

THE
UNION OF BELIEVERS.

ONE BODY BY THE CROSS.—EPHES. ii. 16.

OF TWAIN MAKING ONE NEW MAN.—EPHES. ii. 15.

THERE IS ONE BODY, EVEN AS YE ARE CALLED IN
ONE HOPE OF YOUR CALLING.

ONE LORD, ONE FAITH.—EPHES. iv. 4, 5.

CALLED IN ONE BODY.—COL. iii. 15.

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THE UNION OF BELIEVERS,

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CONFESSION OF THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST.



PART I.

WHAT should be the groundwork of the union of believers, and what should work it out, has been a question as various as the Churches or assemblies themselves, as acting on their own views, or in claim of it. It is quite clear that many have not been satisfied with any of these, as having no real or natural fruit. And the theory, that the presence of the Holy Ghost by His mission at Pentecost was the unity sought, has engaged many minds, and united the opinion of many; but it has done so without considering it with sufficient reference to Christ, in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord, *ἐν Κυρίῳ** in Whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit. It has been an experiment, and those that have been guided by the theory above mentioned, have been compelled to take the form of an ordinary religious body, with higher and more exclusive, but not more certain pretensions, while there has been a very partial knowledge of the place of Him who is both Lord and Christ. Societies in earlier times were founded, and the character that conversion, and the earnest confession, of those that believed, bore at first, was more

* *Εν Κυρίῳ* without the objective article, and following the rule of interpretation—of such importance to the due understanding of many places—it would signify “in Him,” in His character as Lord, and therefore in subjection; in whom, therefore, as such they are built for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

and more lost as time flowed on, and thus the world crept in. It is a cycle which every dispensation without a separation maintained of God must fulfil. I. N. D. himself has doubted the efficacy of the system which he so mainly led in, and says, in a work published in French, entitled, "*Considerations sur les mouvements Religieux du jour*," page 8—"As the means of strength, unity does not inspire me with a confidence without reserve. I fear a little that, notwithstanding, in putting on the desire of unity, that it be *not a failure of faith in respect of the Chief Who*," &c.

It is time to examine the theory itself; and the first thing that strikes the sober-minded person is, that if Scripture be simply referred to, it will be found to have reversed the whole order of God. The theory *begins* by calling the body it gathers, "the habitation of God through the Spirit," which is the final state of a body in conclusion of the operations of God, a body manifested as the body of Christ in the day of His glory. They have *begun* with the pretension of being conclusively the body of Christ, and not only in privilege. They have added the adoption of what I can but as yet see an error of fearful tendency.

Let no one who enters on the consideration of the union of believers, for a moment suppose that it is intended to doubt the special, peculiar, and sole character of the church proper,* or the revelation of her receiving all her spiritual blessings in heavenly places, though she is not *with Him*—blessed time—till He receives her to Himself in resurrection. She is, in process of formation, being called out of the world here, and we have to learn from the word the characteristics of her confession, for she is on the earth and the world around her. There was granted to her from the first a present character in resurrection and life, and she received her mission as Christ had a mission and the authority to correct evils arising among her members,† and received, subsequently, power from on high. The world had departed from God, and, in conclusion, the very nation that had the charge to keep the faith of God's name *in the earth* took the lead, and was joined to the nations in rejecting Him as the

* As asserted in 2 Timothy i. 9; Titus i. 3.

† We have only to refer to John xx. 23.

person of the Son who came on God's behalf to reconcile the world, not imputing their trespasses.

Thus rejection became the world's sin, and God being wholly disowned save by the few left by Him, taken out of the world by the Son as witnesses to succeed Him, and heirs with Christ of the sovereignty of the world, to be manifested when He should come again to claim it in power and judgment. We are called to the kingdom and glory with Him, and are a special body on the earth. We call ourselves by the name of the Lord, and are intended to be a body of witnesses to Him and His glory, in one hope of His calling, **ONE BODY** by the cross, and as such, separated out of this world, receive the Holy Ghost.

SEPARATION FROM EVIL IS THE PRINCIPLE OF UNITY * Thus, separation by the call of God (the condemnation of the world) becomes the unity of the saints. The claim of Christ, the Lord of all, to faith is now the call. To this body, the Church of God, is the Holy Ghost sent to be witness of His glory to them and by them who have believed, and they call Him Lord *now* to the glory of God the Father. Holiness becometh the people of the Lord for ever. Abel, Seth, and Enoch, by the principle of confession, were out of the judgment of the world. To them Noah succeeded; then Abraham, the stranger pilgrim father of the chosen nation. Christ, a nobler witness still—the leader and perfect example of this faith, endured the cross, despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God. But while Christianity, which has lost the confession and is subject to judgment, the union of believers is before God unchanged in the call they have received. The preachers (prophets) of Christianity speak of the world, which would have it thus. They speak, saith the word, by the Spirit of Antichrist, which is the spirit that is in hostility to Christ and to His reign. Nor can they even, if true, as far as they go, apprehend the position of saints in the near communion the saints have.

