work miracles, and *prophets* are men moved by the Holy Spirit and their utterances inspired of God.

(2) *It was non-local.*

Other special ministers, as elders, acted each in the local assembly, but the apostles and some others moved from place to place and their authority was acknowledged " in every Church. " In the list in Eph. iv. the one class with two names, " pastors and teachers, " may be an exception, the word " pastor " is not found elsewhere ; but as we do know that apostles, prophets, and evangelists were regarded as belonging to all the Churches, perhaps, in the absence of knowledge, we may regard their presence in the list as separating them from the local officers, bishops and deacons, who are not mentioned here.

(3) *It was temporary.*

We think there are indications in the New Testament that these gifts were expected to cease ; we have not found any

claims to possess the power to work miracles substantiated, as by Mormons, Irvingites and others, and conclude they belonged to the period of establishment and have ceased. Eph. iv. says they were given "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the *ministry*, for the building up of the body of Christ *until*," and then follows a description of the Church in an established condition, able by that which every joint supplieth to attain "the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love." "The faith," we read, "was once for all delivered unto the saints;" that done, the supernatural or miraculous was gradually withdrawn. How gradually we have but little to show. The "Didache," or "Teaching of the Apostles," a document regarded as being as early as A.D. 100, in Chapter XV., after detailing the reception given to apostles, prophets, and teachers, charges the brethren thus: "Appoint for yourselves, therefore, bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord, meek and not lovers of money, and true and approved; for unto you they also perform the service of the prophets and teachers. Therefore despise them not for they are your honourable men [or men to be honoured], along with the prophets and teachers." This shows clearly that the supernaturally endowed were still acknowledged and regarded as superior to the locally appointed officers. We presume that they ceased soon after this.

"*Ceased*"—and yet only in the sense that no succession of such gifts was thought needful and desirable. Like Abel, they being dead yet speak. It is evident that the divine intention was that through the New Testament, their teaching and its authority should continue. The New Testament contains no hint of the devolution of their authority on others. As the Apostles and Prophets were *agents* in establishing and revealing the constitution of *the kingdom of God*, their work therefore continues as long as the kingdom. The Church is founded upon the foundation of Apostles and Prophets (Eph. iv.). The Saviour's prayer (John xvii. 20) shows that the word of the Apostles would be essential to the faith of all future

believers; and this is so as a fact, for no one believes in Christ, or knows anything regarding Him, except through the New Testament writings. We may refer to our pamphlet, "The Apostles of Christ," for further proofs.

The analogy of the Old and New Dispensation is striking. Just as Moses and the Prophets continued to speak right on until Christ through the Old Covenant Scriptures; so the Apostles and Prophets of the early Church continue to teach the "all things" necessary for the conversion of the world and the well-being of the Church through the New Testament Scriptures.

III. A SPECIAL PERMANENT MINISTRY.

We have seen that every member of the Church is a minister—the rule is, as expressed in language shaped by the figure of a human body, "that which every joint supplieth!" But it appears that there were certain ministers appointed in every Church. These were *local* ministers, and we conclude belong to the permanent organization of each Church of God; they are elders, or bishops, and deacons. Our space will not allow of any detailed consideration, and there is the less need as we have given the important fact at the beginning of this chapter which shows that even Church of England scholars concede *a bishop* in New Testament was simply a pastor of a single congregation. We add that all the allusions to the appointment of elders or bishops show a plurality in each Church. We read that there were *elders* in the Church at Jerusalem (Acts xi. 30; xv. 2, etc.); *elders* were appointed in the Churches in Asia Minor (Acts xiv. 23); *elders* of the Church in Ephesus were sent for (Acts xx. 17); and Titus was instructed to appoint elders in every city (Titus i. 5). So we read of *bishops* in the Church at Ephesus, and at Philippi, and do not read of *the* bishop even of a single Church—much less of the bishop as the pastor of pastors.

We have already noted that the word *diakonos* is a general

word and applied to any one who renders service. It seems to have been used also as the name of a special class of servants of the Church. Thus we read of the *bishops and deacons* at Philippi and of their appointment, under the same conditions and requiring to possess much the same qualifications, as the bishops (1 Tim. iii. 8-12).

Two lists of the qualifications are given in 1 Tim. iii. and Titus i. The lists, it will be noted, are not word for word the same, but substantially agree and complement each other, as free sketches of the portrait of a Christian of mature character, and of commendable domestic, social and moral life, such as would be able to take care of the Church.

