

Words Of Peace & Truth

No. 106: January – April 2019 CONTENTS

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WORDS OF PEACE & TRUTH

(Esther 9:30; see also Zechariah 8:19 and Jeremiah 33:6)

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Editorial

Hostility against the Christian gospel is obviously increasing around the world. An African preacher was arrested in Southgate, London, recently. It is noteworthy that, whereas men and women from Britain took the gospel to Africa in the nineteenth century, we now need preachers from Africa to bring the message to us! A video clip features the man justifying his preaching by saying that Jesus is the way, the truth and the life, to which a police constable replies, “nobody wants to listen to that.” After being hand-cuffed and taken away the preacher was later “de-arrested.”

It is troubling, however, that while many comments on this incident have been supportive of the preacher, many others have applauded the action of the police. Certainly we need to be “urgent in season and out of season” in proclaiming the word (2 Timothy 4:2), not aggressively yet not just saying “God loves you” but warning of judgment to come (Acts 24:25) and declaring the need for “repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:21).

But how important it is that we who say to others, “hear the word of the Lord” should show that we ourselves are governed by God’s word. Alas, much that is being taught and practised in churches today is blatantly contrary to the Holy Scriptures. May the obedience of the Lord Jesus Himself, as presented in the article on the opposite page, encourage us to walk in subjection to the word of God. May it also be seen that we are a heavenly people, passing through this world as strangers and pilgrims (Heb. 11:13).

G.S.B.

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Jesus – His Obedience

“Having knelt down He (Jesus) prayed, saying, ‘Father, if Thou wilt remove this cup far* from Me! But then, not My will, but Thine be done’” (Luke 22:41, 42).

“Jesus said to Peter: ... ‘the cup which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?’” (John 18:11).

* This word appears in the French version of the Darby translation.

God only prohibited one thing to the first man, whom He had placed in a marvellous garden: he should not eat of a certain tree. But Adam disobeyed, and chose to do his own will rather than God’s.

In contrast, the invariable course of the conduct of Jesus was to do the will of His Father. “Lo, I come ... to do, O God Thy will” (Hebrews 10:7). He said to His disciples: “My food is that I should do the will of Him that has sent Me, and that I should finish His work” (John 3:34). Or again: “I am come down from heaven, not that I should do My will, but the will of Him that has sent Me” (John 6:38).

The disobedience of the first man has been a terrible affront to God. By His obedience, Jesus has rendered to God the honour which was due to Him. He did not obey by constraint, but by love: “That the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father has commanded Me, so I do” (John 14:31).

Being Himself God, Jesus did not have to obey. But, having become Man, He showed what was appropriate to this condition: unconditional obedience to God. This obedience took Him to the cross. He “humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, and to the death of the cross” (Philippians 2:8). God has been fully glorified by the perfect obedience of the Man Christ Jesus.

*Translated from “La Bonne Semence” (The Good Seed),
27.01.19.*

COMFORT

“Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation; that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God” – 2 Corinthians 1: 3, 4.

IN a world like this everyone needs comfort, more or less, at one time or another. It is very blessed to know God as the God of all comfort.

There is a great difference between human comfort and divine. The former is found in dwelling upon the resources which may still be left to us in this world, and in thinking of the possibilities which are before us. Thus many who are in sorrow derive comfort from seeing that things are not so bad as they might be, and from the hope that they may yet be better. When there are no resources left and no possibilities to present, human comfort is dumb.

Thus when Job’s friends came to comfort him in his overwhelming grief, they wept, and sat in silence for seven days and seven nights. His resources were completely gone. When, at length, Job opened his mouth and poured out the bitterness of his spirit, they undertook to vindicate the God of whom they knew but little, and in so doing they insinuated that there must have been secret evil with Job, or he would not have been so completely stripped. “Miserable comforters are ye all!” he exclaimed.

We may observe further that when there are resources left and comfort is derived from them, we are exposed to fresh and more bitter grief, for these may be taken away, and the expectations we have cherished may fail. In the meantime the heart is by such comfort bound closer to the earth and present things. We may see thus how poor and ineffectual human comfort is, and also how it may prove even disastrous to the soul.

The God of all comfort is the One who raises the dead. When man’s resources are all exhausted and the very worst has come,

then God acts. It is often said, man's extremity is God's opportunity.

Sorrow and death are here on account of sin. The Lord God spoke of sorrow, toil and death as the result of man's disobedience (Genesis 3). So man's life commonly begins with the cry of sorrow, continues in toil, and ends in death. Men propose many things to mitigate this, and they would if possible remove it, but this they cannot do. As sorrow and death came by sin they cannot be removed without sin being taken away.

The Lamb of God has come to take away the sin of the world (John 1:29), to put it away by the sacrifice of Himself (Hebrews 9:26). The full results of that offering are not yet made manifest, but He has been raised from the dead, and He now lives to God in His presence. There He lives for us, as our representative. Because He lives we shall live also. Into that circle where He is sorrow and death can never enter. It is a scene of cloudless favour, peace, and endless delight. The Holy Spirit, the Comforter, who has come to us, brings us to present enjoyment of that wondrous place. We are still subject to sorrow here, but by the Spirit's ministry we find our joy where Christ is, and this is to us unfailing comfort.

Great pressure had rested upon Paul in his devoted service to Christ in Asia. He had even despaired of life. But he said, "We had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead." Instead of human resources being counted upon, there was the recognition of the sentence of death resting upon all that was of themselves, but God was known in the faith of their souls as the God of resurrection. They were delivered by His power and comforted the Corinthians with the comfort wherewith they themselves had been comforted of God.

From the whole drift of 2 Corinthians we may see how different is the comfort ministered, from that which is human. No mitigation of things here is spoken of nor held out in expectation. What man would call the very worst was anticipated, the

dissolution of our earthly house of tabernacle. But we have been divinely wrought for heavenly glory with Christ, and even now are our eyes set upon unseen and eternal things. The heart is bound to the place where Christ is, and morally severed from things that are here. This leaves no room for disappointment. Death cannot touch the things that are there, nor can sorrow enter to mar them. There lies the fullest blessing of the Lord which maketh rich and with which He adds no sorrow (Proverbs 10:22).

