

THE MYSTERIES OF GOD

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BOOK OF ESTHER," "REFLECTIONS ON JEREMIAH
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PREFACE

KNOWING of nothing that aims to present in one volume, the various mysteries of the New Testament, it has been a happy service to pen these papers, hoping thereby to minister to the profit of some who, while of the household of faith, may have given little or no attention to truths of such vast importance.

The teaching set forth is not original with the writer. He is indebted to many, both through oral and written ministry, for most of the instruction he now seeks to impart to others. May it be yours, reader, to test all by the word of the living God, and thus find true profit.

H. A. IRONSIDE.



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The Mysteries of God

CHAPTER I

“THE SECRET THINGS.”

IN concluding his charge to the children of Israel, in the plains of Moab, Moses said, “The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law” (Deut. 29: 29). The passage is often utterly misapplied, and used by overcautious souls to deter inquiring ones from delving into the deep things of God. It was never so intended. When the great lawgiver spoke, the revealed things consisted of what he had just rehearsed in their ears, together with the records he had already made by the inspiration of God in the first four books of our Bibles. “The secret things” were God’s purposes of grace which He was about to

unfold upon the manifestation of their utter failure, and inability to claim anything on the ground of the law, which they had broken from the first. All rights were forfeited. But God had provisions of grace to be yet manifested. He had infinite resources in Himself, to be declared when they were forced to own that theirs were at an end.

God's revelation of His purpose has been gradual. In the Old Testament two objects were brought out—the woman's Seed, and the seed of Abraham. Through the former, the latter were to be blessed, and be a blessing to all the nations of the earth. Beyond this, the testimony of the prophets does not go.

As in Moses' day, so in the days of Malachi, the last of the prophetic line (before the coming of the preparer of Messiah's way), there were "secret things" which the time had not yet come to make manifest.

The word so rendered in Deut. 29: 29 is *Sathar* in the Hebrew, which scholars define as "absent" or "hidden things." It does not refer to things too high for human understanding, as it is generally supposed to mean, but things concealed, which cannot be known unless divinely disclosed.

In the Septuagint Version, rendering it into Greek, the translators chose the word *κρυπτα* (*krupta*), the plural form of *κρυπτος* (*kruptos*), a word frequently used by our Lord in the Gos-

pels, and twice by the apostle Paul.* It is used in Luke 8:17, where Jesus said, "Nothing is secret that shall not be made manifest." Paul uses it in the same sense when writing of "the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ" (Rom. 2:16); as also in 1 Cor. 14:25, when he writes of the unbeliever coming into the assembly of God, being convicted of all and judged by all; so that he can add, "and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so, falling down on his face, he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth."

Man has his secret things—all to be brought to light in due time. God too has His secret things, which could not be known until He chose to reveal them.

Now the New Testament is not only the answer to the Old, though it is that; but it is far more: it is the unfolding of the secret things which God had purposed in His heart before the worlds were made or the ages began to run their course.

Before entering upon an inquiry as to the secret things thus made known in the New Testament, it will be well to briefly notice the revealed things of the former revelation.

To man fallen, revelation came. The first great promise was made, and so accepted by

* The passages where it occurs, in its various forms, are: **Matt. 6:4, 6,18; 13:35; Luke 8:17; 11:33; John 7:4,10; 18:20; 19:38; Rom. 2:16; 1 Cor. 14:25; and Eph. 5:12.**

Adam, in the curse pronounced upon the serpent: "The Seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." This is evidently "the promise of life in Christ Jesus" made "before the ages began" (Titus 1: 2; 2 Tim. 1: 1, 9).

To Abraham it was declared that as the dust of the earth, the sand of the sea, and the stars of the heaven, should his seed be. He was separated from the nations to be the depository of the promise. "In thy Seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."

Further revelation was made through Moses of the Prophet to be raised up to whom all were to give heed or perish. He outlined too the history of the nation. Settled in the land of Palestine by divine power, they should nevertheless be driven therefrom for disobedience, and scattered among the Gentiles, to be a reproach and a byword wherever they wandered. Upon repentance they would be reestablished in the land, and made the head of the nations, and not the tail.

The further prophets but elaborate this, connecting the restoration with Messiah, now revealed as the virgin's Son, the One "whose goings forth were of old, from everlasting," yet who was to suffer and die at the hands of men, to endure the forsaking of God, to make reconciliation for iniquity, but to prolong His days in resurrection and to be made the King of Israel, sitting on David's throne.

Through Him the believing part of the nation would be settled in their land, and the apostate portion destroyed. He should judge among the nations, rooting out the wicked from the earth and bringing all the righteous into subjection to Israel.

These were the revealed things. Their sphere of action is the earth. They have to do with an earthly people, not a heavenly one. “The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord’s: but the earth hath He given to the children of men” (Ps. 115 : 16). This is the invariable testimony of the Scriptures of the prophets.

Of the Church, the body of Christ, there is no hint: the long history of Christendom is passed over in silence. Of these things the Old Testament does not treat. Neither was it there made known that man should be in heaven. The translations of Enoch and Elijah were strange portents to the Jew, of which his Scriptures offered no explanation. All these were among “the secret things” which would not be revealed till the coming of the Just One, to be followed by His rejection and ascension as Man to heaven.

Thus one looks in vain for the distinctive truths of the Christian dispensation in the Old Testament. The things there revealed refer to Israel and the nations as such; not to the Church of which Christ is the glorified Head in heaven.

The amazing thing is that in Christendom generally, despite the revelation of the mysteries of God given in the last portion of our Bibles, the vast majority are as ignorant of the once secret things as though they had not been made known. Take the so-called Apostle's Creed for a conclusive example. It will be found that for almost every one of its statements the proof-texts could be found in the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms. "He ascended into heaven" is perhaps the only clause in it which the Old Testament did not make known; and even that is more than hinted at in the 110th psalm, and the last verse of the 5th of Hosea. True, as above noticed, it is not in these scriptures made clear that He would be there as Man, but, connecting them with other passages in the writings of the Prophets, there would be ground for the inference that so it must be.

CHAPTER II

“STEWARDS OF THE MYSTERIES OF GOD”

THAT the ignorance referred to in the closing paragraphs of the previous chapter is most lamentable, every intelligent Christian must admit. If God has in our day made known things kept secret from the foundation of the world, it is surely to our interest and God's glory to understand and value them. Isaiah could write the words which the apostle Paul quotes in 1 Cor. 2: 9: “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him” (Isa. 64: 4). But the apostle does not stop there, as do many Christians; he immediately adds: “But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.”

Clearly, then, there are precious truths which even so late as in Isaiah's day were among the secret things, but which have now been added

to things which are revealed, and which are for us and for our children. It is to these things he refers when he writes, "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor. 4: 1).

The Greek word *μυστηριον* (*musterion*), here used, which is simply Anglicized in our word "mysteries," refers to secret things known only to the initiated. It is not that the things in themselves were mysteries and beyond finite comprehension, or even above the range of ordinary minds; but they could never be known at all unless revealed by another. So we speak of the Eleusinian mysteries: they were teachings not given to the multitude, but imparted to a select company of initiates. As used in the New Testament, the mysteries are those truths which in Old Testament days were kept in silence, but which are now the common property of all believers. They are not special truths for a special class, but every Christian is privileged to enter into the knowledge of these mysteries. More than that, no Christian can properly enter upon the responsibilities flowing from the relationship in which he stands toward God if he remains in ignorance of these same mysteries.*

* The word "musterion" is found twenty-seven times in the received text of the New Testament, viz., Matt. 13: 11; Mark 4: 11; Luke 8: 10; Rom. 11: 25; 16: 25; 1 Cor. 2: 7; 4: 1; 13: 2; 14: 2; 15: 51; Eph. 1: 9; 3: 3, 4, 9; 5: 32; 6: 19; Col.

Christ's ministers are to be stewards of the mysteries of God, not merely preachers of what people so often call "the simple gospel." Out of their treasure they are to bring forth things new and old, if instructed in the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. Nor are these things of an abstruse, impractical nature, but intensely otherwise; they are the very lines of truth which above all others tend to form the character and guide the ways of the Christian. Hence, if we accept the preferred reading of 1 Cor. 2:1, it is to these very things that the apostle referred when he wrote, "I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you (not the testimony, but) the mystery of God." And yet he immediately adds, "For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." But "Jesus Christ, and Him crucified," will never be truly known, in the apostle's sense, if the soul be content to go on in ignorance of the mysteries.

Rome, we know, has attempted to foist on the Church a lot of legendary traditions and sacramental observances as the mysteries, thus emulating the pagan cults, which had their inner secrets for the special few. But the Chris-

1: 26, 27 (twice); 2: 2; 4: 3; 2 Thess. 2: 7; 1 Tim. 3: 9, 16; Rev. 1: 20; 10: 7; 17: 5, 7. Some versions add 1 Cor. 2: 1, where *maturion* seems to be a copyist's error for *musterion*. Westcott and Hort, and the Revisers, adopt the later reading.

tian mysteries are for every child of God in this dispensation of grace. Nor are they of an occult and metaphysical nature, appealing only to the erudite and mystical: they are simple truths of tremendous importance, some of which, at least, have been utterly ignored by the vast majority of theologians, ancient and modern, and this to their shame and loss.

It has often been remarked that every teaching which the apostles preface with such an expression as, "I would not have you ignorant, brethren," will be found to be a line of truth of which, after nearly twenty centuries of Christianity, the bulk of professing believers know little or nothing. It will be only necessary to refer to the passages to see how true the statement is.

In Rom. 11 : 25, 26 Paul writes, "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." Now, how seldom does one hear any reference to the fulness of the Gentiles or the salvation of Israel as a nation, in the pulpit instruction of the day? As a result, the Gentiles are wise in their own conceits, and boasting of the near conversion of the world, and the transference of Jewish promises to the Church of God.

Again, writing of the rapture of the saints at the second advent of our Lord, the same apostle says: “I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope” (1 Thess. 4: 13); and he proceeds to comfort them with teaching as to the raising of the dead, and simultaneous catching up of the living at the Lord’s return, which, it is not too much to say, not one Christian in ten knows anything of.

Peter writes of the manifestation of the Lord Jesus, and says: “But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day” (2 Peter 3: 8); and with this he couples solemn and important truth as to the day of the Lord and the day of God; and probably not a saint in a hundred knows the difference between the two terms.

What have Christians to say to this? What can thousands say for thus failing to value and appropriate mysteries of such tremendous importance? Failing to enter into these things, the Church has lost the sense of her pilgrim character; confusing teaching as to Israel and the nations with divine instruction regarding the Body of Christ. The heavenly calling has been lost sight of, and practically given up for an earthly one.

Unquestionably the onus of blame rests upon

the guides who, professing to be Christ's ministers, are anything but stewards of the mysteries of God. Stewards of science, of philosophy, of political economy, of literature, of historic lore, and of religious notions, many of them undoubtedly are; but it is quite another thing to be dispensers of the now-revealed secret things which for ages past were hid in God.

But all the blame does not rest upon the leaders of religious thought, as they are called. In Jeremiah's day he could declare, "The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and *My people love to have it so*": therefore he solemnly asks, "And what will ye do in the end thereof?" (Jer. 5: 31.) The people *love* to have it so! This is most significant. Heretical teachers could not flourish for one day if the people did not wish for their ministry. And preachers of Old Testament truths, which they offer in place of New Testament mysteries, would not find it so easy to go on confusing the people of God if there was real exercise of conscience among those who are content to be styled "the laity," and who seldom read their Bibles for themselves, and endeavor to rightly divide the word of truth.

Do not let me be misunderstood. I do not for an instant decry the expounding of the Old Testament. Far be the thought! I believe it is of the utmost importance that the soul be established in all that is there revealed, in order to

his going on unto the perfection of the full Christian revelation. I believe in the importance of the kindergarten and the primary school, but I do not believe it is a sound principle of education to keep people going over the alphabet when age and intelligence fit them for the university, if but properly instructed.

The Old Testament is “the word of the beginning of Christ” (see margin of Heb. 6: 1), which the apostle exhorts us to leave, that we may go on to full growth—that is, Christianity. It is not that he would have us forget the beginning, any more than the university student forgets the instruction of the primary school. He leaves it, but carries with him the knowledge received.

In the following chapter we purpose thus to leave the revealed things of the past dispensation, and go on to contemplate the mysteries of God which He has now made known for our edification and blessing.

CHAPTER III

“THE MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN”

“UNTO you,” said the Lord, addressing His disciples, “it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 13: 11).

Heaven’s rule over earth was no new teaching. For centuries the prophets had borne witness to it, and pointed on to a coming day when all men should see it. That it was no merely spiritual sway of heaven’s Lord to which they referred, but a true world-kingdom destroying and superseding all other dominions, and characterized by the universal dissemination of spiritual teaching and divine authority, is plain from the Scriptures of the Old Testament.

Through the elect remnant of Israel, this kingdom is to be administered; the Gentiles coming into blessing in subjection to them. To attempt to give the passages which teach what is here briefly indicated would be to quote the major part of the Psalms and the Prophets.

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Daniel, perhaps more plainly than any other, unfolds the glories of that coming reign of righteousness. In vision, Babylon's proud king was given to behold the stone that fell from heaven, shattering the image of Gentile dominion, and becoming a great mountain that filled the whole earth. That this is a far different thing from Christianity is manifest, for Gentile dominion is not yet destroyed, nor is there any likelihood that it shall be by the spread of the gospel and the extension of the limits of Christendom.

And yet, clearly, there is a spiritual kingdom of heaven pervading the world at the present time, but with the King Himself absent in the heavens. Of this the greater part of Matthew's Gospel treats. In fact, unless this be seen, it is quite impossible to truly comprehend that first of the Gospels.

Glancing briefly at this interesting book, we find in chapter 1 the genealogy of the promised King—Son of David, Son of Abraham. In chapter 2 the Gentiles pay Him honor in the persons of the Magi from the east—earnest of the day when all nations shall own His benignant yet righteous sway. John the Baptist comes before us in chapter 3 with the startling cry, “The kingdom (or, reign) of the heavens has drawn nigh.” Undoubtedly it is to Daniel's visions he refers. The reign of heaven over the earth had at that time drawn so nigh that the King could be offered to Israel. If they received

Him, He was there in person to establish His kingdom. In the latter part of the chapter He is baptized in the Jordan, thus identifying Himself with the remnant who own their unfitness for the kingdom proclaimed.