We have perhaps dealt at too great length with the fact of a mutual or general ministry. Yet we hope not, when we think that this book may be of special interest to those who agree that the Church is a local community of believers in Christ, that the supernatural ministry only remains in the form of the Scriptures, and that the only church officers are those named elders, or bishops and deacons. It seems that for all such the great question is how to reach the New Testament General Ministry—all at work for the Church's edification and the world's salvation.

CHAPTER XIX.

CHRISTIAN UNION.

ALTHOUGH eleven years have elapsed since we wrote a few introductory words to a study of this subject, what has happened since, especially the call for union for the foreign field, has confirmed the hopeful view then taken. We then said : During the last twenty years a great change has taken place in the attitude of Christendom towards the subject of Christian union. Broadly speaking, the divisions used to be apologized for or justified ; and Christian union spoken of, not merely as impracticable, but even as undesirable. To-day, though many still fear union is impracticable, the great majority allow it to be "a consummation devoutly to be wished." Seldom now are the various sects justified by such comparisons as the different regiments in an army all fighting under one general ; but alike in this country, in America, and in Australia, there is a strong sentiment of disapproval of sectarianism, and a great desire for union. Wesley's lines—

"Let names and sects and parties fall,
And Thou, O Christ, be all in all,"

meet with sympathizers everywhere. Conferences are held and efforts made, and in a few instances some of the parties nearest to each other have actually united.

At the great World Missionary Conference recently held in Edinburgh, the necessity for union was urged on the ground of our Lord's prayer recorded in John xvii. His words, "That they all may be one. . . . THAT THE WORLD MAY BELIEVE THAT THOU DIDST SEND ME," were the off-repeated call, and since then it is more generally realized than ever that *Our*

Lord deemed the manifest union of believers to be necessary to the conversion of the world. This is surely the right place to begin. Christ requires a unity. But He has done more than that, He has shown in this prayer of His what kind of unity, what is the nature and basis of the unity He prayed for. Christian union therefore is a New Testament theme, and we should be equally anxious to know the nature and basis of the unity our Lord prayed for, as to desire it, assured that a unity of a different nature and on a different basis can neither fulfil His prayer, nor in the end lead to the world believing in Him.

Let us then first consider the Lord's prayer of John xvii. Bengel says: "This chapter is in the whole of the Scriptures the easiest in its words, the deepest in its meaning." That statement, true as it is, does not present its most impressive feature. "The Holy of Holies" was the description given by Alexander Maclaren to the preceding three chapters; and this sense of the presence of the divine, calling for solemn awe and reverence on our part, seems even greater in the prayer of chapter xvii. At the close of His communion with "His own," Jesus lifted up His eyes to heaven and prayed—prayed in ever-widening circle; first, for Himself; then for His Apostles; and after that for believers through the Apostles' word; and, ultimately, though less directly, for the world.

No doubt, as Bengel says, there are depths in the chapter, but at least we may rejoice that some things here relating to Christian union are clear. When Jesus prayed that believers might be one in order that the world might believe that the Father had sent Him, He indicated that the unity of believers was essential to the conversion of the world. Further, the inference seems inevitable that the union must be a visible union. Otherwise, how could the world be impressed by it? How could the world be led by it to believe that Jesus Christ is the Sent One of God?

That this unity of believers is essential to the world's belief only emphasizes, as already said, the importance of understanding the nature of the unity for which our Lord prayed. If

our minds are fixed on a unity of another kind, on, say, an external union, based on some human formula, while Jesus thought of a unity in the Spirit, it would not be safe for us to expect the world's conversion through it, and, if we did so, we would not have Christ's authority for our expectation.

Most outstanding is the unity between

the Father and Jesus.

Of the unity of believers for which Jesus prayed the pattern or type is—the oneness of the Father and the Son. This unity Jesus evidently desires to be extended so as to embrace first the Apostles and, through them, the believers of later days.