We can understand, therefore, how the apostle bade the Thessalonians comfort each other with the words he wrote for them, which showed that nothing could intervene to rob them of all that was theirs in association with Christ. We can also understand how he could speak to them in his second epistle of everlasting consolation which is given to us by our God and Father who loves us.

May God grant to each one deliverance from the delusive comfort which is connected with the flesh and the world, and a knowledge of the true and everlasting encouragement of which He is the Author.

Joseph Revell (1835-1900)

Fragment

As in infirmity, David's words have oft been strength to me – “This is my infirmity: but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High” (Psalm 77:10) – so, when in the furnace like Job, have I found help in the thought of One who sits as a refiner, above the furnace. (The figure says, He looks into the boiling metal until it has thrown up enough of its dross for Him to see His own face reflected in the seething metal below; then the operation is done.)

From a letter of G.V. Wigram (1872)

THE HEAVENLY CALLING AND THE CHURCH

THE heavenly calling has been known from the beginning. The earth having been, in every age, a scene of divine disappointment (to speak after the way of men), and the elect being therefore strangers and sufferers in it, the heavens have been disclosed to them as their place of rest and inheritance. Abraham desired a heavenly country. Enoch had been already translated there. Moses lost the land of promise, but got the Pisgah of God. David confessed that he and all his fathers had been strangers with God in the earth (1 Chronicles 29:15). Elijah among the prophets in the latter days of the Old Testament, as Enoch among the patriarchs in its earlier days, was taken to heaven. And thus, the heavenly calling was had in constant remembrance, and kept in view. And all the elect, in these Old Testament times, whether patriarchal, Mosaic, or prophetic, have, I doubt not, a part in heavenly places. The Lord calls them all “children of resurrection” (Luke 20:36) – and by that He teaches us that they will be called to their inheritance by resurrection from the dead, when they will not, as He further teaches, marry and give in marriage, as though they were children of the earth.

In the divine reasoning of the Epistle to the Galatians they are alluded to, and considered as standing in sonship and heirship,* with the elect now gathering. So, in the Hebrews, they are considered as perfected and sharers of the heavenly calling, with us of this day. But the Epistle to the Ephesians never takes them up to associate them with the saints now gathering in the body of Christ.

These distinctions are very significant, and they lead us to the conclusion that the Old Testament saints enjoy the heavenly calling, or heavenly places as their home and their inheritance, though kept apart from the church, the body of Christ, and the bride of Christ. I may say this concerning them.

** I am not sure to which passage in Galatians the author is referring when he connects sonship with the saints of the Old Testament, but see again Luke 20:36 – Editor.*

But leaving these times of the Old Testament, times of patriarchs and prophets, and having entered the New, we reach in due season the day of Pentecost. The Holy Ghost is then on earth, upon the glorification of the Son of man in heaven; and we find Him doing a work of “exceeding riches of grace,” and which is to be to “the praise of the glory of God” in the ages to come. He is baptising the election now gathering, into one body; a body of which Christ is the Head; a body which is also called “the fulness of him that filleth all in all.” And the whole, Head and body together, is called by an eminent, wondrous title, “Christ” (1 Cor. 12:12). All this is peculiar indeed.

Of course this election, thus forming the body or fulness of Christ, will, with the Old Testament saints, have their place and inheritance in heaven. But while they thus share the heavenly calling with their Old Testament brethren, those brethren will not be in the body of Christ with them. When the kingdom in its glorious form comes to be displayed, when “the world to come” (Hebrews 2:5) is reached, Old Testament saints will have “a name” there, and be, as it were, principalities and powers in heavenly places; but the election now gathering, and baptised into one body, will then be “the fulness” of Him who sits above those principalities and powers and names, of Him who “filleth all in all.”

I am suggesting and submitting my judgment on these truths.

And then – as I would go on to say – when all these have been translated to meet the Lord in the air; when Old and New Testament saints together, as alike “children of the resurrection,” have taken their place in the heavens, as thus ordained to be theirs from the beginning – then the action of the Apocalypse, from chapter 4, begins. In the course of that action, some saints will die as martyrs; and such also will be taken to heaven, and there occupy their places as certain dignities and thrones, “a noble army,” or “a goodly fellowship,” as we may say; but they will not be a part of the body of Christ with the election now gathering.

Those saints of God who survive the great judicial process of the Book of the Apocalypse, will form the seed, or firstfruits of the earthly people. Their calling is not heavenly. They have no part in the heavenly places. They begin to fill and furnish the millennial earth; and to them as a firstfruits will be gathered a harvest, till the face of the whole earth be fruitful – Jerusalem, the land of Israel, the people of Israel, and the nations all the world over, constituting a scene of power and of government, and a sanctuary for the service of the God of heaven and earth, who will then be displaying His kingdom-glories.

And this kingdom is the subject of notice in the scriptures of the Old Testament, together with the judgments which introduce it, and the glories which give it its character. But the calling out of a body for Him who is the Head of that kingdom, is not the subject of those scriptures. It is called, in an eminent sense, “the mystery,” and is declared to have been ‘hid in God from the foundation of the world,’ (see Matthew 13:35 and Ephesians 3:9) and only now revealed to the prophets of the New Testament, Paul the apostle of the Gentiles being made the great vessel and depositary of it, its special witness and publisher.

There have, however, been glances at it from the very beginning; the divine mind letting out hints of the secret it carried, now and again, as we ourselves are wont to do with some favourite thought of which we cannot or dare not speak particularly, times and seasons forbidding it. Is not this so? Is not this so with us, and do we not delight in seeing it thus with God and His secret? In spite of such forbiddings, in the face of such restraints, however respected they may be, and rightly so, the secret will at times break bounds, and cross the field of our vision in a type or in a story, leaving the eye of many a gazer unable to make out what it is or what it means.