The fourth chapter opens with Satan's offer of the kingdom apart from the cross, only to be spurned by the rightful Ruler, who, leaving the wilderness, goes about preaching and healing, saying, "Repent: for the reign of the heavens has drawn nigh"; thus authenticating the message of John.

In chapters 5 to 7 He sets forth the principles that shall govern when that kingdom is fully set up; yet, in closing, shows that not all who say "Lord, Lord," shall enter into the blessings of that reign, but those alone who receive His words, and do them.

From this point on He meets with ever-increasing rejection, as chapters 8 to 11 make manifest. In the end of the last, He upbraids the cities that had seen His mighty works; and then, turning from the thought of the kingdom which they had rejected, He extends the call of the gospel to weary souls everywhere. If Israel own Him not as King, yet He is the sinner's Saviour still, and the giver of rest to the heavy-laden.

So in chapter 12 the leaders of the nation commit the unpardonable sin for which they shall never be forgiven, in this age or that to

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come. The kingdom offer is therefore withdrawn for the present, because the King is definitely and finally rejected by the unregenerate mass.

It is following upon this that He begins to make known the mysteries of Heaven's reign. Up to this point we have been going over what the prophets had predicted. They had likewise told of the ultimate reception of the King when Israel shall be born again and made willing in the day of His power. The interval between the cutting off of Messiah and His return in glory to take the kingdom was vaguely described as a time of sorrow for Israel, but what form the reign of Heaven would take during that undefined period had not been revealed. It is this which the Lord now makes known to His disciples, who, refusing the judgment of the nation, had owned His claims upon them. Heaven's reign should go on even though the kingdom, as such, had been refused. The King was going up to the heavens, but from there He would rule, and the dispensation of the kingdom would be committed to the hands of men. This is the key to the seven parables of chapter 13.

The first one is not, properly speaking, a similitude of the kingdom at all. It gives, rather, the means by which that kingdom, in its mystic aspect, was formed. Rejected as Messiah, the Lord went about as a Sower, sowing the word.

Among those who profess to receive that word there are various classes (vers. 3-8 and 18-23). Wayside hearers listen, but go no farther. Stony-ground hearers professedly receive the word, but there is no root, as tribulation and persecution for the truth's sake soon make manifest. Those who receive the word among thorns allow the legitimate things of life, as also covetousness and worldly anxieties, to choke it, so that they become unfruitful. The good-ground hearers typify those who truly receive the word and understand it, thus bringing forth fruit.

It is the word of the kingdom. All who profess to receive it constitute the kingdom of the heavens in its present mystical form. In other words, the term "the kingdom of heaven," as used in Matthew, and in Matthew only, is practically synonymous with Christendom, which simply means Christ's kingdom. It is that sphere on earth where Christ's authority is professedly owned, and where His word is honored, even though it be but in an outward way. This chapter is being written in the year 1908; but it is not the computation of the Hebrew, the Mohammedan, or the pagan. The first of these dates from the creation of the world, according to Jewish traditions; the second, from the hegira of Mohammed; while each of the various heathen nations has special events from which to count, as in Japan, for instance, the era of Meija. But in Christendom men acknowledge

the advent of One who, though rejected, is the true and rightful Sovereign of the universe. So they write "in the year of our Lord." By so doing they confess His authority, however much their lives may deny it.

Now, within this broad sphere of light and responsibility is found a narrower one, consisting only of those who have truly received the word of the kingdom into their hearts. These are the converted ones of Matt. 18: 3, who have "become as little children," and thus "enter the kingdom of heaven." The rest, while within the influence or administration of the kingdom, have never really entered it, inasmuch as it is a spiritual thing, and requires new birth ere one can "see" it (John 3: 3). In the present age, this converted company has, by the baptism of the Spirit, been formed into the Church, the Body of Christ, as we shall see more clearly when we come to consider the mystery of the One Body, in a subsequent chapter. Here it is only necessary to apprehend the difference between being in the kingdom in an *outward* aspect and being in *very deed* children of the kingdom.

This the next parable emphasizes—that of the wheat and the tares. In verses 24 to 30 our Lord gives the similitude. He does not leave us to ferret out the meaning of it, however; but in verses 37 to 43 He condescends to explain it **Himself**, in answer to the request of His disci-

ples, "Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field."

The Sower of the good seed, He explains, is the Son of man. It was Himself come in grace into a world in which there was nothing for God, to sow the incorruptible seed, the word of life, that thus there might be a harvest to His glory.

"The field is the world." This is of great importance. By making the field the Church, many expositors have gone astray. The world, not the Church, is the scene where the seed is sown. Here too the tares, or the darnel, are sown by Satan and his emissaries. It is "an enemy hath done this." Satan has been busy sowing (in the same sphere where the good seed has been scattered) the evil seed of false and unholy teaching which deceives the receivers of it. Those who accept the false doctrines, "the damnable heresies," referred to by the apostle Peter, are the children of the devil. Having a name to live, they are dead; professing to be Christians, they are the enemies of the Cross; yet they are not to be extirpated, as Rome once sought to do, lest the good be rooted out with the evil; but both are to grow together until the harvest, at the end of the age. For, be it noted, it is not the end of the world, but of the dispensation, that is here referred to, as any critical version of the Scriptures will show.

When the age closes, the tares will be gathered

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into bundles and cast into a furnace of fire. The righteous shall then shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. All this will be brought out in other portions as we go on.

Having thus explained for us the first two parables, our Lord proceeds to put forth others, which, with the key already given, are clear when we compare one portion of Scripture with another.

That of the mustard seed is given in verses 31 and 32. The kingdom of the heavens is likened unto a grain of mustard seed, which, having been sown in a field, developed into a great tree, in the branches of which the birds of the air find lodgment. This gives us the outward aspect of the kingdom. It has become a great thing in the earth. A tree is often used as the symbol of worldly power and glory. In the Old Testament, Nebuchadnezzar is likened to a great tree (Dan. 4: 20-22). The kingdom, or empire, of Assyria is presented under a similar figure (Ezek. 31: 3-7), even to the fowls of heaven resting in the branches. Judah also is so portrayed in Ezek. 17.

Outwardly the kingdom was to assume an aspect of grandeur upon earth. This has been fulfilled in the history of Christendom. Unquestionably “the Church” is a power to be reckoned with in the world to-day, and has been since the days of Constantine. But who are the birds of the air who find lodgment in the

branches? In the first parable they were declared to be the powers of Satan. Without doubt they mean the same here. Babylon is to be the hold of every unclean and hateful bird. These are evil workers and false teachers who yet find a refuge in the professing Church.

Another parable connects intimately with this, in the verse that follows—that of the leaven. Perhaps few portions of the word of God have been more misunderstood than this. It is generally made to mean the triumph of the gospel, which, like leaven, is supposed to be permeating the world, and will continue to do so until all mankind are regenerated. If such be its meaning, it is directly contrary to the universal testimony of Scripture elsewhere. Nowhere is it hinted at that the world will be converted eventually through the preaching of the gospel as we now know it. The very opposite is the declaration of the Lord Jesus, that at His return He will find the days of Noah and of Lot reproduced. Neither is leaven, in Scripture, ever a symbol of anything good; nor meal a type of unregenerate mankind.

Leaven, *throughout*, is evil and false. It was to be rigidly excluded from the offerings which set forth the sinlessness of the Lord Jesus Christ. In the thank-offering and the pentecostal loaves it was permitted because needed to picture the fallen nature of those through grace redeemed. In the New Testament the Lord warns against

the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy; the leaven of the Sadducees, which is false teaching; and the leaven of Herod, which is a combining of the world's politics with religion. Paul writes of “the leaven of malice and wickedness,” and contrasts with it “the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” Therefore, if leaven in the parable before us sets forth something good and pleasing to God, it is in direct opposition to the only use made of it elsewhere by the Lord Himself, and by all Scripture.

On the other hand, “three measures of meal,” in place of picturing unregenerate mankind, full of sin and iniquity, always speaks, in Scripture typology, of that which is good to the use of edifying. It was “three measures of fine meal,” which Sarah prepared, at Abraham's bidding, to set before the mystic “three men” who came to him in the plains of Mamre (Gen. 18: 6). The meat or meal-offering, setting forth the undefiled and undefilable humanity of the Lord Jesus, was made of meal from which all leaven had been rigidly excluded (Lev. 2).

Allowing Scripture to explain Scripture, it is manifest that the parable of the leaven teaches the very opposite to what it is commonly understood to mean. The meal is the food of the people of God, that good deposit which was committed to them by the Lord and His apostles. But a mysterious woman has risen up who secretly insinuates evil into that which

should have remained unleavened, or undefiled. Is it too much to say that this woman is identified for us, in the epistle to Thyatira, as "that woman Jezebel" (Rev. 2: 20-22); and in the vision given to John, as "Babylon the Great" (Rev. 17: 5)? Unquestionably it is the false Church, the great Anti-Church of the Christian centuries, which has usurped the place of teacher instead of learner, and has literally tampered with every precious truth of Scripture. Of this we shall find fuller information when we come to consider "the mystery of lawlessness," in a future chapter.

The four parables we have been looking at were spoken in the open, by the seaside. They show the beginning and the growth of Christendom in its outward aspect and its true character.

Sending the multitude away, and going into the house, the Lord gave fuller instruction to His own disciples, setting forth three more similitudes concerning the kingdom. These likewise have often been quite misunderstood. We turn now to briefly notice their teaching.

First, He tells of a treasure hid in a field. Remembering that "the field is the world," we ask, What treasure was here hidden? All through the Old Testament, Israel is so pictured. They formed Jehovah's "peculiar treasure." To them Christ came from glory, but the time had not yet arrived for His acceptance; so

He “hideth” it, and then went to the cross to pay the purchase-price for the whole world—the field, not merely the treasure. Hidden still that treasure remains, but soon it shall be brought forth from its hiding-place, and He shall acknowledge it as His own. “They shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My peculiar treasure” (Mal. 3: 17, literal rendering). It is the earthly aspect of the kingdom, which will, it is hoped, be made clearer as we proceed.

The parable that follows has striking differences, though in some respects similar.

The merchantman seeking goodly pearls pictures the value of the true kingdom in His own eyes. For He, not the sinner, is the merchantman. Were salvation a pearl of great price, none could ever buy it, for all unsaved ones are bankrupt and unprofitable. Neither is there any that seeketh after God. But He who was rich, for our sakes became poor, leaving the glory that He had with the Father before ever the earth was, and coming into this scene to seek a goodly pearl to adorn His diadem forever. One pearl He found, and that of great price! It is the heavenly aspect of the kingdom—the Church for which He gave Himself. At Calvary’s cross He paid the full price of its purchase; and now none shall dispute His title to that Church which He hath purchased with His own blood. He “loved the Church, and

gave Himself for it." Not all the failure and apostasy of Christendom can alter the value, or touch the purity, of this pearl so greatly prized. Amid all the corruptions of the centuries, it remains perfect and lovely in His eyes. Soon it will be removed from its surroundings of evil and filthiness, and be placed in its proper setting, to be the chief ornament of His crown throughout eternal ages.

The story of the drag-net closes the series. Cast into the sea, it brings together of every kind, good and bad. When it is full, the good are collected into vessels; the bad are cast away. The Lord Himself elucidates it: "So shall it be at the end of the age (not the world): the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth" (vers. 49, 50). At the end of the age, then, in place of a converted world, we find good and bad being separated by angelic agency. The good are the true children of the kingdom, and are saved eternally. The bad are false professors, taken in the gospel net, but who have not really received the word of the kingdom in their hearts. Their end is judgment.

Solemnly the Lord asks, "Have ye understood all these things?" They reply in the affirmative, though it is evident from their after-history that they but feebly entered into what

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He had set before them. He adds, “Therefore every scribe disciplined unto the kingdom of the heavens is like unto a man that is a household-er, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old” (vers. 51, 52).

“The mystery of the seven golden candlesticks,” in Rev. 2 and 3, coincides in large measure with these seven parables. There we find the seven candlesticks symbolize seven churches. Prophetically, they set forth seven distinct stages of the professing body, from the apostolic times to the Lord’s return. We may compare the parable of the sower, with Ephesus; the wheat and tares, with Smyrna; the mustard tree, with Pergamos; the leaven, with Thyatira; the treasure, with Sardis; the pearl, with Philadelphia; and the drag-net, with Laodicea. While the aspect is often different, it will be noted by the careful student that the moral order is practically the same, though, of course, viewed rather from the standpoint of the assembly than the kingdom. Israel is therefore not brought in, as having no part, nationally, in God’s present work.

A few other scriptures require notice to complete our necessarily hurried survey of the Master’s teaching as to the reign of the heavens.

In chapter 16: 18 we get the first intimation of the Church; a subject which will occupy us in its proper place. To Peter, the Lord adds, “I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom

of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Peter, then, is to open the door into the kingdom. It is not into heaven, as vain men have foolishly imagined; nor even into the Church; but the sphere of Christian discipleship and profession, where the authority of the Lord is acknowledged, alone is meant. On the day of Pentecost we find Peter using the keys, and admitting the Jews. In the house of Cornelius, he opens the door to the Gentiles. Since that day, what multitudes have pressed in!

But of them all, none really enter that kingdom, in its true spiritual sense, save such as "be converted, and become as little children" (chap. 18: 2, 3). Within the borders of the country in which we live are found persons of all nationalities. None are citizens but those born such, or who have renounced allegiance to every other government. They alone "enter" the American nation.