We are helped to see that this is the unity Christ prayed for by the preceding chapters, of which the prayer of chapter xvii. is the climax. In chapter xiv. Jesus asks, "Believest thou not that I am in the Father and the Father in Me?" He urges acceptance of this unity of the Father and Himself: "Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me." Then—and the order is significant—after promising to send them the Holy Spirit He extends this unity to include believers: "In that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in Me, and I in you." Of any man that loves Him He says: "We will come unto Him and make our abode with Him." The comparison of the true vine is to show the value of the exhortation, "Abide in Me and I in you." Very significant is the statement made while promising the Spirit, that the world *could not* receive the Spirit. The world had not received Jesus and His word; the disciples had. This made a gulf between the disciples and the world; they could, the world could not, receive the coming Spirit. What is thus clearly indicated is: First, the disciples had received Christ and His word; secondly, this fitted them to receive the Spirit; thirdly, the Spirit would extend the unity of Father and Son to the believers: "In that day," said Jesus, that is the day of the reception of the Spirit, "ye shall know that I am in the Father and ye in Me and I in you."

Another help to assurance as to the nature of the unity Jesus prayed for, and also as to the basis on which it is asked for, should now be noted, namely, that there is a certain uniformity in presenting the petitions: Jesus first states the ground—the basis as we say—why each petition should be granted, and then presents the petition.

First, He does this in reference to Himself. He begins by stating the *reason why* His prayer should be answered. He does not say, like Whittier:—

“ I bow my forehead to the dust,
I veil mine eyes for shame,
And urge in trembling self-distrust,
A prayer without a claim.”

Rather, with utmost reverence, He urges a great indisputable claim. First note the basis of the petition, “*I have glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou gavest Me to do.*” Then follows the petition He asks for on that basis: “*And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me.*”

Secondly, in like manner and at much greater length, *He describes the basis on which He prays for His Apostles.* It may be enough to quote one central statement: “For the words which Thou gavest Me I have given unto them; and they received them, and knew of a truth that I came forth from Thee, and they believed that Thou didst send Me.” On this basis He could pray for them, and because this basis was absent, He distinctly says, “*I pray not for the world.*” On this ground then, that they had so fully received Him and His word, He prays for their unity to be *as* the unity of the Father and Himself: “Holy Father, *keep them* in Thy name which Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, *EVEN AS WE.*”

Thirdly, when He prays for future believers, the same order is followed, (1) the basis—“*I pray for them also that believe on Me through their (the Apostles’) word*”; (2) the prayer for unity: “That they all may be one, *even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us.*”

It is clear (1) that the unity for which He prayed for the Apostles was a *vital* unity resulting from their inclusion in the unity of Himself and His Father. Such a unity their acceptance of Christ's word and belief in Him fitted them for, and it was consummated by the reception of the Holy Spirit. (2) It is equally clear that the unity of after-believers was to be the same—an extension of the same unity to *those prepared by their reception* of the Apostles' word and consequent faith in Christ.

This involves that all who believe through the Apostles' word shall receive the Holy Spirit. Now this is affirmed to be the case in many of the Epistles. Rom. viii., for example, is full of this very subject—the unity of believers with Christ and so with one another, and that through their being indwelt by the Holy Spirit. “But ye,” says the Apostle to these saints at Rome, “are not in the flesh but in the spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. But if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness.” There can be no doubt that the Spirit here spoken of successively as the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and Christ Himself, is the Holy Spirit whom Christ promised to send as “another Comforter,” for when mentioned again He is called “the Spirit of Him that raised up Christ from the dead,” and through this spirit that dwelleth in us, God, it is promised, “will quicken even our mortal bodies.”

“All things are of God.” It must be so when the “thing” is inclusion of men in the unity existing between the Father and the Son. The Father, through Christ and the Holy Spirit, is the Author of Christian unity. There is, of course, the condition on our side; accepting Christ is essential. The New Testament Christian unity, though manifest to the world, is not shared in by the world because it does not believe in Christ. The nature of Christian unity is spiritual; its basis is unqualified reception of Christ as the Son of God. The Apostle sums it up in two verses of the same context in Gal. iii. and iv. “Ye are all children of God, by faith, in

Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ." . . . "And because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father."