The separation from evil, as the principle and veins of their unity, is not separation from moral evil only, though this specially belongs to them, and assimilation in grace to Christ, who is to be "formed in them," to take a just place by His side, but separation from the world, its

* The original title of a tract, by I. N. D.

order, forms, constitutions, and principles, which lie in the power of the evil one.

One body by the cross. The following are the meanings to the cross in the N. T. The natural cross on which the Lord was crucified, and the moral meaning of it signifying—The separation out of the world by it and rejection. “Taking up the cross daily,” “The offence of the cross” ceasing by the rejoining the world, “The foolishness of the cross” to the Greeks—“Whose wisdom was foolishness to God, and a stumbling-block to the Jew, who looked for present glory”—*one body* by accepting the position of rejection with Christ—and thus becoming the object of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost “in power.”*

While God’s true ones are kept (and a zeal to God is acknowledged by God, and He has often done so in His grace amid much error, when the time needed the effort and the confession); yet we cannot do otherwise than look that some day God will suffer either the collapse of such pretensions in a fall, or in dishonour in some fearful excess founded on its present pretensions.

We must not look to the extension of this body gathered under their adopted theory, as sufficient to let it satisfy our judgment. It has greatly seized men’s minds in the scattered condition of Christianity; but the question rather is, has it fulfilled the thoughts of God as the habitation of God in eternity,—for such is the body of Christ to be? They would disdain this question—Is it fitted to answer such an end in its present results? It asserts this as its present characteristic. A glorious thing is truly set before us; but were it such as they suppose, it was not taught by Paul till the conclusion of his ministry, and therefore could not be the constitution by which the Christian Church was to form itself, though it might be, and was placed as that to which it was to aspire: and so is it proposed—“Till we all come into the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man.”

The Lord never declared it as the purpose of the mission of the Holy Ghost; nor was the first assembly of

* “He that gathereth not with *ME scattereth.*” To join anything with the cross, supposing even Christ to be nominally there, works this scattering, as is evident from the broken condition of all Christianity. Saints are scattered not gathered.

Christians formed upon the doctrine thus subsequently taught, but gathered out of the world from all classes to Christ, now their Lord, on all of whom the Holy Ghost was bestowed on the day of Pentecost—a body out of the world gathered unto Christ at His resurrection, to Whom all power had been given in heaven and on earth. They were endued with power from on high, from the glory that was some day to be manifested with the flock to whom the Father was pleased to give the kingdom.

This stood out as the characteristic of the faith which had been God's requirement through all ages—and should be at His coming forth, and it was thus the rebellion of man was broken—by His Kingdom being received, and the Gospel of God preached to all nations in the power of the Holy Ghost, for the obedience of the faith. This was necessary to God's glory.*

But there was a yet deeper individual moral purpose, namely, in the restoration of man from his fallen condition, and bringing him, by regeneration and the bestowal of the Spirit of God, to the likeness of his Creator and fellowship with Him in life and glory. This could alone consist with assimilation in divine character individually, and collectively as the body of Christ. It is not to presume beyond common acceptance of the sense of Scripture to say, that the bride having made herself ready, was in the individual condition of the saints, and of the necessity of which individual condition much evidence can be adduced, the white robe being then the righteousnesses of the saints; nor less collectively as in Ephesians iv., it being declared that they are to come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

The individuality with which the Holy Spirit applies the grace of God to man, in the Epistle of Paul to the

* There was the full declaration of this glory in the New Testament, but in closest accord with the maintenance of the supremacy of God in the Old. The Lordship of Christ was now brought out; the counsels of God being known to God from the beginning. This glory of Christ was the grand purpose of God making Him the Head of His people, of the Church, and of the heathen in the glory of His coming, and the Holy Ghost was sent down to be the strength of them that should witness to the glory which He had, and that should be revealed.

Romans, would direct our attention on this point to this Epistle. In ch. ii., v. 6 (God), "Who will reward to everyone according to his deeds: to them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, *eternal life*: but unto those that are contentious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul that doeth evil, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile. But glory, honour, and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile; for there is no respect of persons with God." And in the connexion of the dispensations in principle, we find Abraham called "the father of the circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also *walk in the steps of that faith* of our father Abraham which he had, being yet uncircumcised."

We know that there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus; and we know that Christ Jesus is a Saviour unto life, and a deliverer from eternal judgment. He is the life, and the means of life, to the believer in Him; and that grace makes us debtors to walk in the steps of the faith of Abraham, and that we are to answer the thought and purpose of God in His having brought us to Himself in Christ Jesus, by living and walking in the new creature by the Spirit. To all this Scripture bears ample witness.