The kingdom is the sphere of rule. So in the latter part of this eighteenth chapter we have governmental forgiveness illustrated, and afterwards revoked. The question of eternal forgiveness before God, fitting a soul for heaven, is not here raised. A king is reckoning with his debtors. One is found owing what would, according to Jewish calculation, be over fifteen million dollars. He pleads for mercy, upon hearing the

command that he and all his are to be sold. His lord, moved with compassion, forgives the debt. Afterwards the forgiven man finds another servant, debtor to himself in the paltry sum of about fifteen dollars. Though he pleads for pity, none is shown; but he is cast into the debtors' prison. It is no question of judgment after death; simply the principle upon which forgiveness is granted to those who sin after becoming subjects of the kingdom. “Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.” The servant who fails will forfeit his Lord's pardon in His discipline or government on earth, if He extends not the same grace to his fellow-servant. Subjects of grace are all who have a part in the kingdom; but the Father, “without respect of persons, judgeth according to the work of each” in this life, disciplining and chastening as His wisdom sees to be necessary. Therefore it behooves me to forgive from the heart my brother's trespass, that I may be forgiven myself (ver. 35).

In the next chapter our Lord presents the ideal subject of heaven's reign. “Suffer little children, and forbid them not to come unto Me; for of such is the kingdom of the heavens” (19: 14). The believing parent is encouraged to bring his little ones to the Lord ere they wander out into the paths of this world's sin and folly, that they may grow up in the kindly shelter of the reign of heaven, “in the nurture and

admonition of the Lord." Receiving the word in all simplicity, they are the models of what every other member of the kingdom should be.

The day when this kingdom is fully displayed will be earth's glorious regeneration, for which the whole creation waits, groaning and travailing in pain, because of the fall and its bitter consequences. To this our Lord refers in verse 28: "Verily, I say unto you, That ye which have followed Me, *in the regeneration* when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." It is His twelve disciples to whom He speaks—Matthias, I take it, occupying the forfeited place of the traitor; Paul's apostleship being altogether of a different order, as we shall see when we consider his special mission in connection with the great mystery of Christ and the Church.

But if such shall be the future exaltation of those who followed the Christ in His rejection on earth, they become the patterns for all who would share His glory by and by. So another parable of the kingdom immediately follows (chap. 20: 1-16). A householder sends laborers into his vineyard; and though they work for various periods of time, yet all alike receive the same wage when the day is over. It is a faithful response to the Master's call that receives reward in the time when service is ended, and it is manifested that "many are called, but

few are chosen.” All are chosen who heed the call, let it come when it may: so none have righteous ground for complaint.

The mother of James and John now comes to Jesus seeking positions of power and authority for her sons. She learns that rejection and death, the dreadful baptism of judgment, must for the Lord precede the day of glory; and an undefined period wherein His servants shall be similarly treated by the world is hinted at, though no clue is given as to its duration.

But He rules out all thought of a temporal kingdom at the present time by warning His disciples that they are not to pattern after earthly lords and Gentile dignitaries, but are to find their joy in lowly ministry. Alas, for how many might the words have just as well never been uttered! Christendom has to-day its lords spiritual as it has its lords temporal, and is not bowed with shame, but lifted up with pride over its departure from the Master's command!

In chapter 21 the King rides triumphantly into Jerusalem, in accordance with Zech. 9 : 9; while the babes and sucklings praise, as predicted in Ps. 8 : 2; but the Lord is careful to set forth at once the fact that He is to be put to death and cast out of the vineyard. The kingdom is not yet to be set up.

This, however, shall not hinder the going forth of the gospel invitation; so He gives another similitude of the reign, showing how, ere the

King comes, a great host shall be gathered out from the Jews and Gentiles to the gospel feast; but warns that some will seek to avail themselves of that feast who have never dropped the rags of their own righteousness for the wedding-garment of His providing.

Then He pronounces, in chapter 23, woes upon those who had rejected His testimony, concluding with His grievous lamentation over Jerusalem, and declaring that "Ye shall not see Me henceforth till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord" (ver. 39).

In His great prophecy on Olivet (chapter 24), He sets forth the sorrows and tribulations through which Israel must pass ere they see the Son of Man, returning in power and glory to establish the kingdom prophesied in the Old Testament Scriptures. It is because of this rejection of the King when He came in lowly grace that they must pass through the time of Jacob's trouble (Jer. 31) ere He return in majesty and judgment.

Meantime the kingdom of the heavens is likened unto ten virgins going out to meet the Bridegroom. It is the professing body of the present dispensation looking forward to the day of His return. But there are as many foolish as wise; true and false are all mixed up together. The midnight-cry it is that puts each in his true place. All have been sleeping till aroused by the message, "Behold, the bride-

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groom cometh; go ye out to meet him.” Awakened, some are startled to find their lamp of profession dying out; others are ready to go in with Him to the marriage. For those bereft of oil it is too late to buy. When they come seeking admittance, their prayer is denied (chap. 25: 1-13).

The next parable is not of the kingdom, though the italicized words so state; but they do not belong to the original text. It pictures the service and reward of those who labor in the king's absence (vers. 14-30).

The judgment to be executed on the Gentile nations, when the Son of Man comes to take the kingdom and to assert His rights, is set forth in the balance of the chapter. The rest of the book details Messiah's final rejection, His mock trial, His death, and His glorious resurrection. Owning the crucified yet risen Jesus as the only Sovereign-Lord, His apostles are bidden to disciple the nations in view of His coming again.

Such, in brief, is the outline of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. If uninstructed therein, the present age becomes a puzzle for which there is no solution.

CHAPTER IV

THE MYSTERY OF THE OLIVE TREE

THE epistle to the Romans divides naturally into three parts. Chapters 1 to 8 are doctrinal, setting forth the gospel of the grace of God in its fulness. Chapters 9 to 11 are dispensational, having to do with Israel's past, present, and future. Chapters 12 to 16 are practical, giving the results that should flow from the knowledge of the other two portions.

To the second part we turn. And first, what is a dispensation? Even so great a preacher as the late esteemed C. H. Spurgeon said, when criticizing the writings of another, "Sufficiently taken up with . . . dispensational truth, whatever that may mean." Many another would be as confused as he, though perhaps not all so ready to own it, when the term is used. And yet it is eminently scriptural. The word "dispensation" occurs four times in our English version of the epistles of Paul, and a careful consid-

eration of the instances in which it is found will make clear its meaning.*

Three times he speaks of the dispensation committed to him (1 Cor. 9:17; Eph. 3:2; Col. 1:25). As the servant of God he had received instruction concerning the message for the present age, which he shows us clearly was a double one, embracing the truth of the gospel and the Church, or Assembly. Once he uses the word in reference to the age to come, when he states that in "the dispensation of the fulness of times" all things in heaven and on earth are to be headed up in Christ (Eph. 1:10). Manifestly, as Heb. 2 declares, such is not yet the case. Hence we have here at least *two* dispensations clearly marked off; and from these we may get a clue to the understanding of the term so objectionable to the great evangelist referred to. Dispensational truth is distinguishing the teaching of Scripture as to the various dispensations, stewardships, or administrations, in which man has been or shall be placed. For *this* is what is meant by a dispensation. It is a particular order, or administration, for a particular time.

Augustine wrote, "Distinguish the ages, and the Scriptures are plain." For lack of this, they are to many a mass of confusion, which

* The Greek word is *οἰκονομία* (*oikonomia*), and means the stewardship, or arrangement, of a house. It is three times so used in Luke 16:2, 3, and 4.

exists, not in them, but only in the mind of the reader.

It should be evident to the most cursory student that God's administration and man's stewardship have not always been of the same nature. The order prevailing in the garden of Eden was as different from that outside, prior to the flood, as that of the postdiluvian from the antediluvian period. Here, then, are three dispensations. The first is that of innocence. Man, without the knowledge of evil, was placed in an abode of delight. His dispensation was a most happy one till he ended it by his own sin.

From the Edenic exile to the flood was a long stretch of nearly sixteen centuries, if we follow the received chronology. It was a period when man had no Bible, neither the restraint of organized government. He had as a guide what men call the light of nature, coupled with the light of conscience. But it ended in corruption and violence so prevailing that God swept away the iniquitous mass with the deluge. It was preeminently a stewardship of conscience; but the steward failed most miserably.

A new administration began when human government was established by God, and magisterial power and authority committed to Noah. Here a striking instance of the importance of dispensational truth comes out. In the stewardship before the flood Cain slew his brother: and, as government was not yet

entrusted to man, God set a mark upon the murderer, lest any finding him should kill him. After the flood the decree was given, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." Dispensationally, both were in their place.

For the heathen world there has been no advance in the dispensations since the days of Noah, as is clear from Rom. 2:12. But upon the decline into universal idolatry that soon followed the reestablishment of man on the earth, God called out one man, Abram, from beyond the Euphrates, where his fathers served other gods, and committed to him a new and glorious dispensation—that of the promise of the Seed. In the light of this the patriarchs walked, according to their measure, until declension caused the bondage in Egypt.

Through Moses, then, another dispensation was introduced—that of the law; which lasted from the covenant ratified at Sinai to the rejection of the Son of God—the Seed, whose coming had been long foretold.

This opened the way for the present stewardship of the gospel and the assembly, given more fully to Paul than to any other; which at once raises the question, What of Israel's hope?

The dispensational portion of the epistle to the Romans is the succinct and perspicuous answer to the query.

In chapter 9 it is shown that to Israel were

the promises made. Messiah was to come through them, and He was to be their Deliverer and their King. But having rejected Him, are the people of the chosen nation all to be cut off? Chapter 10 supplies the answer. At this present time there remains an election of grace. All who trust in the One whom the nation abhors find in Him a Saviour even now. But this involves breaking their link with the nation as such, and becoming a part of the Church, the body of Christ, of which a later chapter will treat.

What, then, becomes of the promises as to Israel's earthly power and dominion? Are they ever to be fulfilled? and if so, how is the present anomalous condition of the chosen people during the stewardship of grace to be accounted for? This is taken up fully, yet simply, in the instruction as to the mystery of the olive tree in chapter 11.

The olive is the tree of privilege. Abraham is the root, for the word ran, "I will bless thee, and . . . thou shalt be a blessing . . . and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12: 1-3). The people of Israel therefore are the natural branches. The Gentiles are, as branches of a wild olive tree, grafted contrary to nature into the good olive tree. To them the apostle addresses a solemn admonition and warning: "For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I mag-

nify mine office: if by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them" (vers. 13, 14). That is, he delighted to see grace going out to the nations, and hoped that thereby his own kindred might be stirred up to a holy jealousy and determination to enjoy for themselves the precious grace of God, offered first to them, but so wantonly rejected.

"For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" (ver. 15.) According to the prophets, the whole world is to be brought into blessing through the blessing of Israel, in the latter day, under Messiah's rule. If even now, ere the prophetic word is fulfilled, grace has gone out to the nations while the people of the promise are outcast because of their sin, who can estimate the abundant favor that shall come upon all the world when the long-promised restoration has at last become a fact?

The rejection of Messiah has caused God—not to cancel His promises made to the fathers of the Hebrews, but—to bring to light hidden purposes, hitherto unrevealed, of grace for the Gentiles during a period of undefined duration, while the covenant-people are in part blinded. This the apostle goes on to unfold, declaring that God has not forgotten His pledge to Israel, but that their present fall is the means of bring-

ing hitherto undreamed-of blessing to the nations; while His ancient people are still dear to His heart, though disowned for the time being. The Gentiles are like wild olive branches grafted into a good tree, in place of the natural branches, who, because of unbelief, have been lopped off (vers. 16, 17). This is clearly contrary to nature.

One hardly knows whether to pity the ignorance or be indignant at the presumption of a recent critic who coolly states that Paul evidently knew very little about grafting, to write of the introduction of wild branches into a good tree. The self-confident judge of divine things had not noticed that the learned and observant apostle distinctly states that such a course of procedure was "contrary to nature"; and on this very expression he builds an argument, and by it strengthens an appeal.

I quote from verse 18. To the Gentiles thus brought into such signal favor he writes: "Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear: for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward

thee, goodness, if thou continue in His goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted *contrary to nature* into a good olive tree; how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?" (vers. 18-24).

The argument is clear and consistent throughout. Israel are now rejected because of unbelief. Meantime, superabounding mercy flows out to the Gentiles. God is taking out from them a people for His name (Acts 15: 14). But if the Gentiles abuse His grace, as Israel did before them, they shall be, in their turn, rejected; whereas, if the children of the promise be brought to repentance, they shall once more be taken up and blessed according to the promises made throughout the writings of the prophets. Therefore he solemnly avers, "For I would not, brethren, *that ye should be ignorant of this mystery*, lest ye be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in" (ver. 25). There is a limit to the present dispensation of grace. When that is reached, the fulness of the nations will have arrived, and God will again turn His hand upon His ancient people. "And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is writ-

ten, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is My covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins" (vers. 26, 27).

Note carefully: it is not the Redeemer acting from heaven, as now: it is the Deliverer coming out of Sion; that is, appearing the second time at Jerusalem as the Messiah of Israel, when "they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and shall mourn for Him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born" (Zech. 12: 10).

This leads to an outburst of praise on the part of the apostle that must stir every heart in touch with the mind of God. With this the chapter ends. It is a wonderful unfolding of God's ways, of which, alas, but few seem to catch the drift. Not heeding the warning, the Gentiles, as a result, are lifted up with pride; and, in place of humility and the fear of the Lord, are indulging in Laodicean boasting, as though the end of the dispensation were afar off, instead of being well-nigh upon us.

Failing to distinguish between the earthly and the heavenly callings, present-day Christianity has become a sad and wonderful mixture of Judaism, heathenism, and Christianity. The Church's portion and hope are both lost sight of, and Jewish expectations cherished in their stead.

The mystery of the olive tree, if understood and taken to heart, would be a great corrective to all this, and would be the means of leading the people of God to distinguish clearly between the two callings. Surely it behooves every true believer to turn away from the vain speculations of unspiritual or blind guides, and to search the Scriptures to see whether these things are so. We are exhorted to walk worthy of our calling, and we can only do so as we understand what that calling is.