Finely in harmony with all the foregoing is the passage in 1 Cor. i. and iii. condemning Church parties. We should note that such Scriptures show that although Christian union is of God and we are only responsible in preparation for it, we have immediate responsibility for its maintenance. We are exhorted to "Abide in Him;" to "keep the unity of the Spirit," and division and strife are condemned as tending to its destruction. Schisms in the Church are condemned and pronounced *carnal*. So, too, is the use of the names of favourite teachers as leaders. The Apostle's words upon this error exhibit the basis of the union with which the condemned practices were out of harmony. They were contrary to *the supremacy of the Lord Jesus*—to the fact that HE it was in whom they were united, the ONE who stood in a unique relationship to them which no one else could claim or occupy. Paul's questions, "Was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized into the name of Paul?" show unmistakably how infinitely more Christ is to believers than any human teacher can be. Paul doubtless had suffered much and been near to death, but this was not to be thought of in the same category as the crucifixion of Christ, the atoning death of the Son of God. Further we were baptized INTO *His Name*. This meant acceptance of Jesus as Lord by each thus *united* with Him in the likeness of His death and resurrection. The basis of Christian union here is a mutual acknowledgment of an infinite debt each owes to Christ and the place each has accepted Him as occupying—they were baptized, not into the name of Paul, but into the Name of Jesus Christ as Lord.

Another important Scripture on the subject of Christian unity is Eph. iv. Here Paul urges the Church to keep *the* unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. We must observe the significance of naming the unity of the Church the unity of

the Spirit—for we cannot doubt that it is the unity of the Church he desiderates. The letter is dealing with the wondrous fact that of *twain*, Jew and Gentile, God had made *one* Body. To use the language of another, Ellicott, in the Introduction to his Critical Commentary, writes: "The Epistle was designed to set forth the origin and development of the Church of Christ, and to display to the Christian dweller under the shadow of the great temple of Diana, the unity and beauty of that transcendently more glorious spiritual temple of which Christ Himself was the chief corner-stone, and the saints portions of the superstructure." On the phrase, the "unity of the Spirit" he remarks that it is not the genitive of *possession* but of the *originating cause*, and so means that it is a unity which has been *wrought by* the Spirit—the same thought we found in John xvii. and Rom. viii.

Let us trace the Apostle's line of treatment. He first enumerates habits of mind and treatment of each other necessary to preserve unity; then names the grand end to secure which this mutual love and forbearance are to be put to work—"giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace"; lastly, he describes this unity—the one body and the units essential to it: "There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye were called in one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all."

The figure of a body is dropped after the two first units. We may think of the human body animated by its one Spirit, and think of the community of Christians, the Church, as like that—one body animated by its one Spirit—the Spirit of God. But from that point it is better to drop the figure, and think of the literal community of believers united to Christ, indwelt by the Spirit of God, and all the other units are seen to belong to that community. The Church has "One Lord," the supreme One; the "one Hope," of being with and like the Lord for ever; one Faith, belief in the one Lord; one Baptism, or immersion, into Christ and putting Him on; lastly, one God and Father of

all—not only *over* but also *through* and *in* all, reminding us again that this unity is a unity in God through the Spirit—The Church is “a habitation of God in the Spirit.”

The Apostle proceeds to show that even the variety of gifts in the Church was designed to perfect this unity, to co-operate “till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”

These passages, and we believe all the rest of the New Testament confirms it, show that the Christian unity prayed for by the Saviour was a unity of those, and only those, who have accepted Christ, their fitness being completed by the Holy Spirit. Such are the individuals united. The name by which, with approval, such individuals were called of old, was *Christians*. “The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.” The New Testament Christian Union is a Union of Christians.

The community of such individuals was called *The Church*, of which Chapter VIII. treats. We fear that in discussing the subject of Christian union not enough attention is given to the individuals who are to unite. The *Christian* is the *unit*, and the word *Christian* is to be understood as met, and only met, in such disciples of Christ as were so called at Antioch and elsewhere. The union of such as these in the one Body is the only Christian union recognized in the Word of God. We may have, of course, federations and unions on many bases; but the only *basis* our Lord's prayer recognizes is such acceptance of Christ and His Word as fit those to be made one to receive the Holy Spirit, for God does not impart or withhold the Spirit arbitrarily but according to necessary conditions. Christian union is not the result of the vote of some Conference, but of the Spirit's indwelling. “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His.”

The attention given to the individual character and experience covered by the name of the *unit* in Christian union, namely, *Christian*, has, of course, an effect on the word *Church*,

which is a community composed of such Christians. The Church of the New Testament is evidently a body of Christians in the New Testament sense. All of the members have been crucified with Christ; have risen to walk with Him in newness of life. They are all solemnly consecrated to the service of Christ, and, for His sake, to the service of the Church and of the world.