We cannot but feel that in John xvii. we are admitted into the centre of the whole Divine moral glory of the Divine persons, in the connexion it can have by Christ Jesus with the man that is one with Him by faith, and in whom He thus dwells. They were the Father's, and He gave them to Christ, and they kept His Word. "I have given them Thy word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, as I am not of the world. All Mine are Thine, and Thine Mine, and I am glorified in them. They are not of the world as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth; and for their sakes I sanctify myself that they may be sanctified through the truth. *Neither pray I for them alone, but for them also that believe on me through their word*; that they may be one in us, *i.e.*, now . . . that the world may believe that Thou has sent me; and the glory which Thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one, I in them and they

in Me, that they may be perfected in one, and that the world may *know* in the future, when both shall appear in a common glory, that Thou sentest me, and lovedest them, as Thou lovedst me.

We begin with the wonderful grace of a portion in Christ, Whom God made sin for us, Who knew no sin, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. It is in that portion, and in the power of His life by the Spirit, that we press forward to the prize of the calling up of God in Christ Jesus. Now, the question is, what is the step in Christ by which this state is reached? We have the character in its height and essence in John xvii.

We have its proper moral character as heavenly in the position aspired to; but it is material to consider what bearing the state out of which we are come has on our new prospects, how practically met for the end of such blessed fruits. Dead it is to me on the cross—but there remains that in the midst of which these fruits are to be yielded; and we are told this end is accomplished in being crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that we should not serve sin. Our aspirations do not cease, but take their highest form in the low place in which we find ourselves—separated from the world, and rejected by it, and if not so, let us suspect that our confession is faulty; not merely criticised by the religion of the day, or carped at by society, but sanctified by our faith, as not of the world, and acting in reverse of the principles of the age. What the common testimony of the Word is to the state in which we were, and the truth of it the conscience must know, namely, that we were dead in trespasses and sins in the first Adam, and that it was for God to quicken us, or we were without hope. And the resurrection is proof to us that God is the God of life, for it is written—“By Jesus we believe in God who raised him from the dead and gave him glory.” But in what state does life find us? How happy it would be if it were more felt that it finds us in ignorance, and with the state of evil hardly shorn of its power. The old man crucified with Christ it is true; and the spirit is life for

* *Kalws*, according as, in the same way as. So in Eph. iv. 4, the calling in one hope of their calling takes a place to which the rest of the unities are to follow, and as preceding them.

the end of righteousness ; but how shall it find its way out of this condition ? How is it to begin its course ? Scripture is plain—Mortify by the spirit the deeds of the old man, and ye shall live. The cross by faith unceasingly applied, till evil yields its place, and eating the flesh of the Son of Man and drinking His blood, we become daily more and more subject to God in the new creature and in the love of the Spirit. We are told that if we are risen in Christ, to set our affections on things above, and not on things of the earth, for we are dead, and our life is hid with Christ in God ; so that when Christ who is our life shall appear, then also shall we appear with Him in glory—the body of Christ, individually and collectively perfected in Him. But what, with all this blessing, and this place before us, and with all our spiritual blessings, does our present real condition reduce us to ? The answer must be, to the lowly work of the mortification of our members that are on the earth, both of flesh and mind. Where is room for boasting ? “ I have seen the end of all perfection,” says the Psalmist, “ and thy commandment is exceeding broad.” *And how will our fellowship with one another be formed ?* In the cleansing from all sin by the blood of Christ, and walking thus in the light as He is in the light.

Called out of the world into the kingdom of God, of which the Fathers of the Old Testament, by faithfulness of confession, are also heirs, we pass on to those better things provided for us in Christ Jesus. We are assembled as called out of the world—baptised unto Christ as our Lord in an evil age—the table taking it up, and we come to that memorial of His love in praise for our common redemption, and confessing His authority over us, showing forth His death till He come ; dead to sin and living to righteousness, looking for Him till He come in the revelation of His glory, and having loved His appearance, waiting for its crown. Happy are they that come *with Him* !

The *union*, therefore, of believers is neither in privilege nor in the fact of any grace, but in that which becomes God’s Holiness ; for as the end of the commandment is charity (or the divine life, as manifested in Christ), out of a pure heart and (out of) a good conscience, and (out of) faith unfeigned ; and none of his works avail before God but as springing up out of that divine life—

we have the results of all the gracious provisions for growth, and of establishment in grace, to bring up the same collectively as well as individually, into the measure of glory in Christ Jesus.

The order of the Word has been overlooked. A long and protracted observation of it has shown a contradiction in the details of a very extensively received exposition. Restoring it to true order brings us to very important conclusions, and draws a line for our confession and path of the deepest practical importance. I will refer at once to this in the two great Epistles, those to the Ephesians and the Colossians. The latter Epistle is well known as adding to the subject the truth of the character of Christ as Head of the Church and all the dispensations of God—adding, as it were, the topstone to the Ephesians in this respect. But on following on the subject in this Epistle, and the promise attached to our reconciliation with God in Christ, there occur these remarkable words—“If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and are not moved from the hope of the Gospel”—being the measure, the subject, of the Epistle to the Thessalonians; and thus we are given to see that the blessing proposed depends on the constancy of our continuing in this faith.*

It is a custom full of advantage, when any fresh view is given us of the Word or other book of import in the truth, viz., to read it afresh under this aspect; and it seems the same order of subject is found in the Ephesians. Nor is this unusual. That the final purpose and the counsels of God should be first mentioned, then the detail of steps by which it is reached; and so in the Ephesians, as well as the Colossians, where it is so plainly referred to in the “hope of the Gospel;” so in Ephesians it is expressed in verses 11 to 14, and attached to it that witness in our souls that is sometimes supposed to belong to something else, but is here definitely applied to our portion in the inheritance, to walk worthy of which is the first step, as in accordance with the first call to them to whom Christ is revealed as being out of the world and taking the cross, and the inheritance being of the kingdom and glory with Christ.