CHAPTER V

THE GREAT MYSTERY OF CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

THROUGHOUT the writings of the apostle Paul he again and again refers to a wondrous secret, which he designates in a special way as "the mystery," or "the great mystery." Other mysteries he treats of, as we have seen, and shall notice later; but there is one that is preeminently such. It occupies much of his ministry, and is clearly the chief gem in the diadem of the truth of Christianity; yet for centuries it was almost entirely lost sight of. In fact, until brought to the fore through the writings and the preaching and teaching of a distinguished ex-clergyman, Mr. J. N. Darby, in the early part of the last century, it is scarcely to be found in a single book or sermon throughout a period of sixteen hundred years! If any doubt this state-

ment, let them search, as the writer has in measure done, the remarks of the so-called Fathers, both pre- and post-Nicene; the theological treatises of the scholastic divines; Roman Catholic writers of all shades of thought; the literature of the Reformation; the sermons and expositions of the Puritans; and the general theological works of the day. He will find "the mystery" conspicuous by its absence. Of ordinances exalted to the place of mysteries, as in heathen rites, he will find much; but as to the mystery, which to the apostle was so unspeakably precious, rarely a reference!

That a doctrine so clearly revealed in the Scriptures could have become so utterly lost is only to be accounted for by the Judaizing of the Church, and the consequent minding of earthly things that beclouded the heavenly ones.

In seeking to point out the truth of the great mystery, I purpose looking at the various passages in which it is referred to, or explained, in the order in which they come in our English Bibles. The first passage is Rom. 16: 25-27: "Now to Him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, *according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith:*

to God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen."

In the epistle to the Romans the mystery is not developed. We must turn to Ephesians especially for that. But in Romans he refers to what was his special line of ministry without expounding it. He speaks of the unveiling of the mystery which had previously been kept in silence. Now it is made known—not through the Old Testament—but "through prophetic writings" (which is a better translation than "the scriptures of the prophets"; that is, the mystery is made known in the prophetic writings of the apostle himself). He was the chosen vessel to whom alone it was given to set it forth "for the obedience of faith." Now if the mystery be for those who have faith to obey, it is certainly of vast importance that every child of God be instructed as to its true character.

Before passing on, let me press the chief point here declared. The mystery formed no part of the revelation of the previous dispensations. Had it been otherwise, Paul could not rightly have written that it was "kept secret since the world began." It was part of the good news he was commissioned to publish abroad, but he learned it not from the former Scriptures, but by direct revelation from the Lord Jesus Christ in glory.

In 1 Cor. 2: 6, 7, after refusing the wisdom of the world, he writes: "Howbeit we speak wis-

dom among them that are perfect (or, full-grown): yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to naught: but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory; which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."

Here, I take it, he does not clearly speak of the mystery of the Assembly, but he implies that some great and hitherto unrevealed secret was the burden of his ministry to those already established in the gospel; hence it evidently includes that which we are now considering. The crucifixion of the Lord of glory made way for the declaration of this great secret, which had never previously been made known. While Messiah is on the Father's throne, and the people of Israel are rejected because of their refusal of their King, God is displaying the hidden purpose of His heart in the bringing in of "a new thing in the earth," even the mystical body of His Son, to share with Him all the glories He is yet to enter upon, when the regular line of prophecy is again taken up.

It is to the epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians we must turn for the further unfolding of this mystery. Its full fruition is declared in Eph. 1: 9, 10: "Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good

pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself; that in the dispensation of the fulness of times (or, the administration of the fulness of seasons) He might gather together (or, head up) in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him."

This is God's wondrous purpose. Jesus has been set aside by man, and with every indignity the wickedness of his heart could devise has been crucified and slain. Because of this the prophetic clock stopped at Calvary. Not one tick has been heard since. From the moment Jesus bowed His head and yielded up His Spirit to the Father, all the glories of the kingdom spoken of by Old Testament seers and prophets have been in abeyance. God has not altered His plan, but He now makes known the fact that when all are fulfilled, and

"Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Doth his successive journeys run,
His kingdom spread from shore to shore,
Till moons shall wax and wane no more,"

He shall not enter upon His glories alone! In the administration of the fulness of the seasons, the final dispensation of all, when the liberty of grace shall be succeeded by the liberty of the glory, the last Adam shall not be without one to share His throne and the glories of His kingdom. The Church is that bride, as the fifth

chapter shows. In the Millennium it will share with Christ His sceptre and power when He will be manifested as the Head of all things, the first-born, or preeminent one, of all creation.

How suited it is that He who suffered so humbly should be exalted so gloriously! But how amazing the grace that leads Him to say of His redeemed, "The glory Thou hast given Me, I have given them"! He richly deserves His honors. We deserve only judgment and wrath eternal. But He takes out from Jew and Gentile, who united to crucify Him, a people who shall be so near to Him forever as to be called His body and His bride!

This Paul further unfolds in chapter 3. "By revelation (not by the study of the Old Testament, be it noted) He made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words; whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ,) which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel: whereof I was made minister,* according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of His power.

* The indefinite article is superfluous. He was minister, in a distinctive sense, of the gospel of the glory and the mystery.

Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God" (vers. 3-10). This is the fullest declaration, or unfolding, of this precious and wondrous mystery that we have in all the Bible. It is so plain that one would suppose that every spiritual mind must see at once to what it refers. Yet the commentators and expositors generally are content to make it mean that in the present age God is extending to the Gentile the same grace He offers the Jew, so that the former, by closing with His offer of grace, becomes a sharer in the kingdom promised to Israel.

But this is to lose sight altogether of that which Paul was the chosen vessel to make known. Israel's blessings are earthly, and for time. When they enter upon them, the Gentile world shall bow before the Jew, and own his superior place. He who has been for so long the tail, will become the head. This is the universal testimony of the prophets.

The mystery, on the other hand, is spiritual, and belongs to heaven. A break in God's ways

having come in, He now makes known his hidden purpose to take *out of Jew and Gentile* a people for heaven, who are to be one with Christ for eternity. They are baptized by the Holy Spirit into one body (1 Cor. 12: 13), and united by the same Spirit to the Head in heaven; thus indissolubly linked up with Himself. Their sphere of blessing is heavenly; hence, during the present time they are pilgrims on earth. When "the dispensation of the fulness of times" has come in, all God's promises to Israel will be fulfilled. They will be blessed on earth. The Church will be blessed in heaven. Christ will be the centre of a redeemed universe, and His bride the sharer of all His acquired glories.

This is the mystery; glorious, inconceivably grand, and transcendently wonderful!

It is what the marriage union on earth sets forth. "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the Head of the Church: and He is the Saviour of the body. Therefore as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy

and without blemish. . . . for we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. *This is a great mystery*: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church" (Eph. 5: 22-32).

Precious it is to realize that every happy Christian home, where the husband and wife dwell together according to knowledge, is a beautiful picture of this mystery—no longer hidden, but now fully revealed.

When we turn to the companion-letter to the saints at Colosse, we find the same weighty and blessed theme introduced. After the twofold headship of the Lord Jesus has been set forth (chap. 1: 15-19), and the twofold aspect of reconciliation unfolded (*present* for the individual, *future* for "all things," vers. 20-22), we are told of Paul's twofold ministry (vers. 23-29). As in Ephesians, so here; he is minister both of the gospel and of the Church. He writes: "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the Church: whereof I am made minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil (or, to complete) the word of God; even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints: to whom

God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in (or, *amongst*, see margin) you, the hope of glory: whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: whereunto I also labor, striving according to His working, which worketh in me mightily" (vers. 24-29). This, with the opening verses of chap. 2, concludes the testimony as to this wondrous mystery, so far as the actual use of the word is concerned; but every earnest student must observe, once his eyes are opened to it, that it forms the bulk of the instruction left for our edification by the apostle to the nations. What is especially insisted on here is that the mystery is the great truth that completes the word of God. It is the capstone of Scripture teaching, as the Cross is the foundation-stone of the gospel. Christ is now working among the Gentiles, while rejected by Israel. This, the Old Testament did not contemplate. That the nations would be brought to own His sway *through* Israel, is clearly taught; but that He would be doing a special work among them, while the Jew is set aside, was a secret hid in God. To understand it is to enter into the truth for the present dispensation. "Therefore the Lord's servant labors devotedly that those already saved might be taught what was of such great importance to all who would be, not

dwarfs, but fully developed or perfect men in Christ Jesus.

Hence he goes on to say, "I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh; that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God,* even Christ; in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (chap. 2: 1-3).

The mystery of God is *Christ*;—Christ mystical, Head and Body! As man He sits on God's throne, the Head of the Church. His members on earth are those redeemed by His blood and baptized by the Holy Spirit into one Body. Thus the great secret has two parts; one, relating to the Head; the other, to the Body.

It was undreamed of in past ages that Man would sit on the throne of the universe. It was unthinkable to a Jew that the middle wall of partition should ever be broken down, and the saved of those both inside and outside formed into one new man. But God has brought to pass what to all but Himself would have been impossible. May we more fully enter into what is so precious to His great heart of love!

* The A. V.—"the mystery of God, and the Father, and of Christ," is unsupported by the best MSS.

CHAPTER VI

THE MYSTERY OF PIETY.

IT should be cause for unfeigned thanksgiving that one mystery there is which has ever been cherished and contended for by the devout of all communions in Christendom. "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory" (1 Tim. 3 : 16).

Editors and translators differ considerably as to the exact rendering to be preferred; but the doctrine remains untouched in any reputable version. The excellent translation of J. N. Darby reads, "And confessedly the mystery of piety is great. God has been manifested in the flesh," etc., using the past-perfect tense through the balance of the verse. Some question the right of the word "God" to remain; but in that case we must understand, "And confessedly great is the mystery of piety [which] has been manifest-

ed in flesh;" and only in Immanuel, "God with us," is this fulfilled.

This is the battle-cry of the soldiers of the new dispensation. "The secret of piety has been manifested in flesh!" God has appeared on earth, taking manhood into indissoluble unity with Deity, or Godhead; and "we beheld His glory (as the glory of an only-begotten with a father), full of grace and truth." To deny this is to apostatize from the faith, and to surrender all rightful claim to the name Christian.

By this confession spirits are tried and the claims of teachers weighed. "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world" (1 John 4: 2, 3).

No truth has been more bitterly denied than this; no teaching more relentlessly assailed by Satan's ministers, oftentimes transformed as angels of light. Not only Jews, but heretics of all ages since the cross, have leveled their venomous darts at this most precious mystery of godliness; but it abides to-day the cherished ark borne by the people of the Lord through the wilderness of this world, on their pilgrimage from the cross to the glory.

And, indeed, it was this very truth that the

ark set forth. There the gold spoke of the divine nature; and the acacia wood—the incorruptible wood of the desert—pictured the human nature of our Lord Jesus Christ. Here was God's throne. Here He could rest: in no mere creature, surely, but in His own eternal Son become flesh, and accomplishing His will perfectly in the scene where He had been so terribly dishonored.

It is on no equivocal statements of Scripture the believer rests his faith that Jesus is very God and very Man, two natures in one person, inseparable and indissoluble.

Of this mystery the former revelation speaks, though in such a way that only when Christ had come could its statements and predictions be clearly understood. The second psalm minutely portrayed beforehand His rejection by the nations and the people of Israel, and then adds, "I will declare the decree: Jehovah hath said unto Me, Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee" (ver. 7). Jehovah could not so address a creature. Between the Creator and the greatest of His creation there is an immeasurable gulf. It is the deity of the Son that the psalm makes known. So Zechariah declares the reality of His manhood, while asserting His equality with Jehovah, when he writes, "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, and against the man that is My fellow, saith Jehovah Tsebaoth: smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scat-

tered: and I will turn My hand upon the little ones" (chap. 13: 7). Micah similarly testifies that He who should be the smitten Judge of Israel, and who should be born in Bethlehem Ephratah, was the One "whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (chap. 5: 1, 2). The holy Babe of Bethlehem and the eternal Son who was before all things are one and the same person.

Nor can Isaiah's words in chap. 50 be made to bear any other meaning. He who came to redeem could say, "Behold, at My rebuke I dry up the sea, I make the rivers a wilderness: . . . I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering." It is no different person, but the very same, who goes on to declare: "The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary"; and who further adds: "I gave My back to the smiters, and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not My face from shame and spitting." In this solemn chapter, He who of old had dried up the Red Sea and driven back Jordan is shown to be identical with Him who on earth had the opened ear, the smitten back, and the flinty face!—all, all fulfilled in Jehovah-Jesus, He who was both the *Root* and the *Offspring* of David.

Many other passages there are which at first sight might not seem to refer to the Son, but

which the Holy Spirit in the New Testament makes plain, declaring His eternal power and Godhead. A number of such are quoted and applied to the Lord Jesus in the first chapter of the treatise addressed to the Hebrews. Passing over the opening verses, which are meaningless if they are not to be understood as maintaining the full equality of the Son with the Father, we find in verse 6 that psalm 97:7 is to have its fulfilment "when He bringeth again* the First-begotten into the world"; that is, when God sends Jesus the second time; "whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:20, 21). This throws a flood of light upon the psalm in question. At once it becomes evident that it is a millennial pæan of praise upon the return of the once-rejected Jesus to take His great power and reign. Verse 7, in the Hebrew, is, "Worship Him, all ye gods," which the Septuagint, as quoted by Paul, renders, "all ye angels." Now we know it is written in the law, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." Manifestly then, when the Father calls upon all angelic intelligences, good and evil, to bow in worship at the feet of Jesus, He

* Such is the true reading, as any one may see who will consult a critical version.

is asserting in the fullest possible way His true deity. If all other proof were lacking, here is incontestable evidence that in Jesus we see "God manifest in flesh."

But the other passages quoted are equally striking. Verses 8 and 9 show us that it was "unto the Son" the Father was speaking in the 45th psalm, which is devoted to "things touching the King." Verses 6, 7 are addressed to Jesus. "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of Thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows."* The first verse asserts His true Godhead; the next, the reality of His manhood. It is the "mystery of piety" in all its preciousness.

The next quotation might never have been noticed in its true bearing, were it not for the Holy Spirit's use of it here. In psalm 102 we have the suffering Saviour, undergoing the agonies of the cross. It is the cry "of the afflicted [One] when He is overwhelmed, and poureth out His complaint before the Lord." (See the

* The author of the blasphemous work entitled "Millennial Dawn," has frequently denied the use of *Ho Theos* (God, with the definite article) as being applied to Christ. But it is this very term used here in Heb. 1:8. "Thy throne, *Ho Theos*," is the exact form. Error is never consistent.