Now this means of necessity that a good number of people who are manifestly and confessedly not regenerate would be excluded. Some one—Dr. Gore, I think—suggests that we need to be less solicitous about quantity than quality, about numbers than Christ-like character in the membership of the Churches. The New Testament union of Christians is based on character, on regeneration.

Then we need to note the influence, on the conception of Christian union, which is involved in the conception of the Church as a local assembly. There was no vast organization in apostolic days of these local organizations so that the whole formed "the Church" in which the local assembly was only a part. A part of the Church!—the idea is foreign to the New Testament. No, the local assembly fulfils in itself the idea of *the Church*. It may consist of ten or of ten thousand, as convenience and gifts decide; but few or many, so long as they attend to the teaching of Christ and His Apostles, they need no recognition nor commands from pope, or archbishop, or Conference, or Synod, to constitute them the Church of God in Christ Jesus.

Of course, this would do away with much in the form of organization which gives rise to many offices and dignitaries not found in the New Testament, much that we submit is an imitation of mere worldly organization, and gives scope for faction and vain glory as well as the exercise of great spiritual power and intellectual ability. That the New Testament ideal of Christian union should not provide for worldly ambition will not surprise any one who knows the laws of the Kingdom of God—the greatest to be the servant of all; and that the

New Testament ideal of the Church will cripple the truly great ones we do not believe, who know that R. W. Dale was provided with scope enough by his membership in one such Church. For while each Church is free from the *authority* of others, each is free to co-operate with all the other such Churches in the work of the Lord.

The realization of this New Testament "Union of Christians" would be a great change. Sectarian names would all disappear. There would remain only what the President of the Free Church Council calls "the denominationalism of the New Testament," which, he says, is "Disciples, Believers, Brothers, Saints," and adds that "These are the vital things. Here the emphasis is to be laid." There would be but one Church—the Church of God—realized, as at the first, wherever two or three, or as many thousands, were gathered into the name of Christ. And these Churches would, as at first, constitute the Church built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone; and each several building, wheresoever situated, would grow into a holy temple in the Lord.

CHAPTER XX.

THE PLEA FOR RESTORATION.

IN the year 1909 there was held in Pittsburg, Pa., U.S.A., the centenary of a community pleading for the restoration of Primitive Christianity, at which some 50,000 delegates were present. In Sydney, N.S.W., Australia, a similar commemoration was held, and in connection with the latter a volume was published entitled "That They All may be One," in which the following totals of statistics are given: United States, members, 1,283,945; Scandinavia, 1,451; Great Britain, 14,501; South Africa, 298; Australian Commonwealth, 18,925; New Zealand, 3,740.

TOTAL FOR THE WORLD: Churches, 11,702; members, 1,332,873.

The centenary was reckoned from the issue of a document entitled, "Declaration and Address of the Christian Association of Washington," in which the reasons were given for the formation of this society, and which was written by Thomas Campbell, a Presbyterian minister, who went to the States in 1807. Later he was joined by his son, Alexander Campbell, who subsequently took a leading part in the movement inaugurated by his father. As an American writer says, "No chapter in American Church history, none, we may truly say, in universal Church history, is more fascinating than that of the work inaugurated by the Campbells and their co-labourers." It will hardly be expected that such increase has been made without diversity, and some considerable objection is taken by the Churches in Great Britain, and by many in America itself, to some changes in America. So far as anything in their practice, or in ours, is contrary to Scripture, so far, we regretfully admit,

we are inconsistent with our plea. But there is less divergence between the *teaching* of the Churches there and here. The preceding chapters of this book represent in a general way the views taken of New Testament Christianity; though it is for the latter, not their *views* of it, they plead, always holding themselves not only theoretically bound, but ready to accept any new light which may break forth from the inspired Word of God.

THE CAUSE IN THE UNITED STATES.

The growth of this people, nameless among the sects, from zero to over one million and a quarter, is a wonderful phenomenon, and our readers may be interested in the following enumeration of some reasons for it given by one of the community in America :—

1. In the beginning of the movement the prevalent conception of Christianity was the Calvinistic. Calvinism contains five points as follows: (1) Men are inherently and totally depraved. (2) A definite number from all eternity were chosen of God unto eternal life, without faith or works or any other thing on the part of man as a condition. (3) Jesus died for the elect only. His atonement was limited. The benefits of His death were not for all men. (4) Those who were elected, and for whom Christ died, are effectually called by the Gospel. (5) Such persons cannot fall away and be lost.