*An error in the English Bible is manifest, through ignorance of this in Heb. xii. 2, where the *our* is introduced in italics instead of the article which is in the original.

The object of these few words is, to show the order that God has taken to accomplish these ends that are fitting to Himself in His creatures, requiring such a recognition of Himself as becomes His right and glory, as well as to be a platform of His divine action, which, in the souls of men, shall work such a similitude to Christ as, by one and the other, His name shall be glorified.

God, by wondrous grace, has antedated our adoption, *i. e.*, the redemption of our body, so far as to have given to us the spirit of it; but we must not antedate that which He has not yet given us, which the pretensions we have mentioned vainly do. The consideration of our present standing and confession will be considered in the second part.

PART II.

NOTHING more surely carries us astray than to begin from a wrong starting-point. If we begin from a too advanced one, we get a false footing, and it grows up a false and unstable representative of what would have been a good, sound result; and in nothing is this more sure than in the order that should arise out of the call of God. It becomes illusory, and it has misguided us by a show of divine capacities, but often unreal ones, which are sure to form that which is unreal. If we would build high, we must begin low; and we can get no rule of judgment as to that path but by beginning with God, that we may reach rightly His fuller purposes. Himself and His glory must become the measure of all, and His strength is manifested amidst our weakness.

The course of Christian confession has undergone the result of every dispensation that God has left in the hands of men. From the first, every dispensation of God has suffered the same declension; and God has in His holy wisdom taken the same course in taking out a people to His name, as every corruption successively established itself. God's object could not possibly be anything but His own glory; and a heart walking with God rejoices at the accomplishment of anything towards this end—but it will feel that humbling ourselves in view of His purpose

must be the path that will lay the groundwork of the best confession, and enable us to escape the common evil, and secure our portion when He vindicates His purpose, and overthrows the opposition made to Him.

Thus it is that it is made manifest who are the Lord's, and who, having suffered with Him, will be glorified with Him. It is to this position alone the precepts of life in the Gospel apply ; and true ministry will apply itself to the perfecting it, putting the brethren in mind of such things, and nourishing them up in the words of *the faith*, *της πισεως*,* and of good doctrine (*διδασκαλιας*, precept). The reiteration of the account of our privileges and hope, however encouraging, cannot, and does not, supply this, though affording much and due encouragement if rightly done ; and souls are thus left without a practical measure that should guide them in the midst of a world subject to Satan, because that world confesses not the Lord its Lord and its Master, in that exceptional place our calling has given us. In fact, an entirely false direction is given to the *ordinary* ministry of the saints.

The character of the Church of which Christ is Head—destined to be with Him in the glory, and having now her place presented to her, and her portion in it—stands in new and peculiar relationship to the confession of the Lord Jesus Christ's rights and dominion, and to the duty of the Church (as she was first called to do) to bear witness to Him. The Church is on earth, and has this primary duty in the world, which stands in opposition to God and to the rule of His Christ, from his crucifixion till now. From the first, God had to vindicate His claim in a long line of witnesses, which duty was laid upon Christ, and then on the Church, called out of the world to be formed for Him by the Word and the Spirit. But this is not our subject, though in the confession of Christ, the preaching of the Kingdom of God, and teaching of the

* The article with *πιστις* is always significant, except as always found by construction with a genitive case; and, on the other hand, as often omitted after a verb. The disregard of it in Heb. xii. 2 is highly injurious to the sense, and the force of the passage destroyed is *Αρχηγον* is also chief leader and not author of *the faith*, not our faith. The omission of the article before *απειθεια* in Ephes. ii. 2 loses the force. With it we have the children of *the* disobedience, i.e., of the world, standing in disobedience, a position of insubjection to God.

things that concern the Lord Jesus Christ (with which Paul's ministry closes—Acts, xxviii. 20), must carry with it the walk of godliness and life in Christ, as it is written that "Christ is declared to be the Son of God, with *power*, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Romans, i. 4). The power of Christ (Lord over all) in the Kingdom of God is found to have life in Christ inseparable from it, and obedience in accordance with it; and Paul says (in Coloss. i. 29) His work was to perfect the saints in Christ Jesus.

Let us not be dismayed at the exceeding breadth of the commandment, and God loves the energy, however various, of which He is the object. It is never lost, but He enlarges the soul under it if we tread softly; and He supplies measures of truth as we proceed further.