Heading.) Touchingly He portrays His desolate condition when He was "as a sparrow alone upon the housetop." In verse 23 He says, "He weakened My strength in the way; He shortened My days." And in the first clause of verse 24 He adds, "I said, O My God, take Me not away in the midst of My days." Now in our Bibles a colon follows this, and the next words apparently finish the sentence. According to the inspired use of the passage in Hebrews, however, a period would follow what has just been quoted, for the next words are seen to be the answer of God to the holy Sufferer's cry. "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of Thy hands: they shall perish, but Thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt Thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but Thou art the same, and Thy years fail not."

How marvelous the recognition of the mystery of piety here! **The anguished Sufferer** on the cross is the One who laid the foundation of the earth, and whose years shall never fail! And this is the uniform testimony of Scripture.

If we turn to Matthew, Jesus is Immanuel, the virgin's son, "which being interpreted is, God with us" (chap. 1: 23). Mark takes care to show us that John the Baptizer was sent to prepare the way of Jehovah, for such is the original for "the Lord" in Isa. 40: 3, which he

quotes in chap. 1 : 3. Who else than He could baptize with the Holy Ghost? Think of a creature, even though the greatest of all creatures, attempting so to do! It would be to make Deity subservient to creaturehood.

Gabriel's message to Zacharias, as recorded by Luke, coincides with this. Of John it is declared that "many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before HIM in the spirit and power of Elias," etc. (chap. 1 : 16, 17). What other antecedent expression can the pronoun Him refer to but "the Lord their God"? Oh, how marvelously do angels, prophets, and apostles, with holy men and women of all ages, unite to ascribe the highest honor to the Crucified, and own that in Him is revealed this wondrous secret of piety!

The entire Gospel of John shines with this truth of all truths. Every chapter bears witness to it. The first starts with the oft-quoted statement that "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God." Here, His eternity of being, distinctness of person, unity of nature, and eternal Sonship, are all alike maintained. And it was the same uncreated Word, Himself the Creator, who "became flesh, and tabernacled among us." He was as truly man as He was God. And such Nathanael owns Him, ere the chapter closes, as he adoringly cries, "Rabbi,

Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel" (ver. 49).

In the second chapter He asserts His deity when He says to the Jews, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (ver. 19). "He spake of the temple of His body." Deity was there enshrined; and when that temple should be destroyed, of His own power He would raise it again. What creature could so speak without blaspheming? John 3: 16—"Luther's miniature Bible"—makes known to Nicodemus that He who was supposed to be, at the most, "a teacher come from God," is really "His Only-begotten Son"; therefore one with Him in life and nature.

But space forbids our going from chapter to chapter. I only pause to note that He who could say, "Before Abraham was, I AM," could be no other than that holy, holy, holy Lord God of hosts whose glory Isaiah saw, as John 12: 41 declares: "These things said Esaias, when he saw His glory, and spake of Him." He it was who "came from God, and went to God," and who could speak so familiarly to His Father of "the glory which I had with Thee before the world was" (chaps. 13: 3; 17: 5). Is it any wonder that Thomas, convinced at last of truth long doubted, cries out in holy ecstasy, "My Lord and My God!" (chap. 20: 28.) Nor is he rebuked by Jesus, as he must have been if he were applying to a creature the titles of Deity.

Angels *refuse* worship (Rev. 22 : 8, 9); Jesus accepted it, because He is "God over all, blessed forever."

From the balance of the New Testament, of which it can be truly said, as of the temple of old, "every whit of it uttereth His glory," I select only three scriptures, ere passing on to consider the next great mystery that claims our attention. I notice first the touching words of 2 Cor. 8 : 9: "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich."

Let those who deny the eternal Sonship of our blessed Lord, and blasphemously assert that He is but a creature, whose course began when He was born in Bethlehem, tell us when He was ever rich down here! "*He was rich,*" but when? Poverty surrounded His lowly birth,

"Which would no glory borrow,
No majesty, from earth."

His childhood and young manhood were not spent amid wealth and luxury; and as He went about on His mission of love, He was poorer than the beasts and the birds, for He had no place to lay His head. At last He died in ignominy and shame on a malefactor's cross, and was laid in a borrowed tomb. Tell us, O unbelieving Socinian, who deniest His preexistence in glory, tell us, when was He rich? We wait

in vain for an answer if the truth be not owned that He was rich in the glory that He had with the Father in the past eternity, when, "subsisting in the form of God, [He] did not esteem it an object of rapine to be on an equality with God." *Then* He was rich! The next verses show the poverty to which He descended: He "emptied Himself, taking a bondman's form, taking His place in the likeness of man; and having been found in figure as a man, humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, and [that the] death of the cross" (Phil. 2: 6-8—J. N. Darby's translation).

In Col. 1 there is a passage the full force of which is obscured in our English rendering of the Authorized Version. We read that "It pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell" (ver. 19). It is really, "In Him all the Fulness was pleased to dwell." The connection makes it plain that it is the divine Fulness the apostle is writing of. All the Fulness of the the Godhead dwelt in Jesus. Of what creature could this be said, however holy and exalted? It is the peculiar glory of Him "who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation *; for in Him were all things created that

* First-born is not, in Scripture, as we might suppose, always the one born first. It is the preeminent one, and the heir. So our Lord Jesus, as Head over all things, is the First-born of all creation—everywhere supreme.

are in the heavens, and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or authorities: all things were created through Him, and for Him: and He is before all things, and in Him all things consist" (Col. 1: 15-17, Newberry's rendering).

The last scripture I notice now is the scene of Rev. 5. The Lamb once slain is there beheld in the midst of the throne of God—a place no creature shall ever take. The moment He takes the book of judgment, all the redeemed, together with angels and all other created intelligences, "fall down before the Lamb," and worship Him as Saviour and Head. It is the bringing-in of the glory, and is a wondrous and glorious picture. Could anything more be needed to show that in Him all recognize the supreme Object of worship? If He be not God, heaven will be filled with idolaters! But with hearts won by His bloody passion, and minds illuminated by the word of God, all saints join in rendering to the once-slain Lamb all homage and adoration, worship and glory and blessing, both now and throughout eternity.

The "mystery of piety" is confessedly great. God has been manifested in flesh, and the divine and human will nevermore be separated.

If any deny this, he is to be refused as an anti-christ, and neither received into the house nor given greeting, "for he that greeteth him is par-

taker of his evil deeds" (2 John 10, 11, literal translation). God cannot tolerate neutrality when the doctrine of Christ is in question. Oh that His beloved people everywhere were aroused to the importance of uncompromisingly standing for this cardinal truth, now so frequently and unblushingly denied even among professed Christians!

CHAPTER VII

THE MYSTERY OF THE RAPTURE OF THE SAINTS

“**B**EHOLD, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep”! What an amazing statement, in the light of the declarations made over and over again by ministers and laymen that “we must all die.”

“We *must*,” say they. “We *shall not*,” says the apostle, by the Holy Spirit’s direction. Here, then, is a mystery deserving our careful consideration, in view of the grave discrepancy between the teaching of the Bible and the belief of Christendom.

To the epistles of Paul alone do we turn for the revelation of this mystery. He was the special vessel chosen to make known the heavenly calling. The twelve were, as we have seen, connected primarily with the testimony to Israel. Paul, as one born out of due time, was selected to be the messenger to the nations, announcing

the distinctive truths of the present dispensation.

The Lord Jesus clearly instructed His disciples as to His second advent in glory to destroy His enemies, and to set up His world-kingdom. After His ascension, this is everywhere proclaimed, as His heralds go about making known His gospel. It was understood that ere that day should come there would be for Israel a period of unparalleled tribulation, "the time of Jacob's trouble." At its close, the Lord was to appear, to bring in the long-promised reign of peace. All this was in full accord with the teaching of the Old Testament as to "the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow."

In order to make this clear to the reader who may have given but little attention to these important subjects, it may be well to briefly review what is there set forth, but in a somewhat fuller way than in our first chapter. In doing this it will be necessary to do little more than refer to a large number of passages of Scripture, many of which lack of space will forbid quoting in full, but it is hoped the reader will carefully read any that are unfamiliar to him.

First, then, let it be noted that Old Testament prophecy *never* refers to the dispensation in which we live (extending from Pentecost to the Lord's coming for His own) save in a most indefinite way, as, for instance, in Dan. 9:26, a

passage which will come before us a little farther down. From Moses to Malachi, Scripture is mainly occupied with one nation, Israel, (Amos 3 : 2; Deut. 7 : 6; Ps. 147 : 19, 20), and the hope of that nation, namely, the raising up of the Prophet (Deut. 18 : 15), Priest (Ps. 110 : 4; Zech. 6 : 13), and King (Isa. 32 : 1; Ps. 2 : 6), who is to bring them into everlasting blessing as a people (Ps. 132 : 11-18; Isa. 35 : 10; 51 : 11; 61 : 7), though not until their regeneration (Ezek. 36 : 24-30).

The Gentile shall share in that blessing (Isa. 56 : 6; 65 : 1), but not as on the same footing with Israel; rather in subjection to them (Isa. 14 : 1-3; 60 : 3-5; 62 : 1, 2).

The prophets predicted, however, that ere the ushering in of that day of Jehovah's power and Messiah's glory, there would be a rejection of both the looked-for Redeemer (Isa. 53) and the nation (Isa. 50); the former by Israel to whom He came; the latter themselves set aside by God because of having refused His Son when He came in grace to offer Himself as both Lord and Saviour (Zech. 7 : 13, 14); while the rejected Messiah takes His place in the heavens on Jehovah's throne (Ps. 110 : 1), which He will occupy until the future repentance of the people (Hosea 5 : 15).

This setting aside of Israel is, however, not final, as we have seen when looking at the mystery of the olive tree; and this the 30th and

31st chapters of Jeremiah,* together with many other portions of the Word, plainly declare. But it is before their restoration to the divine favor that they must pass through the time of trouble above referred to. See Jer. 30: 7.

At the expiration of this period of chastisement a remnant will be ready to acknowledge the Crucified as their Messiah, and "will mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and as one that is in bitterness for his first-born" (Zech. 12: 10-14; 13: 6, 9). In the darkest hour of their sorrow, when Jerusalem is compassed about with armies, and they are in direst distress, He will appear as their deliverer, and as the destroyer of their foes. The tabernacle of David will then be set up once more, and the reign of righteousness ushered in (Zech. 14; Amos 9: 8-15). At His apocalypse He is to appear "with all His saints." Who these saints are, whether men or angels, is not disclosed here. The appointed time had not yet come to reveal it.

Thus far, the Old Testament. Turning to the later revelation, we find many new data introduced, without which the present working of the Spirit of God in the world would be inexpli-

* A fairly full exposition of these chapters will be found in "The Weeping Prophet: Reflections on the Prophecy and Lamentations of Jeremiah," by the same author and publishers.

cable. Bearing in mind what we have seen as to the mystery of the eleventh of Romans, we see how Israel's rejection has but made way for unforetold grace to be shown to the nations, though the apostle quotes Old Testament promises of blessing to the heathen as proof that such is compatible, not in collision, with the word of God before made known. This special work among the Gentiles, however, is not to go on forever; for if these continue not in the divine goodness shown them, they too shall be cut off, and the natural branches grafted in again, for "God is able."

He now is doing a work unmentioned in the Jewish oracles during the time that His earthly people are "Lo-ammi" (not My people; Hosea 1: 9), and unacknowledged by Him: thus "blindness in part is happened to Israel *until* the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." The Lord Jesus confirms this (but rather from the political side) in His prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem and the long period of Gentile supremacy following it, finally ending in His personal appearing (Luke 21). In verse 24 we read, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles *until* the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled."

At first sight it might be supposed that "the *fulness* of the Gentiles" would synchronize with the closing of "the *times* of the Gentiles." But it is just here that a distinction is made by the

revelation of the mystery of the rapture, which will come before us as we proceed. In order to fully prepare the way for it, I would ask the reader to turn to the ninth chapter of Daniel, and note carefully what is written concerning the prophecy of "the seventy weeks." A lengthy exposition of this passage cannot be attempted here, but I briefly notice the main points. From the cycle of time, seventy weeks (or sevens) of years (note the periods before the prophet's mind in verse 2), making in all 490 years, are "determined," or "cut off," and given to Daniel's people—of course, the Jewish nation.

Ere this length of time expires, six important events will have taken place: 1st, transgression will be finished; 2d, an end will be made of sins; 3d, atonement (rather than "reconciliation") will be made for iniquity; 4th, everlasting righteousness will be brought in; 5th, vision and prophecy will be sealed up, or finished, i. e., all fulfilled; and 6th, the most holy, or holy of holies, of the millennial temple at Jerusalem will be anointed. (See Ezek. chaps. 40-48 for a description of the temple to be rebuilt, and its millennial glory.)

The seventy weeks are divided into three unequal periods: 1st, seven weeks, or 49 years; 2d, sixty-two weeks, or 434 years; 3d, one week, or 7 years. During the first seven weeks, "the strait times" (see margin), the city and

wall of Jerusalem were to be rebuilt. The date from which to count is found in Nehemiah, chap. 2, when a "commandment went forth to restore and build Jerusalem." The sixty-two weeks seem to have immediately followed, and ended in the coming of Messiah. After the conclusion of this period, He was cut off and had nothing; but by this atonement was made. Then comes in the present long interval of Jerusalem's treading down. The city is destroyed, as our Lord foretold, and "even unto the *end* shall be war," until one arises who confirms a covenant with the mass of Jews for the final, last week. Clearly, then, this week is still future. The prophetic clock, as noted before, stopped at Calvary. It will not start again till "the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." The present is a timeless epoch, parenthetically introduced between the sixty-ninth and seventieth weeks, in which God is taking out from among the Gentiles a people for His name (Acts 15: 14). Not that He has utterly given up the Jew now, but both Jew and Gentile stand on one footing—"there is no difference, for all have sinned" (Rom. 3). Both alike are saved through faith in Christ, and all such are made members of the one Body, the Church, by the Holy Ghost united to the Lord Jesus Christ as Head in heaven, according to the revelation of the mystery which we have already considered. The Church began with the baptism of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pente-

cost. How long will it exist on earth? Will it remain here throughout "the time of Jacob's trouble," and until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled?