Such glimpses of this brilliant secret I would now look at for a moment or two, having already travelled from the beginning to the end of scripture, as “with all saints,” noticing the destiny of the Old Testament saints, of the election now gathering under the Holy

Ghost, and of the Apocalyptic saints, whether they die in the course of it, or outlive the action of that awful season.

I believe, then, that “the mystery,” the church, the bride of the Lamb, begins to tell itself out in the first woman. She was taken, as we know, from the side of Adam, when he was cast into a deep sleep; and she was then formed by the Lord God for Adam; and finally set at his side to be his help-meet, and in a sense and measure, his coordinate companion.

All this tells us of the bride of Christ (Eph. 5). The same mystery, in different phases of it, is to be read in the stories of other women in the Book of Genesis, as in Rebecca, in Rachel, and in Asenath. And so, in the Book of Exodus, in Zipporah, the Gentile bride of Moses. It is very easy to read something of the church in each of these. Ephesians 5 has surely encouraged us, and led us in the way, and given us a sample of the manner in which we are to read these types.*

I cannot doubt that the gleaner in Leviticus 23 (v. 22) is also a like mysterious or typical person. She is introduced in the interval of the story of Israel and of the earth, or, between the Feast of Pentecost and the Feast of Trumpets. For a parenthesis of about three months in the Jewish ecclesiastical year, we lose sight of everything but this gleaner. She is but a poor stranger. She has entered the fields of the lords of the soil, not to covet or usurp, but as a stranger to come in, and as a stranger to go out; satisfied, as it were, with “food and raiment,” which is the stranger’s fare and the Christian’s or the church’s contentment (Deut. 10:18; 1 Tim. 6: 8). I say not that Ruth may not be a like figure with the gleaner of Leviticus 23, for she enters the scene also in an interval that breaks the story of Israel; as between their utter moral ruin at the close of

* One has noticed that the language of Ephesians 5 is in the style of the delight of Adam when he received the woman whom God had prepared for him (see Gen. 2:23, Eph. 5:30) – Author.

Judges, and their revival at the opening of 1 Samuel.* But I grant that we may, the rather, see in Ruth the remnant of the latter day coming in on the Gentile terms of sovereign grace, according to Romans 11:31.

But such Old Testament types are but faint indeed. The mystery of the church is specially disclosed in the Epistle to the Ephesians. It is there spoken of under two titles, which are exclusively its own. It is “the body of Christ,” and the bride of Christ.

One has strikingly said, “It is not in the heavens above, nor in the earth beneath, nor in angels themselves, bright witnesses as they are of creative power, that the character and ways of God will be manifested in the ages to come: it is in the new, redeemed creation in Christ, in the church and by the church, that God’s manifold wisdom will be made known in the church, brightest emanation of the divine mind, master-piece of God’s handiwork, every perfection of light and glory and beauty shall be displayed; otherwise she would be unworthy of her high destiny as the bride. The depths and heights of the grace and love and power of God will never be known to the heavenly hosts, till they behold the church, chosen from Adam’s ruined and apostate race, not only brought into the closest and sweetest intimacy of sonship to God, but exalted to the highest dignity in heaven, a partaker of the ineffable glory of her risen Head.”

Surely these words are good for the use of edifying. But further. In unfolding grace and glory in this Epistle to the Ephesians (which Epistle I would now consider somewhat particularly), we may observe that there is a peculiar accumulation of language, as I may express it, as though the writer (the Spirit) were conscious of what

* The church, as we know, enters the scene just when these gleaners do, in a time when a break in the story of Israel has been experienced – Author.

a theme of peculiar weight and dignity he was treating. We read of “the glory of grace,” of “the riches of grace,” of “the exceeding riches of grace,” of “the praise of his glory,” and of “the praise of the glory of his grace.” This is the style in which the magnificent secrets of this Epistle are brought out to view. The casket is according to the treasure.

And the sight given of the ascended Lord is in the same style presented to us. It has been observed by another, that St. Mark tells us that our Lord was carried up into heaven. The Epistle to the Hebrews tells us that He was carried up through the heavens. But this Epistle tells us that He ascended up far above all heavens (Mark 16:19; Heb. 4:14; Eph. 4:10). What a varied, wondrous account of Him! But the Ephesian account is the most magnificent – for it gives the Son of man the very place which is given to God Himself in Deuteronomy 10:14.

And this accumulation of language, of which I have spoken, is preserved in the second chapter, where the Spirit comes to look at the objects of this high calling, and not, as before, at the character of the calling itself. He takes knowledge of us sinners in two conditions, dead and alienated; dead as in ourselves, alienated as from God – and then he sees us as translated into the opposite conditions of life and nearness. But He accumulates language, in treating of these things, as He had done before. Terms are multiplied, descriptions are repeated elaborately, that all these conditions in which we are presented, and each of them separately, may be apprehended with great emphasis by our souls. The death-estate in which we lay by nature was awfully complete; the life-estate into which we are now brought, is thoroughly, eternally perfect. Our condition of distance from God, in which grace found us, is described to have been such that nothing could pass beyond it – our present condition of nearness to Him is such as the Son Himself alone could have enjoyed, so to say, before us.

But further. The characteristic of the church’s blessing is this – that they are in Christ. Earlier saints, as we have seen, will be

heavenly in their destiny; but the church's calling is heavenly, in and with Christ.

The word "in" abounds there in a remarkable manner – and it is always in "Christ." In the course of the wondrous disclosures there made, we learn that having been quickened together with Him, we are now seated in heavenly places in Him.

Being thus ascended, we are also taught that, there on high, we are blest with all blessings in Him. And again – we are accepted in Him, the Beloved – made the objects of personal love, as well as blessed with all spiritual blessings. And again – in Him God has abounded towards us in all wisdom and knowledge, making known to us His thoughts and good pleasure touching ages to come; giving us the place of friends.

Thus is it with us now. But this same scripture looks forward and backward, and shows us the interest we had "in Christ" before the world was, and what we are to have "in Him" when the world has run its course. Ere the world was, we learn that we were "chosen" in Him, "predestinated" unto the adoption of children. And when the world shall be over, and dispensations have finished the display of themselves, and closed their wondrous story, we learn that we shall be "heirs" in Him and with Him of that great new system, "the world to come," in which all things shall be gathered together under Him as their Head.