The preaching of the facts, truths, principles, precepts, promises and warnings of the Gospel as contained in the New Testament, came to the people as a new revelation from heaven. It antagonized Calvinism at every point. Many good people were on the verge of despair. They could not find an assurance of their election. They were not certain that Christ died for them. The new teaching assured them that Christ tasted death for every man (Heb. ii. 9); that the good news was to be preached to all (Matt. xxviii. 18-20; Mark xvi. 15, 16); and that the invitation to accept the

purchased redemption was extended to all : " He that will, let him take the water of life freely " (Rev. xxii. 17). This statement partially accounts for the rapid growth in numbers at first.

2. The plea for union is so reasonable, so scriptural, and so full of the spirit of the Prince of Peace, that it has from the beginning taken a strong hold on large numbers. It presented a marked contrast to the bitter strifes and sectarian contentions with which the Church was cursed. Into the midst of this conflict the disciples threw themselves, saying, " Let us have peace." How? " By a return to the religion of Jesus as it is described in the New Testament—its faith, its ordinances, its life." The protest against the sin of division commended itself to good men, intelligent and fair-minded, as warranted by the word and spirit of Holy Scripture. The prayer of the Saviour is a sufficient warrant for the plea in behalf of unity and peace among those who believe.

3. The clear and scriptural teaching as to the steps that men must take, according to the New Testament, to enjoy an assurance of salvation. They said : " He that hath ears, let him hear." " *Belief* cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ " (Rom. x. 17). " He that disbelieveth shall be condemned " (Mark xvi. 16). " Without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto God " (Heb. xi. 6). " Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved " (Acts xvi. 31). " God commandeth men that they should all everywhere *repent* " (Acts xvii. 30). " With the mouth *confession* is made unto salvation " (Rom. x. 10). " Be baptized every one of you," who, having heard, now believe, repent, and confess Christ, " unto the remission of your sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit " (Acts ii. 38). Baptism brings penitent believers into Christ (Rom. vi. 3). Hence it is said to save (1 Peter iii. 21). This scriptural, reasonable, logical and positive presentation of " the way of salvation," constantly supported by quotations and illustrations from the written word, accounts in part for the success of the disciples in gaining adherents.

These are some of the reasons for rapid increase. We incline to add to the above *an extensive use of the press.*

It has been said already, that such a movement has not been without diversity, and changes of emphasis, and differences as to the propriety of this "expedient" or that. We are glad to believe that the history shows that the New Testament has proved in practice, as it was held to be from the start, a sufficient rule of faith and practice. With no creed of human origin, they have continued all along the century, speaking generally to teach the same things; and though in Great Britain the Churches of Christ have dissented from some features in the American *practice*, the *teaching* there and here has been all along very much the same.

THE CAUSE IN GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

The intimation of the movement set on foot in America, by which the work in Great Britain was affected, was made by a celebrated Scotch Baptist to his circle of readers, who also were principally Scotch Baptists. The title-page of the magazine in which this was done reads: "The Millennial Harbinger and Voluntary Church Advocate, conducted by William Jones, M.A., author of the History of the Waldenses; Biblical Cyclopædia; Lectures on the Apocalypse; Ecclesiastical History, etc., vol. i." This title-page bears date 1835, and contains as motto the following characteristic sentence from Alexander Campbell:—"Lord Jesus, may Thy character open to our view, as depicted in Thy doctrine, Thy miracles, Thy suffering, Thy death, Thy resurrection, and Thy glory! And then we shall not fear to put ourselves *exclusively* under Thee, as our Lawgiver, our Prophet, our Priest, and our King."

Mr. Jones commenced this magazine to communicate a knowledge of the movement in America, and by reprinting some of Mr. Campbell's writings and publications, to make known its principles. It was not so easy in those days to get information from the United States as it is now, and one is

interested in noting how circumstantially Mr. Jones tells how the news came, especially narrating an incident which took place in the chapel in London where he ministered. He writes—

“During the summer months of 1833, on the afternoon of the Lord’s Day, while the public worship of God was going forward, at the chapel in Windmill Street, Finsbury Square, a young man was perceived to enter and take his seat near the pulpit.” That young man, Mr. Peyton C. Wyeth by name, was one of “the disciples” personally acquainted with Alexander Campbell, and through him Mr. Jones not only gained much information, but also was brought into touch by correspondence with Mr. Campbell himself.