If we begin from and with God only, we are led to see the indissoluble connection between the gift of the Holy Ghost, as given in John xx. 22, and that in Acts ii. This connection is visibly manifested throughout the Word, and here *earnestly* pressed on the attention of believers. They are both substantially with us. One is in the power of the resurrection, in life and godliness, with authority in those assembled to exercise the fulness of discipline; the other the Holy Ghost, as power from the Glory, and bearing gifts for men. These are mingled in the constitution of the Church till He comes—and if the latter sustains by gifts in accordance with the true character of the Church, the witness the first may give will be by the grace of life. The office of the other, towards that which is without; witnesses to the glory of Christ, and to His dominion in right, and that He would come to judgment, and to rule and govern; and carries the obligation of witness to the ends of the earth of that right, dominion, and glory, which will be the portion of the saints with Him. In sum, then—according to the last verse of the Acts of the Apostles—"Preaching the Kingdom of God and the things concerning Jesus Christ" unite them. The corruption of the Church was thus from men of the world entering into it, sitting in the branches of it, and at last the Church itself entering bodily into the world, so that the whole was leavened, and what should be first forgotten? **THE LORD!**—The Christ of God!—And His servants ye are, to whom ye obey.

The things concerning Jesus Christ become thus lowered exceedingly, or lost. If Christians felt the true state of things they would, amidst the leavened Church, say—"Thou hast multiplied the nation but not increased the joy; and, O Lord God, other lords have had dominion over us." Corruption so ruled that the civil power was engaged to repress its fruits; and a sense of the evil in ignorance that they had a Lord to whom they could say, "But by Thee only would we make mention of Thy name;" a separation often originating with godly intent, has issued in wilfulness of condition, and they say in effect, "Our tongue is our own; who is Lord over us?"

Such a state of things could not but affect the use and due acceptance of the record God has, in wondrous grace, left us in His Holy Word; and it has, perhaps, more affected it, in the view taken of the Lordship and present dominion of Christ over His saints, and the confession that would adorn it, and what is emphatically termed **THE** faith, than in any other point. There can be no critical translation without manifesting this to a great extent, but the general intent has been largely changed and injured in its representation of the truth; and instead of this engaging us to search the Word in all that could lead us in the path of obedience to Christ in the world, has thrown minds, and mischievously and unduly so, on *doctrines* (or what I might term the metaphysics of truth); and if I meet with practice which seems to be somewhat, it is in disregard of the common and simpler steps of life, and of the confession of Christ; and there fails that which is so necessary to others who, in their simplicity, require the light and guidance to be gained from those who should lead in the way. No man can lay a foundation other than is laid in Christ Jesus. God disburdened man at the cross; but it is *for the race* he is to run for the glory of Him that has called him out of darkness into marvellous light, that the wise master-builder is needed.

It is into the method of this building that the confusion has entered, as has been stated. The confusion introduced by a false application of the Word of God has been the result of a state of things, and then, naturally, the result is the farther distortion of the Word. Nothing has caused this more effectually than the sense given by

the omission or insertion of the objective article,* of which a few examples can only be mentioned ; but this would induce the student and the teacher to search the Word, that he may be a clear and more efficient guide to others in the Spirit.

Faith in the Son of God, with power according to the Spirit of holiness by resurrection of the dead, introduces me into the assembly separated out of the world to Him. IT IS NOT A PRINCIPLE OF KNOWLEDGE OF DOCTRINE, BUT THE PLAIN AND SIMPLE POSITION THAT I SHOULD TAKE IS, THAT OF SUBJECTION TO CHRIST, AND OF A LOYALTY DUE TO HIM. THIS IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD, and in expectation of His coming, and to meet the teaching of the things concerning Jesus Christ, and the privileges of faith.

It has been observed by those learned in the Word, that the various names of God in the Old Testament are all significantly applied in each place. It is not less true in the New:—Christ—The Christ—The Lord—The Lord Jesus Christ—Jesus—Christ Jesus—of which every one should be used according to the force of the application of the term in the passage.

So the Apostle used *τον Χριστον* (the Christ), in the case of Moses, to whom God made known His ways ; who preferred that reproach to the enjoyment of the pleasure and sin of Egypt under Pharoah, who represents Satan the rival (*τον Χριστου*), and who would have kept them in bondage, thus bringing the whole action described under relationship to Christ as Lord.