This is a great theme indeed – our eternal portion in Christ, our standing in Him, with the counsels that purposed it ere the world was, the high condition and prerogatives in which it now puts us, and the portion which it will convey to us in the ages to come. And all this excellent estate is ours, simply because we now believe or trust in Him. *To be continued.*

From "Short Meditations" by J.G. Bellett (1795-1864).

THE WORK OF AN EVANGELIST

2 Timothy 4:5

It is impossible to know the Saviour without longing to make Him known to others. His unspeakable love claims the utmost devotion of every ransomed heart and kindles the desire to make Him known far and wide amongst the sinners for whom He died. The woman of Sychar cannot rest until she has said to the people of the city: "Come, see a man who told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?" (John 4:29). Andrew has no sooner found the Messiah than he runs for his brother Peter to share the blessing (John 1:41). Philip has no sooner beheld the beauty of Christ than he is found bringing Nathaniel to the Saviour (John 1:45). And thus, in some measure, it ever is.

Answer, every believing heart! Is not this a cherished desire? Have you not deep longings to make known your Saviour's name in all its living power? Would you not be delighted to see multitudes at His feet, joyful in His salvation and rapturous with His praise? Does not your spirit kindle with joy at the thought? In the Old Testament God's witnesses were impelled by a command from without, but in the New Testament there is also a constraint of love within (2 Cor. 5:14). Yes! there is a desire in every believer's heart to make known the Saviour.

It is our blessed privilege to "sound out the word of the Lord" (1 Thess. 1:8), and to "hold forth the word of life" (Phil. 2:16), but this demands a path of decision and self-denial which our hearts often shrink from, and thus the desire to do so is nipped in the bud. The sword of violent persecution is sheathed at present,* but in the fear of misapprehension and ridicule Satan has found a more potent means of silencing our lips. How often, 'It will be thought out of place,' or 'They will think me odd and peculiar,' have closed our mouths! Shame on our coward hearts!

** Written 120 years or more ago – Editor.*

Let us cry to the Lord, like the disciples in Acts 4, that we may speak His word “with all boldness.” It was the earnest desire of the apostle (Eph. 6:19, 20) that he might open his mouth boldly to “make known the mystery of the gospel . . . that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.” This spiritual boldness is what we need. Not the forward flippancy of the flesh that irritates without convicting, but the calm courage of the one who can say, “I have a message from God unto thee” (Judges 3:20).

Nor let us be discouraged by the consciousness of our own weakness; rather let us glory in it as that which makes room for Christ’s power. How sad that we should be considering difficulties and probabilities, which would never have a place in our minds if self was not before us instead of Christ, while souls are perishing around us! Why should we calculate our abilities and resources as if we were sent into warfare at our own charges? Have we not received the Holy Ghost to empower us to be witnesses unto Christ? Then let us lay aside indifference and sloth, and be followers of him who said, “that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory” (2 Tim. 2:10).

The sovereignty of God in grace was not distorted by the apostle into an excuse for indolence and indifference, but with him it formed the spring of an energy in service which never tired, and is a blessed fact pregnant with encouragement to every worker in the gospel field. To know that there are elect souls whom God will bless, and that if we do not seek them out God will send somebody else to do it, ought first to fill our hearts with prayer that we may be guided like Abraham’s servant to the very spot where we shall find them, and then it ought to make us very earnest in dealing with souls when we reflect that, in the sovereignty of God, their eternal salvation may depend, instrumentally, on the few words we say to them, or the tract we put in their hands.

Oh! brethren, this is a day of good tidings, let us not hold our peace (see 2 Kings 7:9). Let us arise to “do the work of an evangelist.” Let us not attempt to cast off the responsibility of this great privilege. Let us not ask in guilty indifference, “Am I my

brother's keeper?" (Genesis 4:9). Let us consider these striking and solemn words, "If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; if thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?" Prov. 24:11, 12. Nor let us forget that "A true witness delivereth souls," Prov. 14:25, and "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him," Psa. 126:6. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord," 1 Cor. 15:58.

In conclusion, we cannot be too solemnly reminded that gospel testimony in conjunction with a worldly walk has a terribly hardening effect on sinners. If, like Lot, we live near the world and like the world, the world soon comes to the conclusion that there is not much in it after all. Small wonder that loving invitation and solemn warning alike fail to awaken souls when they come from those who are identified with the world. "He seemed as one that mocked unto his sons-in-law" (Genesis 19:14). It is the one who comes to the world as Jonah went to Nineveh – out of the jaws of death, in resurrection power, a man of another sphere, without a single moral link with the scene against which he denounced judgment – whose testimony takes a mighty effect. May there be a complete divorce between us and the ways of the world; and in the power of this Nazariteship may we bear witness to sinners of redemption accomplished and judgment approaching!

By Charles A. Coates (1862-1945); published before 1900.

THE VARIOUS MINISTRIES OF THE APOSTLES

A reader wrote to me recently, drawing attention (among other things) to the widespread setting aside of the ministry of Paul, who

is the apostle to the Gentiles and to whom the Lord entrusted various mysteries for communication to the saints. In a previous article reference is made (page 9) to Paul as the depositary of the mystery of Christ and the assembly (church) but a few other extracts are reproduced below from ministry emphasising the distinctiveness of Paul's ministry but also indicating the character of Peter's and John's. Just as each of the four gospels has its own special character, so the apostles who wrote the epistles had their different (but not contradictory) ministries from the Lord. It is perhaps too easy to simplify the different viewpoints from which they wrote; for example, it has often been remarked that Peter presents the kingdom, Paul the church and John the family, but of course their ministries do overlap. It is hoped that the following remarks by Bible teachers from the past will help to set our thinking on right lines – Editor.

From the ministry of J.N. Darby (1800-82).