Scripture answers, No! Another mystery was made known to the apostle Paul, declaring the close of the Church's history by a mighty miracle which may take place at any moment.

He writes, "Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1 Cor. 15: 51, 52). This is the proper hope of the Christian, and it is this marvelous event which marks the "fulness of the Gentiles." The "times of the Gentiles" will not end until the tribulation period is over, which begins upon the rapture of the Church. The Church has no part in that time of trouble. It belongs to heaven, and will be taken home to glory ere it begins. In order that this may be made plain to the least-instructed reader, I would note briefly the characteristics of that period of judgment. It will be a short dispensation, in which divine wrath will be poured out upon Israel, apostate Christendom, and the nations at large. It is to be the awful result of the rejection of the Prince of Peace.

The book of Revelation, from chapter four to

nineteen is occupied entirely with its solemn events. The promise is given to the Church in chapter 3: 10, "Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."* In full accord with this, the heavenly saints are seen enthroned in heaven as the four and twenty elders, who have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, ere the storm of judgment breaks. When all is over, they ride forth as "the armies of heaven," with "the Word of God," at His glorious appearing, no longer seen as worshiping crowned priests, but now as warrior-saints. This accords with Zechariah's declaration, "The Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with Thee" (chap. 14: 5).

In the time of woe intervening, Antichrist will "come in his own name," and be owned by the apostates of Judah and Christendom as Messiah; the Roman empire having been revived in a new and dreadful form by direct satanic energy, Babylon the great will control it, until judged by God for her blasphemies and her abominable wickedness. The seals will be opened, the trumpets of judgment sounded, and the vials of wrath poured out, while men repent not of their deeds, but blaspheme the God of

* See Appendix I, "Enemies of the Cross of Christ and Dwellers on the Earth."

heaven. This is the great tribulation; but we search in vain for any mention of the Church or the heavenly saints on earth during that fearful time. No! they are above it all—with the Lamb who redeemed them, and who shall have taken them to be with Himself.

The manner of the rapture is described in 1 Thess. 4: 13–18. Some in Thessalonica had been put to sleep by Jesus. Their living brethren feared they had missed the glory of the kingdom thereby. Writing to assure their hearts, the apostle says: "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus (or, sleep through Jesus) will God bring with Him." But how can this be, since they have passed away in death? The "mystery" explains it. God will bring them with Jesus at His glorious appearing, because He will first raise them up, and then change the living, prior to the appearing in splendor to establish the kingdom. "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not anticipate them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which

are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

This is the mystery of the rapture. The shout of the Lord will awaken all the sleeping Church; the voice of the archangel (Michael, who is the prince of Israel) will summon the saints of bygone dispensations from their tombs; the trump of God will sound (the last trump of 1 Cor. 15: 52), closing up this dispensation; and in a moment all the redeemed, whether raised or changed, shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air.

This is the uniform testimony of the Pauline epistles, and the proper hope of the Church of God.

How shocking the temerity, or how gross the ignorance, of men who declare we *must* all die, in view of such a declaration as that we have been considering!

Not for death did the Thessalonians look, but "they turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven" (chap. 1: 9, 10). May reader and writer so serve and so wait till the voice the shout, and the trump, shall summon us into the presence of our Beloved!

CHAPTER VIII

“THE MYSTERY OF LAWLESSNESS”

BLESSED and holy have been the mysteries thus far contemplated. Dark and sinister is that which next comes before us. So fearful is it, in fact, that it would seem, at first sight, quite improper to class it in any sense among the “mysteries of God.” And yet it is rightly so spoken of; for, of all secrets, none is more difficult for man to comprehend than God’s toleration of aught so evil. Yet He has not only permitted its existence, but warned us of it beforehand, and foretold its end.

The great theme of the first letter to the Thesalonians is the coming of the Lord *for* His saints; that of the second epistle is His return in manifested glory *with* them.

Between these two events will be fully developed the mystery of lawlessness, or the secret of iniquity. It does not, however, then appear as a new thing, or for the first time. Far otherwise: even in his own days, when Christianity was but in its infancy, the apostle wrote, “The mystery of lawlessness doth already work,” and that *effectually*, for so the last word implies

in the original (2 Thess. 2:7). Side by side with the proclamation of the truth has ever been the satanic work, energetically carried on, to corrupt the truth, introducing poisonous counterfeits that delude the souls of all who receive them.

We have already seen this set forth in symbol under the figures of the enemy sowing darnel among the wheat, and the woman hiding the leaven in the food of the people of God—the three measures of meal. The same thing is set forth in the letter to Thyatira, where the false prophetess Jezebel is instilling her abominable teachings into the minds of her disciples (Rev. 2:18–23).

Invariably Satan works by imitation. God has revealed holy mysteries to His servants. The devil too must have his deep things, which thus appeal to the spiritually proud and carnally-minded. The mystery of lawlessness is, in fact, the working of the human mind, energized by Satan, in divine things. Refusing the sure testimonies of the Lord, and walking in vain confidence, the ear is readily given to fables, and the mind revels in wonderful and strange teachings, which delight and bewilder, but are not only to no profit, but to the actual subverting of those who run greedily after them. The object of Satan is to turn the eye from Christ; hence the mystery of lawlessness makes much of man, and, by any means whatever, puts the

Lord Jesus at a distance. And it is by imitating scriptural truths that this is successfully accomplished. Were it otherwise, the simple would take alarm. So we are told that “as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses (by imitating the miracles performed), so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith” (2 Tim. 3: 8).

In tracing out the progress of this dark and dreadful mystery therefore, we must look for some gigantic systematizing of error, by counterfeiting divine truths. Nor have we far to seek; for from the beginning it is only too manifest. In its earliest inception, this mystery consisted in taking up the hopes, forms and ceremonies of the Jewish dispensation, and transferring them gradually to the Church of the present period. This accomplished, the heavenly calling would be lost sight of; the great mystery of Christ and the Church would be effectually hidden; and believers would thus sink down to the level of the world, becoming, in spirit, dwellers on the earth* and forgetting that their *politeuma* † is in heaven (Phil. 3: 20.).

To persuade erstwhile Jews and heathen, used

* That the expression “dwellers on the earth” refers, not to all who live in the world, but to a moral class, characterized by earthly-mindedness, is, it is believed, made plain in the Appendix.

† It is from this that we get our word “politics.” The best rendering, perhaps, would be “commonwealth.”

to forms and ceremonies, that a Christianity bereft of outward attractiveness was inferior to an ornate and elaborate ritual, was not a matter of great difficulty. Hence we soon see the truth of the priesthood of all believers, each one having immediate access to God, displaced by the teaching that, as in Judaism and in heathenism, so now, there is a special priestly order who alone have to do directly with the mysteries of religion, and who act as mediators and go-betweens for the laity, or the commonalty. This was one of Satan's most cunning devices to put the people at a distance from God. How well it has succeeded the centuries witness! By degrees, more and more power, with its accompanying pomp, was delegated to this superior hierarchy; gorgeous vestments were adopted, magnificent titles accorded, and thus the simple Christianity of early days seemed almost crushed out of existence. Priestly functions, too, extended farther and farther. Baptism became a sacrament only to be administered by this special class, who likewise alone were holy enough to dispense the elements of the Lord's Supper, to solemnize a marriage, to anoint the sick, and to hear confessions of sin, with the power to grant absolution.

The ordinance of baptism itself became a great mystery, whereby the taint of original sin was supposed to be washed away, and the baptized one born anew. The simple "breaking of bread"

gave place to the mysterious and blasphemous sacrifice of the mass—a continual and unbloody sacrifice for the sins of the living and the dead! Anointing the sick with oil by the elders of the church, that they might be healed in answer to prayer, became the sacrament of extreme unction to prepare the doubting, bewildered soul for death, instead of life! Christ Himself as the "one Mediator between God and men" (1 Tim. 3: 5) was largely replaced by "saints" (made so after their death by hierarchial authority) and "the holy Virgin" more accessible than her divine Son! Thus, one by one, doctrines and usages were so perverted as to be unrecognizable.

Suffice it to say that so effectual has been the working of this mystery of lawlessness that there remains not one doctrine of Scripture that has not been denied, and an imitation foisted upon the ignorant in its place. Thus it went on spreading, not only through the Roman communion, but among so-called Greek orthodox, and now among Anglican and even Protestant denominations, as well as heretical sects like Christian Science, New Thought, etc.

But it has not yet attained its full growth, nor will it while the Church, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, remains upon the earth.

In 2 Thess. 2 we read of a hindrance to the full manifestation of the evil of the mystery of lawlessness referred to, which is evidently the pres-

ence of the Holy Ghost in the Church on earth. He "lets," or hinders, until "He be taken out of the way." When He goes up with the Church at the Lord's descent into the air, "then the *lawless one* shall be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus shall consume with the breath of His mouth, and shall annul by the appearing of His coming; whose coming is according to the working of Satan in all power and signs and wonders of falsehood, and in all deceit of unrighteousness to them that perish, because they have not received the love of the truth that they might be saved. And for this reason God sends to them a working of error, that they should believe what is false, that all might be judged who have not believed the truth, but have found pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thess. 2: 8-13, J. N. Darby's Trans.).

This is certainly a most solemn passage, deserving to be carefully weighed. It refers to something which may take place very, very soon; a state of affairs many living now may enter upon shortly. The more minutely it is examined, the more clearly it will be seen that it pictures a terrible period, soon to come upon all that dwell on the earth; when the Church will be gone, the secret of iniquity will be headed up in one man, the Antichrist of prophecy; and all who had chosen the earth in place of the heavenly portion will be given over to strong delusion. This cuts off all hope of any being saved

in that coming "hour of temptation" (Rev. 3: 10), who have heard the gospel of the grace of God in this "day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6: 2), but heard only to reject it. It puts a terrible responsibility on those who listen again and again to the proclamation of salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, yet have never trusted Him for themselves, but have either gone on their sinful course in utter indifference, or else supposed that by trusting in the Church, a human priesthood, or religious ordinances, they had made their peace with God; thus ignoring Him who alone made peace by the blood of His cross.

It is solemn indeed to realize that if Christ should come to call His own away while they are in this awful state, they would be left for certain judgment, for God Himself would send the delusion, or working of error, which would shut them up to judicial darkness. In this dispensation of grace, they "loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." In that time of deepest distress they will be given up to the darkness they have loved and deliberately chosen.

For former instances of God's sending men delusions and visiting them with judicial blindness, see the cases of Pharaoh (Ex. 11: 10), of Ahab (2 Chron. 18), and of the nation of Israel (Isa. 6: 9, 10; Matt. 13: 13-15). All who hear the gospel and believe it not are "condemned

already" (Jno. 3:18). If the Lord comes while they are still in that state, the condemnation is final, and we note their dreadful doom in 2 Thess. 1:7-10, together with the contrast of the blessed place that might have been theirs had they but believed the testimony so graciously given. "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that *obey not the gospel* of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power; when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because *our testimony among you was believed*) in that day." There could be no stronger declaration that all who reject the testimony now, will be unable to avail themselves of the testimony then, while the result of the outpouring of divine wrath upon the scene will only harden, in place of bringing to repentance (Rev. 16:9-11, 21).

It would seem, from a careful study of the book of Revelation, that immediately after the rapture of the saints all the Christless fragments of Christendom will be united for a time in one universal world-Church—Babylon the great. For not in any past history of Rome has Rev. 17 been completely fulfilled; Babylon in its final phase is yet future. She there is seen as the

great harlot bearing rule for a brief season over many waters, which are, as interpreted, “peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues” (ver. 15).

Upon her proud forehead is written, “MYSTERY, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth.” She is drunk with the blood of the saints, who in all ages have been slain by the adherents of false religion. For a time she bears sway over the revived Roman empire, until at last she is overthrown and given to the flames by those who had once been her abject slaves.

Thus shall Babylon’s power be broken, and all worship and homage be paid to a *man*—“the man of sin”—who heads up in himself the mystery of lawlessness. This is the subject of the thirteenth chapter of Revelation, which in point of time seems to be subsequent to chapter 17, for there we see no woman riding the beast. Her doom has already come, and now the man of sin is fully revealed, and all pay homage to the Antichrist, the false Messiah.

This will be the devil’s masterpiece, and the culmination of the mystery he has been developing for so long. But his triumph shall be but momentary; for when iniquity is at its height, and Satan’s power seems to be supreme, the heavens shall be opened, and He shall ride forth whom John saw in vision, as described in chap. 19 of the same book. “And I saw heaven

opened, and behold, a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written, that no man knew but He Himself. And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. . . . And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him that sat on the horse, and against His army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshiped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone" (vers. 11-14, 19, 20).

Thus shall the mystery of lawlessness be forever blotted out and righteousness alone shall reign!

CHAPTER IX

THE MYSTERY OF GOD FINISHED

THE final book of the Bible is an apocalypse. It is not apocrypha—that is, something concealed, or hidden—but, indeed, a revelation. It gives the close of all God's ways with man upon the earth, and vindicates His righteousness both in grace and judgment; but it is primarily a book of judgment, and that threefold. It details the judgments that must fall on apostate Christendom, on disobedient Israel, and on the gainsaying nations.

The heart of the book is the tenth chapter, and the pith of that portion is the angel's declaration, of verse 7, that "in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as He hath declared to His servants the prophets." This is the theme of the seven-sealed roll; the vindication of God's holiness in having so long tolerated evil in His universe. What greater mystery confronts and confuses the human mind than the question, Why does God allow unrighteousness so often to triumph? It is what men call the mystery of Providence; but

Providence is only another name for God. This is *His* secret. He will disclose it in due time, and all shall be clear as the day. Till then, faith rests upon His Word, and trusts His love, however true it may seem to be that goodness and righteousness are at a discount in the present age, and have been so since Cain rose up against his brother and slew him.

“Careless seems the great Avenger; history’s pages
but record
One death-grapple in the darkness, ’twixt old systems
and the Word;
Truth forever on the scaffold, Wrong forever on the
throne,—
Yet that scaffold sways the future, and behind the
dim unknown
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above
His own.”