The seed thus sown soon bore fruit, for in 1836 Mr. James Wallis, of Nottingham, a business man of sterling character and great intelligence, left the Scotch Baptists, and, with others, formed a Church of the New Testament order in his native town; and when, at the end of sixteen months, Mr. Jones ceased to issue his *Harbinger*, Mr. Wallis commenced to publish the *Christian Messenger*, in order to continue the republication of Mr. Campbell’s writings. It is thus seen that Mr. Wallis was the first individual, and the Church in Nottingham the first assembly, to take a stand on New Testament ground, as a consequence of the American movement. We say “as a consequence of the American movement,” for other Churches afterwards joined the movement, which had occupied much the same position for years previously. For example, a small Church in Ireland, near Dungannon, and another at Coxlane, near Chester, had existed from about 1804, while a third now in our fellowship—Rose Street, Kirkcaldy—began as far back as 1798.

If the seed came from America, the ground here had been prepared by the labours of such men as Mr. Archibald McLean and his coadjutors. This work came under review in the correspondence between Jones and Campbell, and the former asked: “May I hope for pardon, sir, if I add that even ‘the

Reformation' in the United States owes something in the way of gratitude to our Scotch Churches?"

By means of the *Christian Messenger*, pamphlets, tracts, and much personal labour, there gradually came into fellowship with each other a number of Churches, accepting the principles of the Reformation; and in 1842 the first conference was held at Edinburgh, when some 50 Churches were associated, 42 of whom reported a membership of 1,300. The next conference did not take place until 1847, in which year the Churches were refreshed and stimulated by the visit of A. Campbell, accompanied by James Henshall. Since the year just named, a general conference has taken place without interruption to the year 1910, when Liverpool was the place of assembly, and 194 Churches reported a membership of 14,822.

The rate of progress has been remarkably regular, and presents throughout much the same features. Churches have added new members, or they have planted new Churches: or a Church which has grown up more or less apart from help from us has (in some cases with necessary changes in doctrine and practice) sought and obtained entrance into the co-operation.

Each of these Churches, being complete in itself, and under no authority but that of the Lord Jesus, their work would be best set forth by dealing with each separately. But the conviction has obtained among them from the beginning that the New Testament favours Churches helping each other in Gospel work, and so it will suffice here to notice what is a chief feature of the British Churches, their "co-operation for evangelistic purposes." This mutual help has been extended by means of an annual conference and its arrangements. It was early perceived that this conference might degenerate into a legislative assembly, to prevent which the limits of co-operation were defined in resolutions of the "annual meeting." These state in effect that a Church, being on the list of Churches, only means that such Church desires to co-operate, and not that we recognize such Churches only as Churches of Christ; and they also state

that all resolutions submitted to the Churches are recommendations only. In this way the liberty of Churches is preserved, and each Church left free to recognize and work with any Church not in co-operation.

The work in Australasia began in the year 1844. There is a membership there of some 23,000. In considering the fact that progress in Great Britain has been slower, admitting much imperfection, we would yet suggest that, as compared with America and the Colonies, we are at a great disadvantage through the conservatism of an old society. We would add that a second important cause has been the constant loss sustained by emigration from a crowded land. But we hasten to add that we have also

Causes for Rejoicing.

(1) Coincident with the period of our history a great change has taken place in the religious community in its views on the great question of Christian unity. We are not now alone in our condemnation of divisions and longing for all who love the Saviour to be one according to His prayer. That sentiment is now universal. Recognizing this happy change as due to many causes, we *know*, nevertheless, that we have had a share in bringing it about.

(2) We rejoice in the many who have been brought to Christ and have lived the new life and died rejoicing in the hope of the Gospel in these Churches. We think not only of prominent workers, but also of the many undistinguished brethren, often "poor as to the world but rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to them that love Him."

(3) The Churches here have been greatly blessed by the sense of brotherhood in Christ, and in the possession of leaders such as the late David King, of Birmingham, and Gilbert Young Tickle, of Liverpool, whose names are "household words," and the memory of whose lives is "a goodly heritage." Other names occur, but we think these can be mentioned without being invidious.

(4) Last, but not least,

Our Colonial Brethren.