Paul starts from a glorified Christ when the last enmity of man's heart had been brought out, and a messenger, so to speak, sent off to heaven, that they would not have this man to reign over them.* Paul only goes to the root of things (save John): Peter, "he that has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin." Paul, he that is "dead to sin." Peter, though with accomplished redemption and the new birth, goes on with the Jewish system – never the church as the body of Christ. Peter is the fact and effect on men here. Peter looks for the inheritance above as a hope: Paul recognizes it as such (Col. 1) but looks at us also as a new creation, sitting in heavenly places in Christ and the inheritance is all things, Christ being Heir and we joint-heirs with Him. Besides personal justification, he deals with the ways and dispensations of God, His counsels, and ways experimentally. John is always individual

**See Luke 19:14. Many have seen the Lord's words "sent an embassy after him" as having been fulfilled in the refusal of Stephen's message and his martyrdom – Editor.*

and brings us into the revelation of the nature of God, and our being in God and God in us according to that nature. It is nature, not counsels ... (*Letter, December 1881*).

I do add, let not John's ministry be forgotten in insisting on Paul's. One gives the dispensation in which the display is: the other, that which is displayed. (*Letter, 1882*) Compare, for example, *Eph. 1:9,10 and 2:7 with John 17:20-23* – Editor.

The apostle John does not give dispensations, but deals more immediately with natures; what he does is evidently the bringing out the manifestation of God. (*Collected Writings, Vol. 26, p.288*)

What I have just remarked, if you examine it a little closely, you will find to be the difference between the writings of Paul and John, and the reason for the special attractiveness of the writings of the latter. John brings God down in man to earth. It is the divine down here, and it is the perfection of loveliness and truth. Paul brings man out of the earth and up to heaven. You will see that, save in casual allusions necessarily made or supplementary to the main subject, John never takes even Christ up to heaven. (*John does not record the ascension – Ed.*) He brings the Divine Person down here in human kindness, diffusing what is perfectly divine into the hearts of men that can receive Him, through His own Person, and at any rate manifesting it among them. And hence too it is, that it was John's part to go on to the Apocalypse; because, though in certain respects on much lower ground, inasmuch as it is the government of the world, it is still the display of God's ways and character on the earth.

(*Collected Writings Vol. 9, pp. 8,9*)

(With reference to Psalm 16:10:) Christ here depends on Jehovah for His resurrection. He says, "Thou wilt not leave," though He could say, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." Yet He could say as perfect Man, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." As Peter among the Jews could say, He hath made Him whom ye have crucified both Lord and Christ: while Thomas could say, My Lord and My God. Indeed Peter never leaves this ground – the rejected Man, the Messiah, exalted

by God – nor preaches the Son of God (as Paul did at once in the synagogues), though the first, by divine revelation, to confess Him such. *(Collected Writings, Vol.17, page 18)*

From the ministry of J.G. Bellett (1795-1864)

Another testimony was now to go forth, a testimony to the loss of Israel's and the earth's hopes for the present, and to the call of an elect people out of earth into heaven. And Saul the persecutor, that is, Paul the Apostle, was made the special bearer of it.

And how rich was the grace displayed by the Lord in choosing Saul to be the vessel of this heavenly treasure! At this very time he was in full enmity against God and His Anointed. At his feet the witnesses whose hands had been first upon Stephen, laid down their clothes. But this is the man that is to be made God's chosen vessel; and such is the way of the Lord in abounding mercy. ...

The sovereign grace that saves the Church was thus displayed in Saul. But the heavenly glory that is reserved for the Church was also displayed to him, for he sees Jesus in it. ...

The twelve apostles had accompanied with our Lord all the time that He had gone in and out among them, from the baptism of John to the day that He was taken up from them, and they were now called forth (being endued with the Holy Ghost) to be witnesses to Israel of the resurrection. And these witnesses tell Israel that the times of refreshing, the times of accomplishing all promised good to them, waited only for their repentance; for that Jesus was now exalted to be a Prince and Saviour to them. And now the final trial of Israel was come. What could be done more than had now been done? Trespass against the Son of Man had been forgiven, at least, the way of escape from the judgment which it called for had now been thrown open to Israel by the testimony of the Holy Ghost in the Apostles; but what could provide relief, if this testimony were now despised? (See Matt. 12:32.) But the Holy Ghost is resisted, the testimony of the twelve is despised by

the martyrdom of Stephen, and the Lord's dealings with Israel and the earth are therefore necessarily closed for a season.

The Apostle of the Gentiles then comes forth, fraught with further treasures of Divine wisdom, revealing purposes that had been till now (while God was dealing with Israel and the earth) hid in God. He comes forth with this testimony – that Christ and the Church were one; that heaven was their common inheritance: and the gospel committed to him was the gospel, as he expresses it, of “Christ in us the hope of glory.” This gospel he had now to preach among the Gentiles (Gal. 1:16; Col. 1:28). ...

“It pleased God to reveal His Son in me,” says he. This is the ground of the Church's special dignity, and the Gospel which Paul preached. It was not the Gospel of Messiah, the Hope of Israel, nor the Gospel of the once crucified One, now exalted to “be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins;” but it was the Gospel of the Son of God revealed in him. ... And upon the Son thus revealed within hangs everything that is peculiar, as I have observed, to the calling and glory of the Church. Thus we read, “The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; ...” (Rom. 8:16, 17). And again, we read “that we are predestinated to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ,” ... This bright roll of privileges is inscribed by the Apostle thus – “spiritual blessings in the heavenlies;” and so they are, blessings through the Spirit flowing from and linking us with Him who is the Lord in the heavens (Eph. 1:4-12).

All this follows upon the Son being revealed in us, by which the Church puts on Christ, so as to be one with Him in every stage of His wondrous way; dead, quickened, raised and seated in heaven in Him (Eph. 2:6). Of this mystery, Paul was especially the steward.

From “Paul's Apostleship and Epistles.”

From the ministry of F.E. Raven (1837-1903)

The difference between John's and Paul's ministry is that Paul takes the saints up to heaven, but John brings God down to earth. That finishes up in the Revelation, "The tabernacle of God is with men." He claims the world for God and brings God into it. Hence Christians are viewed as down here ...