His final triumph over all evil is what is so vividly presented in the rapidly-shifting tableau of “the Revelation (not of ‘St. John the Divine,’ but) of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants things which must shortly come to pass.”

The book is by no means so difficult of spiritual comprehension as some have imagined. It divides naturally into three parts, as intimated in verse 19 of the first chapter. “Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things shall be after these

things" (literal rendering). The first division is, of course, the opening chapter, with its account of what John had seen—the Lord judging in the midst of the assemblies of His people. "The things which are," that is, which are now present, or now going on, are the letters to the seven assemblies in chapters two and three.* The balance of the book is devoted to the third division;—the things which shall follow after the Church's history on earth is closed. It is the time of the end, the short period of judgment, when all who have refused the grace of God will have to know His vengeance. This is in full accord with what is elsewhere taught most clearly in Scripture.

At the end of the age the tares are gathered in bundles and burned (Matt. 13: 30, 40-42); the man without the wedding garment on is cast into outer darkness (Matt. 22: 13); the unfaithful servant is appointed his portion with the hypocrites (Matt. 24: 48-51); the foolish virgins, though they go for oil, are shut outside (Matt. 25: 11); the unprofitable servant has even his profession taken away (vers. 28-30); those who neglected to enter in at the strait gate seek in vain to enter then (Luke 13: 24); even as those who refused to be warned by Enoch and Noah perished in the flood, and

* See a note as to help on this subject, in Appendix B. The seven churches cover the entire dispensation.

those who listened not to Lot were destroyed in Sodom (Luke 17: 26-30).

These, then, are the ones who become followers of Antichrist, and are crushed by the wrath of the Lamb!

But it is equally plain that the period of Rev. 4 to 19 will not be one of unmixed judgment. Some there are who will become the objects of sovereign grace, and who, though they pass through the terrible tribulation of that time, will be saved out of it. But these are not Christ-rejecters of the present day, whose hearts then become soft, and who own the Saviour they now refuse.

In short, we search Scripture in vain for one hint that any gospel-rejecter will be saved in that day. Nor does the expression in Rev. 7: 9 militate against this: "Of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues," for manifestly none of Israel will be among them, as we see the 144,000 of the twelve tribes quite distinct from the great multitude. The expression really declares the universality of the response to the everlasting gospel among the heathen nations, but Christendom, as Israel, is not counted, unless, indeed, there be found even there some who never heard the gospel before. This everlasting gospel is not the gospel of the grace of God as now proclaimed, but the good news that the long reign of iniquity is almost over, and the Lord God Omnipotent is about to as-

sert His power, and thus the mystery of His toleration of evil shall be solved at last. There will be found in that day a people who will receive this message with contrition of heart, and turn to Him in repentance, confessing their sins.

And, first of all, we are reminded that this will be the period of Israel's awakening, as we have already seen in several passages. In Dan. 12:3 we read, "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever"; and this, as the first verse assures us, during the time of trouble; but "at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book."

The hour of their darkest trouble and deepest sorrow will result in the elect among them returning to the Lord. The 144,000 of Rev. 7 picture to us those who will say, "Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for He hath torn, and He will heal us; He hath smitten, and He will bind us up" (Hosea 6:1). Zion's sore travail shall result in a great bringing forth of children, as predicted in Mic. 5:3 and Isa. 66:8. We quote the latter passage, "Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children." The verses following are deserving

also of special notice in this connection. See also Zech. 12 and 13.

And so the "blindness in part" is to be done away; the "fulness of the Gentiles" having come in, as shown also in Hos. 3: 4, 5. "For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim: afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days." This is true, not of the nation as a whole (see Zech. 13: 8, 9; Isa. 24: 13; also Ezek. 20: 31-44), but of the remnant. The mass will be destroyed for their apostasy. The remnant will be acknowledged as the nation, "and so all Israel shall be saved" (Rom. 11: 26). To be of the sons of Jacob even, does not insure an opportunity of grace. None who refuse the truth now, whether Jew or Gentile, can be saved then.

Through the Jew, the gospel of the Kingdom will during this time be preached in all the earth for a witness, ere the end shall come. Sent forth by the Spirit from on high, they will proclaim far and wide the approach of the Kingdom, and call upon men to repent as John the Baptist did of old. See Matt. 24: 14. Thus we see grace going out to the Gentiles who have not heard the truth previously. The great result of this is seen also in Zech. 8: 20, 23.

With this agrees our Lord's teaching as to the judgment of Matt. 25. This takes place at His coming to the earth. The *living* nations are gathered before Him. The separation is made according to the treatment accorded the Jewish missionaries mentioned above, whom He owns as "My brethren." Intelligence in divine things is not marked in any, but at least they did not reject or neglect the messengers. They are saved, and enter into the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world. They are the "blessed of My Father."

And so, even though the sword of judgment is unsheathed, grace is still exercised according to the word, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy" (Rom. 9:15). From Israel and the Gentiles a countless number will go into the millennial kingdom, and acknowledge the sway of the blessed One, once made a curse for them, as for us. But not one who has spurned the Lamb of God in the present period will be among them.

There will be some who will be numbered with the heavenly saints after the Church is gone. They will be exclusively Jewish, as evidenced by the fact that they sing "the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb" (Rev. 15:3). By martyrdom under the Beast and Antichrist they lose an earthly inheritance and obtain a heavenly one. Their part will be, not with the Church, the Body of Christ and

Eve of the last Adam, but doubtless with those of old who "desired a better country, that is, a heavenly" (Heb. 11:16). In Rev. 20 we see them enthroned with the rest who live and reign a thousand years. With the Lamb they will be forever, but not theirs will be the special place enjoyed by those who now believe in Him and who are identified with Him in the present hour of His rejection.

Having thus rapidly sketched the actings of God in judgment and in grace, as set forth in the third great division of the Revelation, I turn to notice its order more particularly. It seems to divide into two almost equal parts, each of which covers the same season, or time, only that the latter has Israel more particularly in view, and the former the Gentiles. An appendix is added, having to do with the Church in the glory of God.

The first of these two sections begins with the *door opened in heaven*, in chapter 4, and goes on to the judgment of the wicked dead, ending at verse 18 of chapter 11. The second portion, or the recapitulation, giving details omitted in the former part, begins with the temple of God *opened in heaven* (and the ark of His covenant, speaking of His relation to Israel, seen), in verse 19, and goes on to the final judgment of chapter 20. The balance of the book is a kind of appendix, setting forth the glories of the Bride the Lamb's wife, the heavenly Jerusalem.

It will be noticed that in the beginning of the first section, four and twenty crowned priests are seen in heaven, robed in white and sitting upon thrones, surrounding the throne of God and the Lamb. Unquestionably these are the heavenly saints who have been translated to glory at the coming of the Lord for His own, according to 1 Thess. 4, as seen in the chapter on the Mystery of the Rapture. God is now about to draw His sword for the final conflict, but He takes care to gather His own to Himself ere the judgments fall.

In chapter 5 the Lamb alone is found worthy to take the seven-sealed book—the title-deeds to the earth that once cast Him out. As fast as He breaks the seals, judgments against which men harden themselves fall upon the earth that refused Him, as set forth in chapters 6, 8, and 9.

Chapter 7 is a parenthesis, letting us know that, even in that dreadful hour of His wrath, a remnant of Israel, and a great multitude of the heathen nations, shall (as we have already, I trust, seen clearly), be saved for the *earth*, and the earthly aspect of the millennial kingdom.

The opening of the seventh seal releases the entire scroll, and seven angels who stand before God are given seven trumpets. As Israel of old sounded the trumpets of Jehovah's judgment about Jericho prior to its terrible fall, so these shall sound the downfall of all that man and Satan have built up throughout the ages.

Six of these trumpets sound in chapters 8 and 9. And, as a parenthesis occurred between the sixth and the seventh *seal*, so here we have another one between the last two *trumpets*.

The mighty angel of chapter 10, who comes down from heaven, can be none other than the blessed Lord Himself. What created being could be so described? He is "clothed with a cloud (the cloud of the divine glory): and a rainbow was upon His head, and His face was as it were the sun (supreme majesty), and His feet as pillars of fire." Moreover He has the now-opened scroll in His hand, and, as Possessor of all created things, He puts His right foot upon the sea, and His left foot upon the earth. Lifting up His hand to heaven, He "sware by Him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be no longer delay: but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, **THE MYSTERY OF GOD SHOULD BE FINISHED**, as He hath declared to His servants the prophets" (vers. 6, 7).

John is then commanded to eat the book; for prophecy consists not of idle words, or mere intellectual instruction, but is to be received into the heart, that it may enable the man of God to live *now* in the light of *then*.

The first fourteen verses of chapter 11 contin-

ue the parenthesis, setting forth the Lord's care for Jerusalem and His judgment on the apostate portion of the nation. The climax is reached in verse 15, when the seventh angel sounds, "and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The world-kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ, has come; and He shall reign for ever and ever." This involves the complete overthrow of Satan's power, hence of all evil, and the bringing in of everlasting righteousness. Thus the Millennium and the day of judgment at its close are all anticipated. Therefore "the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their thrones, fell upon their faces, and worshiped God, saying, We give Thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come: because Thou hast taken to Thee Thy great power, and hast reigned. And the nations were angry, and Thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged,* and that Thou shouldest give reward unto Thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear Thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth" (vers. 16-18).

Thus the secret of God will be finished, and evil will be seen to be but the dark background against which His grace and His holiness will

* Of course the wicked dead. The righteous are raised at the coming of the Lord for His saints.

stand out in bolder relief than if sin had never been permitted to lift up its head in the universe.

As stated above, the second part of the prophecy travels over the same ground, reaching its climax in the judgment of the great white throne. The millennial reign of Christ will be a time of rewards for His saints, and will close with judgment on His adversaries.

This world, yea, the entire universe, may be likened to a business which has become demoralized through wicked devices, and is therefore put into the hands of a receiver, that its affairs may be straightened out. When all is established in order, the receivership comes to an end.

Such a Receiver is our Lord Jesus Christ. Man, ruled by Satan, has hopelessly ruined himself and all over which he was set by God. Jesus is given the receivership. He will bring order out of the existing chaos, and put everything right. "Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power. For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. . . . And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. 15.)

Thus will the receivership be accomplished—evil banished, righteousness triumphant, the mystery finished, and God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—be all in all throughout an eternity of bliss, in which iniquity shall never again rear its head! But none in that unending day of God will sing so sweet a song as those who once were sinners lost and guilty, yea, vile and loathsome too, but who have been saved by grace divine, and shall forever praise the Lamb who died, and extol the precious blood that cleansed from sin's pollution. Had there been no sin, there could have been no Saviour; and oh, how great the loss, to have known our Lord as Sovereign and Creator, but not as the One who died to redeem us to God with His own blood, thus to bind our hearts to Himself for all the ages to come.

“One string there is of sweetest tone,
Reserved for sinners saved by grace;
’Tis sacred to one class alone,
And touched by one peculiar race.

“Though angels may with rapture see
How mercy flows in Jesus’ blood,
It is not theirs to prove, as we,
The cleansing virtue of this flood.”

—THOS. KELLY.

APPENDIX A

ENEMIES OF THE CROSS OF CHRIST, AND DWELLERS ON THE EARTH *

THE attentive reader can scarcely have failed to notice that the third of Philippians is a chapter abounding in marked contrasts.

There is the contrast between the Judaisers, whom the apostle contemptuously styles "the concision"—the cutting off—and those whom he designates "the circumcision"—the cutting round—who have no confidence in the flesh and who rejoice in Christ Jesus (vers. 2, 3). This leads him to contrast his own past religiousness—his trust in the flesh—with his present state, as having counted all loss for Christ and gladly letting everything go and esteeming it as offal, to win Him (vers. 4-9).

In ver. 9 the legal righteousness which "is of the law" is contrasted with "the righteousness which is of God by faith." This is really but carrying out the distinction noticed just above.

In vers. 10 and 11 there is implied at least, the contrast between the resurrection of judgment

* This paper appeared some years ago in *HELP AND FOOD*, a monthly magazine. I reproduce it here in order to make plain the truth as to the dwellers on the earth being a moral class.

which was all he could once look forward to, and the "out-resurrection from among the dead" in which he now looks to have part.

Perfection, in the sense of absolute holiness,—final perfection such as will be ours at the end of the way—is then contrasted with perfection (or full growth) in the sense of having apprehended the great truths of the gospel (vers. 12-16). The former he disclaims (ver. 12). Regarding the latter he can say, "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded."

Lastly, he contrasts the body of our humiliation with the bodies to be ours at the Lord's coming, "fashioned like unto the body of His glory" (ver. 21).

Just before this however he points out a contrast between two moral classes frequently brought before us again in the book of the Revelation, and in fact everywhere distinguished in Scripture. It is the contrast between earthly-and heavenly-mindedness.

"For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame; who mind earthly things." Opposed to these we have the heavenly-minded ones, "For our conversation (citizenship, commonwealth, politics; it has been variously rendered) is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ" (vers. 18-20). The seventeenth verse should also be

noticed in this connection: "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an example." The "walking" here doubtless refers to taking outwardly the Christian place. Those who "walk" are those who, presumably at least, have gone on pilgrimage. They profess to "seek a country." In the Old Testament we read "The Lord . . . knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness" (Deut 2: 7); while in Acts 9: 31, of antitypical Israel we are told, "Then had the churches rest . . . and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied."

They too had gone out into the desert with God. They were no longer at home here. Alas, that *our* walk should ever be otherwise than as theirs, "in the fear of the Lord."

Those referred to in Philippians had the outward appearance of pilgrims, and yet, unlike those who began with that of which the blood-sprinkled lintel and the divided sea spoke, they were enemies of the cross of Christ!