Ordinances are all in their character separative—separating out of the world to God. Baptism is marked so as it buries the past, and is the confession of a new Master in the world. It bears this characteristic very strongly in the Acts of the Apostles. It is the confession of Christ as Lord, by the receivers, in the form we find it

* The meaning of this should be shown to humbler readers. If I speak by any word of the character or nature of a thing or person, this article is left out. The insertion of it would make the word, whether a person or a thing to be marked as an object spoken of, and not the nature or character of it. If I say I believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, I mean Himself ; in that case the objective article would be found. If I wished to say that I believed on Jesus Christ as Lord in His character, I should leave out this article, referring to Himself in this character.

in this portion of the Word. In this as in other cases that will be mentioned, the article (the), and in the Greek 'Ο, is used objectively, and marking the person to whom they thus confessed subjection. It was unto the confession of the Lord that they were thus separated, a position much forgotten, or I may say all but nearly so, but He cannot share His glory, or His authority or subjection due, with another. Of many places I will mention a few, as viii. 16 of the Acts of the Apostles, and xix. 4. The baptism of Paul, as told in chap. xxii., is remarkable in this respect:—He was baptised (as the received text had it) "calling on the name of the Lord." The critics, however, accept the reading, and perhaps justly, "calling on *His* name." But unto whose name was he baptised? He had found Him whom he was to confess, and the Master of his new service. As in baptism, in which the expression is so distinct and unmistakeable individually applied at the entrance of Christian confession, so the other ordinance in the table of the Lord the same is taken up and confirmed. The Apostle, after having said "I would not ye should have fellowship with devils; *for* ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils," &c., he adds—"Do we provoke *the* Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than He?" The Israelites were partakers of the Altar, confessing Jehovah; and we hear further of being guilty of the body and blood of the LORD. When mentioned as communion, the Word Christ is used, if rule and authority, it is LORD. It bears the same impress throughout, and we are directed to the force of the same expression by the same form; and LORD is to be looked on, not as a title of honour, but as the expression of a practical mastership and rule over everything; and whose coming shall judge our subjection and obedience. Thus it is said in Acts ix. 31—"Thus had the church rest throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria, and were edified, walking **IN THE FEAR OF THE LORD**, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, was multiplied"—happy sequel of its fear and its obedience. The form in Acts xiii. 12, is remarkable. The deputy seeing what was done, believed, being astonished at the character of the doctrine (*διδασχη*) of the LORD. Resistance to it having such consequences. And in xvi. 15, Lydia, after her baptism and that of her family, besought them, saying—"If ye have judged me *faithful to the Lord* (*τῷ Κυρίῳ*), come

unto my house and abide there." And in verse 31—It is not said, Believe on Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house, but on the Lord Jesus Christ. The judgment of the earth being most probably in the jailor's view, and xx. 21—Witnessing (publicly and from house to house), repentance towards God (returning under His sway), and faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ.

But if the word *Κυριος* (*Lord*) with the article before it presents to us Himself in person, and therefore His attributes; its absence as indicating in distinction specially His *character* as LORD, puts it in a stronger point of view, in the Epistle to the Romans, ix., and in the 2 Cor. iv. In the former we read, "If we confess with our mouth Jesus—*Lord*," *i.e.*, as some writers, to make the sense manifest, have justly introduced (as) that is, in His character as LORD. So in 2 Cor. iv. "We preach not ourselves, but Jesus Christ (as) LORD." In various places the form has the same force as Acts x. 36—"He is LORD of all," without the objective article.

There is a very peculiar place where we are shown how in this subjection, the highest ways of God are carried out. When it is said, in the phrase (in Ephesians ii. v. 20, 21), "In whom the whole building fitly framed together groweth into an holy temple in the Lord" (*ἐν Κυρίῳ*), being characteristic of the manner of growth, and in the circuit of the same subjection, becoming the fit habitation of God by the Spirit.

We should not expect, then, the expression *Κυριος* to be used, when it is connected with internal growth and the character that belonged essentially to the new creature; and therefore we read as to the *works* of the old Adam—Ye have not so learned *the* Christ, and the truth as it is in Jesus. words which relate to the putting off the old man and putting on the new man; but all that would relate to confession, is distinct; and so in this Epistle, outward conduct is referred *τῷ Κυρίῳ* (to the Lord), chap. v. verse 10; and when *Χριστος* (Christ) is the person objectively, it is *τῷ Χριστῷ* of the Christ, as Romans, xiv. verse 10, the judgment-seat of the Christ, and *Χριστος* (Christ), has no such interchange with *Κυριος* (Lord). Christ becomes at once the subject, as characteristic of the faith that the Christian professes. The use of the word *Κυριος*, or Lord, *always* denotes a subjection in us; and Jesus denotes Saviour.

But there is an example of the use of the objective article of such importance, and abounding with indication of the purport of it in this case, that I must set it forth more at length. In John xviii., our Lord is before Pilate (verse 33)—“Then Pilate entered into the judgment-hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto Him, Art Thou the King of the Jews?” Jesus replies, and Pilate again addresses Him, and Jesus declares the nature of His kingdom. In verse 37, Pilate continues—“Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto *THE truth*, *την αληθειαν*—everyone that is of the truth (*της αληθειας*) heareth my voice. Pilate saith unto Him, What is truth?”—*Αληθεια*, without the objective article. Pilate knew nothing of *THE truth* here stated, and proposed by the Lord. He knew of the debate of the heathen philosophers in the schools, who asked—“What is truth?” What the Lord had to confess was that God was supreme, and Himself God’s sovereign. This, some would say, was a *Jewish* ground; but there is *One* Lord, and His name one to the whole earth in its extent,* from the rising of the sun to the setting thereof.