(New Series Vol. 17, p. 312)

Extract from a Bible reading at Quemerford in May 1894, when F.E. Raven, T.H. Reynolds and Others were present:

F. E. R. The great point in this chapter (Romans 6) is, man has entered in – "He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father ..." If you had this chapter alone, you would not apprehend entirely the truth. John 6 fills it out. John takes one side, and Paul the other. In John it is the inherent excellence of what has come out, "Living bread come down from heaven;" with Paul it is the value of what has entered in; you must have the one to complete the other. As a matter of fact, John has been learned last; we have got hold of Paul's teaching much more readily than John's.

T. H. R. While we could not apprehend this apart from the Spirit, yet you cannot get on the line of the Spirit till you have this; you are ready then to have John opened out. You must get to this through death and resurrection; the Spirit does not open out the excellencies of Christ till you are on the ground to receive it. You must get to Christ; then the Spirit leads you on.

Question: Why do saints turn so much to John's writings?

T. H. R. There is a loveliness and beauty in John that touches the heart, though one may not understand it.

F. E. R. I think people are not in a condition to touch John till they understand Paul's line of truth. The gospel never came to you from John. The gospel comes through Paul, not from John.

D. L. H. It is a little striking that John is given to us last.

F. E. R. John comes in for the filling up. You get the architect in Paul. You see what God was doing. Man has entered in according to the satisfaction of God; but John gives the filling up.

T. H. R. And shows you who that Man is. You get the attractiveness of the Person of Christ. You never get the conscience set at rest in John. You have to go to Paul for solid ground on which your soul is to rest.

F. E.R. I do not believe in short cuts; many try them, but they prove a long way round.

E. C. G.V.W. (*G.V. Wigram [1805-79]*) used to say of someone preaching from John 5:24, he gave no solid ground for a soul to rest on.

F. E. R. You must get the soul at rest on the solid ground of the cross. You must have the line of things Paul presents to get peace; you must have righteousness as a basis. Paul opens out righteousness. People ought to see the distinct place that each apostle has in his ministry. Paul had the ministry of the gospel and the church. I do not find John had either, and yet his writings are most essential to Paul's for the filling up of his ministry. ...

Editor's Note: Readers may find some of the foregoing remarks surprising, but let us bear in mind that (1) it is only Paul who can say "my gospel" (Rom. 16:25); (2) he received this directly from the Lord in glory (1 Cor. 15:3 and Gal. 1:12); and (3) it is only he who opens up the truth of justification by faith, i.e. the righteousness of God reckoned to him who believes in Jesus (Rom. 3 and 4). It is only on this basis that we have peace with God (Rom. 5:1). Peace is not exactly based on love, but on righteousness being established (Isaiah 32:17), although it is of course in His love that God has provided righteousness for us (Rom. 5:8; Philippians 3:9).

From the ministry of Dr. W.T.P. Wolston (1840-1917)

The way in which John presents the Lord in resurrection is exceedingly interesting; and I have no doubt that in the three

appearances which John alone records, the Spirit of God purposely brings before us three immense circles of truth. We saw last week, when speaking on this chapter, the Lord in the midst of His disciples. You have that which is a figure of the Assembly now, the present place of privilege which Christ gives us here upon earth. It is very striking to notice, that, while John gives you so much of what you might call heavenly truth and heavenly relationship, his great point is that it is to be now known on earth. Many a saint thinks he will get wonderful blessing by-and-by. But John's great point is this, it is all to be known and enjoyed now while on earth. It is the revelation of what God is as already made known while in this scene. That is, you have the unfolding of what God is, and the sense of being in the favour of God while here.

Paul's ministry is quite different. He presents us before God, as in Christ, where Christ now is. John brings God down here. Paul takes man up there. Both are true, and both are necessary. Therefore, I repeat, that what we have in the first scene is what we as Christians should know and enjoy now. If we really are in the mind of God we shall know what it is to be gathered together as His children, enjoying His favour, led by His Spirit, and with the Lord Himself in the midst.

(From Addresses on the Eleven Appearings)

A COMPANION OF PAUL

THERE can be no doubt that if we are to get the gain of the greatest and most precious things which are being ministered in our day by the Holy Spirit, we must take heed to the ministry given through the apostle Paul. Whilst all the holy writings are profitable it was given to Paul to complete the word of God (Colossians 1) and to this apostle, specially raised up for the Gentiles, were committed revelations beyond anything made known to others. The truth of the Lord's supper, the rapture of the saints, and the mystery were matters specifically communicated to

him, as well as the peculiar and heavenly character of the gospel, which he calls “my gospel.”

With these revelations and his distinct commission, sufferings were entailed, and those who would be governed by the truth committed to Paul cannot expect to escape the reproach and conflict involved in maintaining what the apostle ministered and stood for. These sufferings are not confined to those who are gifted and are able to teach, but all who would be companions of Paul in his teaching must share the reproach involved.

In this connection, it is worthy of note that Aristarchus – one of Paul’s companions – was never said to have ministered the truth publicly, but shone in his identification with the apostle and shared in his suffering. He was apparently one of those at Thessalonica who believed and joined himself to Paul and Silas, when first that town was visited by the gospel (Acts 17). As a fellow-traveller with Paul, he suffered at Ephesus (Acts 19:29) and was found with the little company at Troas (Acts 20:4), where the privilege of breaking bread was taken up. He was a fellow-workman (Philemon 24) and fellow-prisoner with the apostle (Colossians 4:10) and was the only one mentioned by name as being with Paul in the ship on the way to Rome (Acts 27:2).

To be found at the end with Paul, as standing for the truth of the heavenly calling, is open to all, however insignificant, for such are honourably mentioned, and we can be sure that they have the approval of the Lord. *J.A.Povey, Norwood (Croydon); reproduced from “Words of Truth,” Vol. 15, No.10 (October 1947).*

MORAL BLINDNESS

A SERVANT of the Lord, no longer with us, * once said that “infatuation precedes destruction;” it was no doubt true of the Jewish nation in their treatment of Messiah before Titus was sent to demolish their city, and I believe it to be true in every time, in the ways of God with men.