There were such who walked with Israel of old. The same chapter that presents the people starting on their journey, after having been sheltered by the blood of the lamb, tells us that "a mixed multitude (or a great mixture) went up also with them" (Ex. 12: 38). Outwardly, perhaps, one might have had difficulty in distinguishing them from the elect nation, but their real character came out in the wilderness. In

Num. 11: 4-6, we get the cry of the people who were enemies of the cross of Christ (typically of course) who had never entered into what Red Sea judgment should have taught them, of separation from Egypt and its lusts. "And the mixed multitude that was among them fell a lusting; and (sad result) the children of Israel also wept again and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely, the cucumbers, the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic: but now our soul is dried away; there is nothing at all beside this manna before our eyes." And yet the manna spoke of Christ come down in grace to meet His people's need (Jno. 6: 32). But alas, His beauty, temporarily obscured by association with such as those of whom the apostle warns us "even weeping," we lose our appreciation of it, though He be "as wafers made with honey" for sweetness, and "fresh upon the dew"—ministered in the power of the Holy Spirit.

For manna they had no heart;—far rather would they have the flesh and fish of Egypt and the fruits which they must grovel on the ground to obtain, or even dig into the earth for. So it ever is when then the cross has lost its charm for our souls; when we can no longer say, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. 6: 14).

Have we not all known something of the deadening influence of the mixed multitude who

“walk” and “make a fair show in the flesh,” but whose hearts are in the world still where they would fain draw ours? Oh let us remember, leeks, onions and garlic all leave their odor behind!

You cannot feast on things like these without spiritual loss. Perhaps you fancy that a little worldliness, a little indulgence of the flesh, will not hurt your testimony, nor mar your enjoyment of divine things. You imagine it will never be noticed by others, for whose piety you have respect and who watch for your soul. If you do allow yourself to go on in measure with the world, you at least are regularly out to the meetings and manifest an interest in the gospel. Be assured it is just as impossible to dine on garlic and not have the odor on your breath, as to taste of the world's follies in any form without manifestly lowering the tone of your spirituality.

A night in worldly company, how it tells on one. An evening at the theatre, what a stench on the breath the day after! A popular and fascinating, but really pernicious novel, greedily devoured, what a garlic dish is that! Indulgence in earthly vanities, worldly dress and careless ways, how they eat out the spiritual life and cause the soul to loathe the manna! You cannot enjoy the world and Christ at the same time. One will inevitably crowd the other out.

I judge that there is a distinction, and a marked one, between the mixed multitude and murmuring Israel; just as we are called upon to distin-

guish between the "enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction," (not merely chastening) and the Philippian saints who are warned against such. For even the saint is in danger of becoming in measure like them in ways, if unwatchful, though one with them actually they never can be. *Forgetful* of the cross of Christ, believers often are; sad that it should be so! *Enemies* they could *not* be. 1 Cor. 9: 24—10: 11 is addressed to all. Wisdom's children take heed and are kept safe; but the foolish pass on and are punished.

The great characteristic of these, "whose glory is in their shame," is earthly-mindedness: "Whose god is their belly, who mind earthly things." In this their connection with the mixed multitude is very marked. Lust, the desire for personal gratification (let it take what form it may) and love of the scene from which the cross has separated the Christian, are their two great marks.

Let us, dear fellow-pilgrim, beware of any who would tempt us to seek our enjoyment in the sphere that has cast out our Lord. His cross has come in between us and the world. Do we, then, want anything out of it, or a place in it? If so, in heart we go back to Egypt.

To do that, Israel had to *go around the Red Sea* (Jer. 43: 1-7); through it they could not go. It is a dreadful thing thus to set the cross aside. It is not necessarily denying our interest in the death of Christ or in the shedding of His blood.

These truths may be acknowledged and confessed in measure, where the cross—symbol of His shame and bitter sorrow—has really been ignored.

It is the cross that has stained all the glory of this world; even as of old the cedar-wood, the scarlet and the hyssop were stained with the blood of the bird of the heavens, slain in an earthen vessel over running water—Christ the heavenly One, in the body prepared for Him offering Himself through the eternal Spirit a sacrifice for our cleansing (Lev. 14). To faith all its glory has disappeared in the “burning of the heifer” (Num. 19). It has no glory since it became guilty of the murder of the Son of God; since it nailed our Lord to the tree. All its objects of beauty, its religious splendor, its society, its culture—everything in which it prides itself—all is blood-stained now.

This is what those “who mind earthly things” deny. Refusing the truth that He is outside this scene of man's pride and folly, they seek to attach His name to the world that cast Him out. Of old they cried, “Crucify Him!” Now they would garnish His sepulchre.

They cannot utterly ignore Him; His impress is too strong and clear for that. It was impossible that God in human form could be in the world and yet not leave some evidence of His presence behind Him. So they claim Him now as one like unto themselves.

Have you noticed that—how every body wants to claim Jesus, even though they hate His cross?

They speak of Him as the great Exemplar, the Teacher, the Martyr,—anything you will, but that He died to deliver us from *this present evil age*—that His cross is the dividing line—this they will not have.

In contrast to these “dwellers on the earth,” how sweet to read of some “whose commonwealth is in heaven.” Here they find no continuing city. They seek one to come. His lonely path of sorrow and separation is the one they would tread in such a world as this. Identified by faith with a rejected Christ, and possessors of His life, by new birth, they cannot be at home in the scene of His deep, deep sufferings and of His awful shame. A separated, peculiar people, they confess plainly that they “seek a country,” and are content to wait for glory till the coming day of His appearing. His path of isolation and strangership is dearer far than earth’s fair by-ways, just because it was *His* who left us “an example that we should follow His steps.”

Marked is the contrast now. Marked will it be at the close. Caught up to be forever with Himself will all those be who knew Him as Lord and Saviour. Left in the earth of their own choosing and the place of their hopes will be those who were the enemies of His cross. The future of both we have outlined in the Apocalypse.

To the assembly of a little strength, who had not denied the Name of the absent One, He says, “Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of

temptation which is coming upon all the world, to try *them that dwell upon the earth*" (Rev. 3: 10).

These last are evidently the same moral class as those whose present earthly ways we have been tracing; for that the expression does not refer merely to inhabitants of the world is clear by reference to chaps. 11: 9, 10, and 14: 6, where we find them distinguished from "the people and kindreds and tongues and nations."

In the verse quoted above we see that when the Lord comes and takes His own away from the place of their toil and suffering to enter into His own rest in the glory of God, these will be left behind (despite possible Christian profession) to pass through the terrible period of judgment so graphically depicted in this closing portion of the divine oracles.

That they are identical with the false professors of every age is clear from chap. 6: 10 where we hear the martyrs crying for their blood to be avenged "on them that dwell on the earth." Ever the enemies of the cross of Christ, they have been again and again the persecutors of those who gloried in that Cross!

We find them again specially brought before us, in the eighth chapter, immediately preceding the sounding of the last three trumpets. "And I beheld and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice; Woe, woe, woe, to the *inhabiters of the earth*, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound" (ver. 13).

Those who cared not for a name and a place here are seen before this, represented by the twenty-four royal priests, robed and crowned in heaven; their theme of praise, the precious blood shed on the cross which had separated them from the world. How dreadful now the position of those who refused the heavenly calling which, through grace, these had learned to prize! The earth that they loved is now the scene of the hardening judgments of God, and is fast slipping from their grasp;—and heaven they have lost all hope of; though once, they fondly thought they might at least have a place there when death should snatch them from their delights here. Thus they would be *making the best of both worlds*. Now they have lost them both!

The testimony of God's "two witnesses" only lacerates them into the agonies of despair; and amid the well-nigh universal joy over their death, when all the kindreds and peoples are making merry in that awful day of the divine displeasure, we are told: "*And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth*" (chap. 11: 10).

But though no voice below may continue to proclaim their doom, in *heaven* a loud voice cries, "*Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time*" (chap. 12: 12). How

marked the contrast here, with the words immediately preceding: "Rejoice, ye heavens, and *ye that dwell in them.*"

In the next chapter, while authority is given to the Roman beast "over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations," yet it is only of the earth-dwellers that actual worship is predicated (ver. 8). For they will not be without a religion then, as they are not without one now. Twice in the seventeenth chapter are they likewise referred to, in connection with this same beast and its harlot rider. "The *inhabitants of the earth* have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication" (ver. 2). "They that *dwell on the earth* shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is (or shall be present)" (chap. 17: 8).

Terrible outlook for apostate Christendom! It is the false Christ "the man of the earth;" the lamb-like beast, who leads them in their worship of the first beast. "He exerciseth all the authority of the first beast before him, and causeth *the earth and them that dwell* therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth *them that dwell on the earth* by means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast, saying to *them that dwell on the earth*, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the

wound by a sword and did live" (chap. 13: 12-14).

Strong delusion, God has given them up to! Those whose hearts were set on things down here now have a god and a christ of their own, of earth and suited to earth, but all alike soon to be destroyed at the appearing of the heavenly One in judgment.

In chap. 14 we find the 144,000 of Israel distinguished from these as a people "redeemed from the earth." They are not the Church, nor a part of it, but during the absence of "the Lamb" their hearts had gone out to Him in the place where He was and from whence they waited expectantly for His coming, and thus they were not seduced by false Babylon or the christ of the earth.

Immediately following this vision, we have the last word from God the earth-dwellers shall ever hear until they meet the rejected One in judgment. "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto *them that dwell on the earth*, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven and earth and the sea, and the fountains of waters" (vers. 6, 7). It is a call to cease from their folly though the hour is late, but we hear of no response.

Their dreadful doom as beast-worshippers is given in the message that follows: "The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God,

which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation" (ver. 10). Solemn words! Who can conceive their awful import?

Such a cup had the Lord Jesus drained for sinners when He hung upon the cross, the truth connected with which they had hated. Now they must quaff its fearful contents themselves.

Such in brief then, is the present and future path and portion of those who mind earthly things, "whose end is destruction."

Let us see to it, beloved, that we walk in holy separation from them now, "hating even the garment spotted by the flesh." "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye have died and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3: 1-3).

As strangers and pilgrims, may it be ours to press on in haste to the land where He has gone who has won our hearts by dying for us on the cross, and who is soon coming to take us to be with Himself in the Father's house. How paltry and poor will Egypt's fare look then when we feast upon the hidden manna!

APPENDIX B

AS this little book may fall into the hands of some who may be little acquainted with the truths it sets forth, I subjoin a list of helpful works on the themes of which it treats, to some of which I am myself greatly indebted. All the writings mentioned may be procured of the same publishers.

For a general prophetic *vade mecum* I know nothing so good as :

“PLAIN PAPERS ON PROPHETIC SUBJECTS,” by W. Trotter. \$1.25.

A smaller work is :

“EIGHT LECTURES ON PROPHECY,” by the same author in conjunction with T. Smith. Cloth 60 cts., paper 35 cts.

No books have helped more to an understanding of the difference between the Old Testament hopes and the New Testament calling, than the now fairly well known

“NOTES ON THE PENTATEUCH,” by C. H. Mackintosh. In six volumes, best cloth, \$4.00, or cheaper cloth binding, \$3.00. These are the books so often recommended by the late D. L. Moody, Major Whittle, Geo. C. Needham, and other well-known servants of Christ.

Pre-eminent among all other helps I place,

"THE SYNOPSIS OF THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE," by J. N. Darby, the pioneer in the restoration of dispensational truth and Paul's doctrine. The set, consisting of five volumes, sells for \$4.00 postpaid.

On the several "Mysteries," I note and commend the following, though not necessarily endorsing every statement. It is for the reader to "search the Scriptures daily whether these things be so," and thus to "prove all things, and hold fast that which is good."

On Chapter Three I recommend,

"THE MYSTERY" AND THE "KINGDOM OF HEAVEN," by R. Holden, and S. Ridout, (illustrated with a helpful chart). 15 cts.

"THE MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN," by F. W. Grant. 15 cts.

On Chapter Four:

"NOTES ON THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS," by W. Kelly. Cloth 85 cts.

"HATH GOD CAST AWAY HIS PEOPLE?" by A. C. Gaebelain. \$1.00.

"GOD'S SALVATION." An Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans, chaps. 1 to 12, by John Fort, 15 cts.

On Chapter Five:

"THE HOPES OF THE CHURCH OF GOD," by J. N. Darby. 60 cts.

"SIMPLE PAPERS ON THE CHURCH OF GOD," by C. E. Stuart. Cloth 60 cts., paper 30 cts.

"LECTURES ON THE CHURCH OF GOD," by W. Kelly.
85 cts.

On Chapter Six:

"THE SON OF GOD," by J. G. Bellett. Cloth 50 cts.,
paper 25 cts.

"THE CROWNED CHRIST," by F. W. Grant. Paper
20 cts.

**"MEDITATIONS ON THE MORAL GLORY OF THE LORD
JESUS CHRIST,"** by J. G. Bellett. Cloth 50 cts.,
paper 20 cts.

On Chapter Seven:

"PAPERS ON THE LORD'S COMING," by C. H. Mack-
intosh. Cloth 30 cts., paper 15 cts.

"THE HOPE OF THE MORNING STAR," by F. W.
Grant. 15 cts.

"CHANGED IN A MOMENT," and **"HE COMETH WITH
CLOUDS,"** by H. T. 10 cts.

"CAUGHT UP BY THE BRIDEGROOM," by Geo. Cutting.
4 cts.

On Chapter Eight:

"PROPHETIC HISTORY OF THE CHURCH," by F. W.
Grant. 25 cts.

On Chapter Nine:

A number of excellent expositions of the Revela-
tion are now to be had. The scholarly reader will
probably get most help from

"LECTURES ON THE REVELATION," by W. Kelly. \$2.60.

Next in order and more acceptable to many, I
would place,

"THE REVELATION OF CHRIST TO HIS SERVANTS,"
by F. W. Grant. \$1.00.

Simple works, and more readily understood, are the following:

"EXPOSITION OF THE REVELATION," by W. Scott.
\$2.50.

"THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST," by T. B.
Baines. 85 cts.

"THE REVELATION EXPOUNDED," by W. Kelly. 80c.

"THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST," by Chas.
Stanley. 12 cts.

I take it for granted that none will suppose I would recommend any of these books as absolutely authoritative. The unerring word of God alone is that. But the above list will, I feel sure, be valued greatly as helps to the fuller unfolding of that Word, by all spiritually-minded persons who may investigate their contents.

H. A. I.



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