There is enough said for a general direction for pious readers, who desire to search out their way to obedience to the Lord by the Scripture, offered to them as a perfect guide in all things. In the case of the Epistles to the Thessalonians, where confession of the Lord in a hostile world is the subject of these Epistles, the use of *Κυριος* is very emphatic. It was as to this faith the Lord put the question, Shall I find it on the earth when I come? It was in respect of this faith that He spake, which confessed that He was Lord, and only Lord, The Christ of God. The Holy Ghost was sent down in power, that the assembly, who had come out of the world that had rejected Him, might own Christ as their Lord in exception to any other Lord that the world might own, and looking for His return. This is the *Ἡ Πιστις* of the New Testament when found combined with the objective article (unless in case of necessity in construction), and faith working

* There is one instance where what the objective article would have done is found otherwise done, in James ii. 5:—“Has not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, *heirs of the kingdom*,” thus making up for the omission.

by love will witness to Him in godliness, and truth, and growing knowledge of Himself and of THE faith; and I know no exception (save on account of construction), as far as my knowledge extends, except in Colossians i. 23, where it seems to extend to the whole circuit of the truth received, but is brought up immediately by the sentence, "If ye are not moved from the hope of the Gospel," the coming of the Lord, and being glorified with Him, as the reward of a good confession; and there is no duality of system. All the parts culminate together; but the soul has to begin with loyalty to the rejected One in the earth; and so it was ordered from the beginning and maintained to the last, as is evidenced in the work of the Apostle Paul to the very last verse of the Acts of the Apostles. It was, indeed, most gracious, when the trial had now long been in the world (for, with much tribulation we must enter the kingdom of God [see specially as to both points, Acts xiv. 22], heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if so be we suffer with Him that we may be glorified together), that the place of the Church in Christ in heavenly places should have been revealed to the Apostle for the Church, and the source of her spiritual blessing in Christ to be theirs. It is not spoken of as necessarily in action, but as a state and privilege in the fact, in the way or after the manner,* as "He has chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and unblameable before Him in love, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children to Himself in Jesus Christ." But we find it as serving our place in the inheritance, of which we have received the earnest of the Holy Ghost, acting here as the Spirit of promise to a people who having become subject to Christ out of the world, in whatever form they formerly stood, *are GOD'S ASSEMBLY in that world, which lies in the power of the wicked one*, and of which he is the god. As such the Spirit is given to them as "power from on high," that the strength of the glory might be theirs for a good confession of His name, and that in that strength they might be His witnesses. The power which Christ had *breathed* into them conferred a full capacity for Church order. They were risen in Him when He rose.

As those that leave the systems of the world and the

elements of it are in the faith of the Son of God, are ONE body by THE CROSS, so do they receive and drink into one and the same Spirit, and unity is kept in the binding together* of peace, but I see no such faith or intelligence of the ways of God in the various sects or assemblies of religious bodies. They are complements of one another's defects, if not in actual antagonism or rivalry. The temple of God, as viewed in His purpose, meant to be building as an habitation of God by the Spirit founded in subjection to the Lord, is defiled (1 Cor. iii.), and open to the passions of the worst evil. The first step fails in individual or public confession. How can the Spirit rest with those who remain in the world, or come out of it to take some other shelter, or serve some other Lord? Any claim to be *the assembly of God*, which is not founded on separation to God, as a body, is an illusion.

It is generally true that "Separation from evil (is) the principle of unity;"† but in the point of view by grace above exhibited, it is more particularly shown as separation from the world in its form and from the principles of this age, all being subject to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit which now worketh in the children of THE *disobedience* (της ἀπειθείας), while those separated to God in an evil age are subject to the Lord in confession of Him as exclusively their Lord, all their ways being ordered of Him, and waiting for His appearing. This is Η ΠΙΣΤΙΣ, THE *faith* of the New Testament; remembering this, that the *Love* of the Lord, and our desire of glory with Him, alone keeps us out of that under which we are sure to fail. Needful, therefore, is it to understand His ways and orders in everything, that we may be approved in that day. "If ye know these things," saith the Lord, "happy are ye if ye do them."

PART III.

It will justly conclude the argument of the two former parts, to consider the aspect under which we are to look at the Epistle to the Ephesians, whether there has not been a distinct position given to it, and a revelation as-

* Συμβιβασμός.