*See J.G. Bellett, in his beautiful “Introduction to Isaiah,” page 21.

The antedeluvians were infatuated – morally blinded; so far as I can understand, they were so intent upon living on the earth that the preacher of righteousness could get no true hearing; yet surely the very state of things must have been enough to make them attentive;† yet they allowed the flood to come upon them. Intent upon life (Luke 17:27), death surprised them and they were all drowned.

The Jews in Jeremiah’s day were infatuated. Their pretensions were unparalleled and their blindness inconceivable (Jer. 18:12); and the fall of Jerusalem involved both the prophets who so blindly affirmed security and the unfortunate people who listened to them. Insolent pride had taken possession of Judah and she fell in the very midst of it.

It appears to me that the whole of Christendom, on a larger scale, will be infatuated just before the final catastrophe of the age;§ I mean that sudden destruction which shall come upon the allied forces of the Beast, and upon the whole earth. The inspired page predicts that there will be no repentance, even in very the midst of judgments, * but daring revolt and defiance of God to the very end.

† It is well to notice that pursuit of wealth and a disturbed state of society may co-exist; so now in this present age. (Author)

§ *Surely this was an accurate prophecy, for we can now see that catastrophe approaching, many people (including, alas, some who profess Christianity) being apparently unconcerned about truth, facts or warnings and determined to join in current ungodly trends to the gratification of their passions and lusts. (Editor)*

* See, for example, Revelation 9:21 – Editor.

But do we not see a strange infatuation in many cases just before a moral judgment from God falls upon those blinded by it? I mean by a moral judgment the intervention of divine power in such a manner as to manifest, even before the time of the tribunal of Christ, the utter vanity of their pretensions. The signs of infatuation, I think, are much the same in all ages, and the chief

one of all is that of pride which goes before a fall; a spirit which pretends to know everything, which refuses to be taught, and will not even hear a remonstrance. It is a state of soul bordering on judicial blindness, and very different from the assurance of faith which is always accompanied by the fear of God.

Since Christianity has been upon earth I think that whenever ecclesiastical power has asserted itself upon human principles, when there has been the assumption of certain grand truths of the church of God and the attempt to monopolise them, then infatuation has set in, and judgment has followed.

It will be said, "You refer to Rome." No doubt Rome is infatuated, and will be judged and destroyed; but I refer to every attempt by proud man to exalt himself by claiming ecclesiastical power which is not his. I believe we might find many instances of this without going to the Vatican, nor can we be too anxious, whilst owning the grand truths of the assembly of God, to be kept from any assumption of power and infallibility which is not ours. The Lord is with those who seek humbly to be faithful to Him, the Head of the church, and He is their wisdom; power to stand true to Him and serve Him too is found in Him alone. He will not fail us; but the spirit that accompanies such a walk will be rather that of the broken and contrite order, which is precious to God.

Ignorance and presumption with a display of religious zeal are the marks of infatuation, and no doubt characterise man's religion in the age in which we are living as in every other age. May there be that humility which can proceed only from a true walk with the Lord; and may we be kept from every effort to glorify that man who was set aside in the cross, whilst retaining the precious truths which are ours in Christ. "If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light" (*Matthew 6:22*).

By "E.L.B.," no doubt E.L. Bevir (1847-1922). Reprinted from "Voice to the Faithful," Volume XXIX (1895).

THEY HELD HIM

Luke 2:28: Simeon “received [Jesus] into his arms, and blessed God” – he held the Holy Babe reverently and joyfully in fulfillment of light from God which he had embraced in faith.

Luke 22:63: “And the men who held Him mocked Him, beating Him” – they held Him in mockery and cruelty, with no thought for who He was; but He bore it all patiently.

Matthew 28:9: the women “coming up took [or held – KJV] Him by the feet and did Him homage” – they worshipfully held the One who had been taken from them but had just met them again as risen from the dead.

Song of Solomon (Canticles) 3:4: “When I found him whom my soul loveth: I held him and would not let him go” – having previously declined his loving overtures and allowed him to go from her, she has learned her lesson, her love for him causing her now to hold on to him.

Colossians 2:19: “... and not holding fast the Head, from whom all the body ... increases with the increase of God” – from the negative context of this verse we can learn the importance (not only of being maintained individually in communion with the Lord Jesus but also) of collectively allowing nothing to come between us and the Head of the church, from whom all light, life and direction come to us as moving in fellowship together.

Editor

Affliction

“For the Lord will not cast off for ever; but if He have caused grief, He will have compassion according to the multitude of His loving-kindnesses: for He doth not willingly afflict or grieve the children of men” (Lamentations 3:31-33).

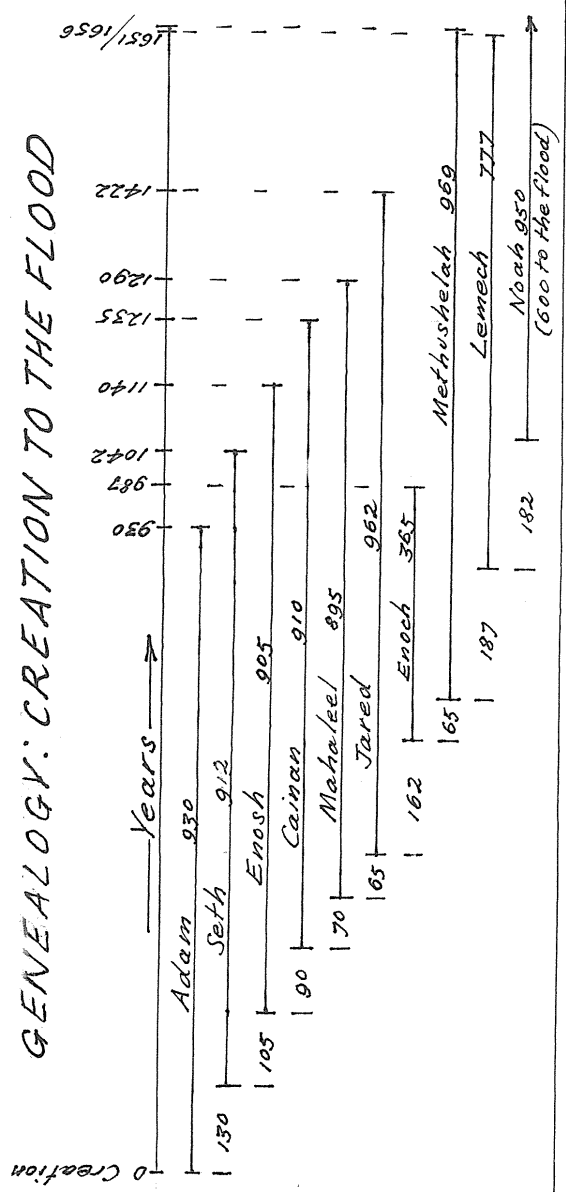
“Ye shall be comforted concerning the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem ... and ye shall know that I have not done without cause all that I have done in it” (Ezekiel 14:22, 23).