When disciples of old were "scattered" "they went about preaching the word." With some differences, we yet trace a similar divine providence in so many of our number emigrating in former years to Australia and New Zealand, and more recently to Canada and South Africa. These emigrations have often been a cause of pain, for not seldom those who have left us were energetic brethren, from whom help was expected in aggressive work. But, with Paul, we say, "The things which happened unto us have fallen out rather unto the progress of the Gospel"; and with joy we write that in the Churches in the homeland the Australasian Churches are beloved for Christ's sake, and also rejoiced in as *compensation for the pain referred to above*, and as part proof that we have not "run in vain, neither laboured in vain."

The reader will understand from the position stated, that we have framed no creed to be a bond of union, or as such things have inevitably proved, a cause of disunion. But from time to time there have been published, for the information of others, longer or shorter descriptions of the position taken. The following, which was prepared some years ago, has been extensively used, and may be here added as it represents the main lines of the plea of these Churches throughout the world—

THINGS MOST SURELY BELIEVED AMONG US.

The Bible.

We hold that it is the Word of God, revealing His will in different dispensations; the New Testament revealing more particularly the New and Better Covenant.

The Foundation.

"Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." This truth is the

foundation of the Church, and must be believed and confessed in order to salvation. Matt. xvi. 16; John xx. 30, 31; Rom. x. 9, 10.

The Gospel.

Is "the power of God unto salvation," Rom. i. 16; it is "concerning God's Son," Rom. i. 1-4, and so includes the foundation truth above; and also the redeeming work of Christ—His death for our sins; His burial; and His resurrection for our justification. 1 Cor. xv. 1-3; Rom. iv. 24.

The Baptism.

Commanded by Christ to be administered to all disciples (Matt. xxviii. 19) is an immersion in water, Acts viii. 36, 38; x. 47; Rom. vi. 4. It is for induction into the Divine Name, into Christ, into Christ's death, and so "unto (or into) the remission of sins," Matt. xxviii. 19; Rom. vi. 1-11; Acts ii. 38. Penitent believers only are qualified for Christian Baptism, Mark xvi. 16; Acts ii. 38. Hence we reject infant sprinkling as unauthorized alike in action and subject.

The Church.

Consists of those who have believed the Gospel, repented of their sins, and been baptized. This appears from the fact that the Church was formed by obeying the Great Commission, Matt. xxviii. 19, 20; Mark xvi. 16; from the accounts of the origin of Churches as in Acts ii. 38-42; xviii. 8; and from the references in the Epistles to members as baptized believers, Rom. vi. 1-11.

The Organization.

Each of the "Churches of Christ" (Rom. xvi. 16) is a local, independent community. Hence each is spoken of as

“The Church of God” in its locality, 1 Cor. i. 2, etc.; and is under no authority except the Lord Jesus, its Head, and His authorized Apostles. We therefore refuse all control of the Church by Conferences, Synods, Councils, Parliaments, Monarchs, or Popes.

The Names.

Sectarian names are held to be sinful, 1 Cor. i. 10-17; iii. 1-5. Only names approved in the New Testament are used by us—for the local community, “CHURCH OF GOD” or “CHURCH OF CHRIST”; the plural for such Churches, or for those in a certain area, as “the Churches of Galatia,” Gal. i. 2. For the individual member, we use “disciple,” “Christian,” etc., Acts xi. 26; 1 Peter iv. 16.

The Lord's Supper.

We attend to this ordinance every first day of the week, Acts xx. 7; 1 Cor. xi. 17-34. We regard it as among the “all things” to be observed by those who have been discipled and baptized (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20), and therefore feel that we have no authority for admitting to “the table of the Lord” any but baptized believers.

The Ministry.

A separate “order” of priests, “clergy,” or “ministers” we hold is unscriptural. All in Christ are priests, 1 Peter ii. 5, 9; Rev. i. 6. Each Church of Christ seeks to have scripturally qualified elders, or bishops, under whom all the members, according to their gifts, edify one another in love. Those appointed specially to minister in temporal things are called deacons.

The Means.

The expenses of evangelization and worship, and also of help to members when in need, are met by the freewill offerings of the Church only.

The Plea for Union.

It is held that Christ wills all believers to be visibly united—ONE IN HIM (John xvii. 21). In New Testament days this was so (Eph. iv. 4-6); variety of opinion outside clearly revealed things not being regarded as breaking the unity. Rom. xiv.

These Features

of our plea, while not exhaustive, show how sectarianism can be done away, and a real unity of believers, in obedience to the Will of Christ, take its place. We submit that a return to New Testament Christianity affords the only true BASIS OF CHRISTIAN UNION.