† There was a tract with this title by "J.N.D.," but since altered.

signed to it, which has been beyond its true intent and bearing, which is best done in considering the place this Epistle holds in the light of the truth, and in connection with what we have been examining. There will be always a perfect agreement in the ways of God. What the Holy One begins, He continues even to the end ; but in the views founded on this Epistle there has been a disruption in the order of God, which, while it seems to introduce something wonderful in His sovereignty, in what has been termed the calling of the Church, has erred dangerously. Nothing can be more familiar to the student of the Word in the light of God's guidance, than His purpose to maintain a witness for Himself, however variously, through all ages, among those who confessed Him, and observed whatever was the token of it, and bringing to nought every departure from it. After various use of means, He chose at last a people who, having this office, received at His hands everything. "All that I have is thine." Earthly headship and heavenly place according to the purpose of His will. Whoever was worthy by faith of the revelation of God and the power of the Holy Ghost received the heavenly, as those who only confessed the Lord on seeing Him, took the earthly kingdom. The saints of the Most High take the kingdom associated with Christ in His reign over the earth. This inheritance was also theirs ; for Christ was now revealed ; and in an evil and adverse nation there were those who trusted in Him from among them. The kingdom in glory at the coming again of the Son of Man was proclaimed, and on confessing Him they received the Holy Ghost, and were bound for the kingdom. This was all revealed to the Apostles and Prophets by the Spirit ; the kingdom of God, with higher powers and higher responsibilities, was thus before them, and the footsteps of Christ, and the glory of it, put before them. It was the kingdom still, but in higher association than to the saints of the Old Testament. The revelations of Paul were meant, besides communicating the portion the Gentiles were to receive, to subserve the truth already possessed and acted upon, not to displace and root it up, or referring it to other fulfilment, destroying the moral obligations connected with it, and thrusting aside the reward for the confession of it, in that day.

But if I or others fail to divide the word of truth

aright, we are on the border of heresy, and are in danger of introducing error.

God in His own season was pleased to reveal that He would make the Gentiles heirs of the Kingdom with His own people in heavenly places, because it would have been contrary to His counsels to have given them earthly places, for on earth they must be ever secondary. The Cross introduced this on earth, doing all to destroy separation of twain, making one new man, and into one body, having the same Spirit, in the same way as they had one hope of their calling, and Christ in them the hope of glory. The same Master, and same obedience, the same common separation out of the world. The service given to Paul to make known the entrance of the Gentiles to the same standing, privilege, and place, as we find in full in iii. 6—"That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and *of the same body*, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel, whereof I am made a minister"—heirs together, body together, partakers together. And the Gentiles were "sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of *our* inheritance." "This inheritance is reserved in heaven for us in God" (Coloss. i. 5, and 1 Pet. i. 4). And from thence came the spiritual blessing to complete and maintain them in their hope. The riches of the glory of this mystery was CHRIST in them the hope of THE glory.

Called in one body with one end before them, and to the carrying out of this, the Lord in His grace sending persons, that in earnest searching and humbleness we might track the path of them that looked for glory through an adverse world that knows them not. The object is one and the same; charity out of a pure heart, out of a good conscience, and out of faith unfeigned—not driven about by every wind of precept, but dealing truthfully in love, come up into a unity of confession and obedience (*of the faith*) in confession of Him who is our Lord, and who will return, and to acquaintance with the Son of God, which is in likeness to His divine image; for if we think we know Him in any other way, we know nothing as we ought to know. To be the habitation of God by the Spirit is the *result* of all this dealing of God. What oneness shall we pursue but in this divine subjection, and how needful is the peace that binds together (*Συνδεσμῷ*) the assembly in its calling. The binding together is by

peace, together with the common end proposed, with all oneness and long-suffering together, the common end being the obedience in the faith till we attain to that fullness of unity in which God is glorified on earth, looking by faith and desire to the coming of the Lord.

The Lord added daily to the assembly such as should be saved, and this very long before the truths of the Epistle to the Ephesians were known—indeed it was not known till the end of the career of the Apostle. And I find in verse 4 of chapter iv. that one hope of our calling was the prototype of every unity spoken of. The duties of the saints on earth in the new creature, and the *morals* and discipline that in that belong to newness of life, as in those separate to God in the faith—all are in just dependence on the truth of the calling; and the doers, we are told, shall receive the reward of the inheritance—Coloss. iii. 24—“Because ye serve the LORD CHRIST.”

The more the pretensions are pressed that we have alluded to, the more assuredly is the stable ground of the Word laid aside. Intelligence is fostered, but just application lost; but while we bless God for the wonderful light granted to us of late, the need of rightly dividing the Word of Truth, and the need of being sober and watching unto prayer, is pressed on our attention. How infinite is the damage to believers to have the assembly independent of the object it was assembled for, and the end it has to aim at, and the method for that end in the use of the assistance granted to it in gifts from above, and in persons given to it of the Lord.

What is given to us then is the Kingdom of God (*i.e.*, rule with Christ as joint-heirs with Him), and not to be distinguished by any other name than His, raised beyond the earthly measures of the saints of the Old Testament, by fellowship with Christ, and by the gift of the Holy Ghost. The Church or assembly of the latter is of those separated out of the world and gathered unto the name of the Lord, a witness within to His holiness, and without to His GRACE AND SOVEREIGNTY, waiting for the Son of God from heaven.