GENEALOGICAL TABLES

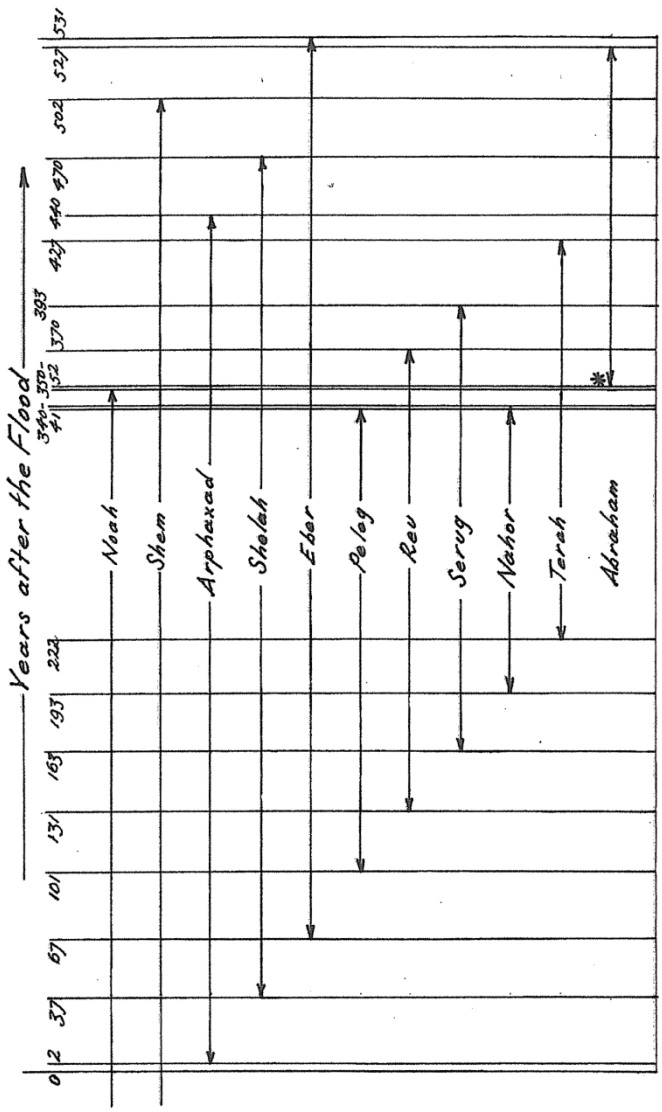
I thought that readers might be interested to see displayed in diagrammatic form the genealogies given to us in the book of Genesis. Among other notable points are the following:

1. When Adam died there were no less than eight subsequent generations alive. It is not difficult to conclude that there must have been a great deal of interchange between them, which may well have assisted in the accumulation of much knowledge and skill.
2. When Enoch died, who prophesied the coming of the Lord and associated judgment (Jude 14, 15), five preceding and two succeeding generations were alive.
3. Methushaleh died in the year of the flood, but this does not prove that he was subject to that judgment.
4. Shem and Eber, progenitors of the line of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, outlived many of their successors. *Editor*

GENEALOGY: CREATION TO THE FLOOD



GENEALOGY: THE FLOOD TO ABRAHAM



* Assuming that he left Haran in the very same year that his father died.

POETIC PAGES

The Cross in my Pocket

I carry a cross in my pocket,
A simple reminder to me
Of the fact that I am a Christian
Wherever I may be.

This little cross is not magic,
Nor is it a good luck charm;
It isn't meant to protect me
From every physical harm.

It's not for identification
For all the world to see;
It's simply an understanding
Between my Saviour and me.

When I put my hand in my pocket
To bring out a coin or key
The cross is there to remind me
Of the price He paid for me.

It reminds me, too, to be thankful
For my blessings day by day
And to strive to serve Him better
In all that I do or say.

Anon.

Satisfied

The following lines were written by and found under the pillow of a dear girl after she had departed to be with the Lord Jesus Christ, who was very precious to her.

“I shall be satisfied” (Psalm 17:15)

I shall be satisfied,
But not while here below,

/P.T.O.

Where every earthly cup of bliss
Is wisely mixed with woe.
When this frail form shall be
For ever laid aside,
And in His likeness I awake,
I shall be satisfied.

“He shall be satisfied” (Isa. 53:11)

He shall be satisfied,
When all He died to win,
By loving-kindness gently drawn,
Are safely gathered in.
When in the glory bright
He views His glorious bride,
Sees of the travail of His soul,
He shall be satisfied.

NOTE

The Editor trusts that the selection and composition of material for this magazine has been undertaken with the Lord’s guidance and that the contents are of moral and spiritual value and appropriate to present needs. The only infallible statement of truth, however, is found in the Holy Bible and the reader is, therefore, urged to follow the practice of the Bereans, who “received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so” (Acts 17:11). The Editor is always happy to receive comments and inquiries, and to consider suggested articles for inclusion in future issues.