

# MOVEMENT.

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4. The Last Call. .

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FOUR LECTURES \*  
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# MOVEMENT.

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## DIVINE DRAWING.

*“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.”*

(JOHN XII. 20-43 ; ISA. VI. 1-13.)

A SUBJECT of great spiritual importance is that of *movement*, and these two scriptures confirm its importance. Two great glory-systems are presented to us in scripture—two great orders of things, each of which has a glory of its own. One is spoken of as “this world”—that is, this present world in which we dwell—and it has a *prince* over it, mentioned in this chapter. The Lord names him as such three times in this gospel. And at the same time another world, another glory-system, is presented centreing around a Man, and that Man is Jesus.

Now this presentation of His Person is made by the Spirit that we may be drawn away from what would captivate us here, and drawn over to His own glorious world, which is filled by Himself. Hence the serious importance of *movement*, seeing it is quite impossible to stand

still, for these two great forces are at work ; they are not quiescent ; we may sink down in a self-complacency and indifference, but we are not without movement of some kind, and such movement will be either Christ-ward or world-ward—toward Him who has been lifted up out of this earth which has been stained by His blood, or toward him who is behind this present world-system, and whose doom will be eternal destruction.

Now it is extremely encouraging to see in John xii. that there were some Greeks (representative of the Gentiles) whose souls were decidedly in movement. They had seized all the light that was given of the true God, and had gone to the only place where that light could be found (“for salvation is of the Jews,” chap. iv. 22) to worship ; and being there they had heard of Him who had come to substantiate all that light and bring it into living evidence in His own Person. There is movement in their souls and they come to Philip with the words, “Sir, we would see Jesus.” They knew little of what was involved. *We* may say it lightly, but to see Jesus means that we are prepared to be withdrawn from all that would captivate us here and to pass over to His side, cost what it may ; and, conversely, to share His rejection here.

“Sir, we would see Jesus,” and their desire was gratified. But immediately that is so, the Lord

Jesus takes it up as the moment arriving when the Son of Man (His widest title) should be glorified. But what a pathway it was! *It meant that man as such should be removed far away from the presence of God*; and the cost was—His death! The corn of wheat must fall into the ground and die, or else it would for ever abide alone. In all its moral beauty and perfection that corn of wheat must go down into death, that man, as Isaiah puts it, might be removed far away. (Chap. vi. 12.)

That is incidental to seeing Jesus. There must be the recognition that we are going to see One who belongs to another system of glory to that into which we have been born, and that it is all over with the old order, which has been removed for ever from God's eye.

The Lord says, "If any man serve me, let him follow me." He marks out distinctly there the need for movement, and the end of this present world-system. "*Now is the judgment of this world.*" (Ver. 31.) That is a very solemn consideration and wider than the question of mere individual sins. Have we accepted it? Nineteen hundred years have passed since that sentence was uttered; has it ever been reversed? When we survey the vaunted progress of civilisation, the march of science and invention, it might seem to us well nigh incredible that this world,

as under God's eye, received its death sentence at the mouth of Christ, that THEN (not in a day yet to come) was the judgment of this world. That Christ—in whom all that was for God was centred—should be cast out and crucified, brought to a head all that was in this world, and in that very fact it was judged and condemned for ever; and with it, its prince, for Christ names him as such here, "Now shall the prince of this world be cast out." Satan, the deceiver of the whole earth, has another remarkable title in scripture: he is the "god of this age" (lit.). (2 Cor. iv. 4.) That is its religious head; but here he is seen as its prince—for has he not invested it with glory?

It is wonderful to get from the lips of Christ the exposure of this world-system. But, it is said, that was before the entrance of Christianity and we have around us now a *christian* world. Do we think that underneath the gloss of Christianity the world is any different? Nay; scripture shews us most conclusively that it is not. It is seen in its full-blown character in Revelation xvii. under the figure of the woman, the harlot "arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold" (marg. "gilded.") That is, the externals of religion will be there, but underneath is its actual character, unchanged. Well nigh two thousand years have passed and the sentence pronounced by Christ still awaits

its public carrying into effect, but meanwhile what has come in? In contrast to that a *new glory-system* has come to light and a *new centre* belonging to it, a new point of attraction for man wholly outside the old. "*And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.*" This he said, signifying what death he should die."

We have all doubtless noticed that the Gospel of John is built up on *seven signs*. The culminating sign-miracle of the gospel we get in this verse—"signifying [that is, shewing by sign] what death he should die." On it hangs the teaching of the chapter and of the gospel. One has said that Christ wrought no miracle that He should not die, but that He wrought a miracle by dying. He brought into being through that very death and beyond it a new glory-system in resurrection outside the old judged one, which was henceforth to be the goal toward which every heart that turned to Him and accepted the removal of self in His death, could be drawn and find a home. "I, if I be lifted up from the earth"—spectacle to angels and to men, lifted up outside this judged system here—"will draw all unto me."

That shews what true movement is. Christ is the mighty magnet, drawing all to Himself. How often one may be tempted to put before souls what they ought to do and what they

ought to be—and it affords people immense complacency to hear that. But nothing will avail to set our souls in true movement but *Christ*, known in affection. Most of us have made one important move in our lives, and then the tendency is to settle down in self-complacency. But Christ is always true to His love.

Now the effect of movement comes out very plainly here : they become *sons of light*. “Yet a little while is the light with you,” Jesus said. “Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you.” How solemn that those to whom these words were addressed did not move! Verses 42, 43 indicate that. Here we get the secret of it unmasked: a “nevertheless” comes in. “For they loved the praise [lit. glory] of men more than the praise [lit. glory] of God.” The men whose good opinion they valued belonged to the religious world : that is the serious consideration here. They were guided by human thought and human glory, and they loved it, because it contributed to self in them. Yet all that glory had come to an end in the death of Christ—the corn of wheat fallen into the ground : man ended there in Him, who alone of men was morally beautiful to God. It is noteworthy that in the crucifixion scene the other gospels speak of the two crucified with Christ as “malefactors” or



“thieves,” but John’s gospel goes deeper : they are *men*. “They crucified him, and with him *two other*.” That is, man and all that centres around man must go, and all the glory of man. This world is a judged system and it has to be judged in the soul, and this is effected practically in us as the glory of Christ and His system dawns upon us and ousts the power of that world from our hearts.

A solemn fact is presented to us in Isaiah vi. in the apathy of Israel, and in their being given over to blindness and hardness of heart. We are told “These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.” Who is the subject of this glory? It is no less a person than the Lord Jesus, though we should have scarcely dared to so apply the scripture apart from John xii. 41.

The chapter opens : “In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord [Adonai here] sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.” Now the history of Uzziah is a most interesting one. He was greatly prospered in his works until he was strong and his heart was lifted up to his destruction, and he would usurp the place of the priests. He went into the temple to offer incense but the priests opposed him, and while he was wroth with them there rose up leprosy in his forehead from beside the incense altar, and they thrust

him out from thence ; “ yea, himself also hasted to go out, because the Lord had smitten him.” (2 Chron. xxvi. 20.) There was the vindication there on earth of the holiness of God’s house ; and this chapter (Isa. vi.) begins with the year in which king Uzziah died. Now there was apathy in Israel as in John xii. and that in the very nation in which there should have been movement. But we are introduced to heaven, and in heaven we find movement ; it is one great scene of activity. The train of the Lord filled the temple ; the seraphim were there in the acknowledgment of the holiness of His Person—“ Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts : the whole earth is full of his glory.” That is a wonderful unfolding of the glory of the world which Jesus fills and in which He is prepared to draw every true heart to Himself. “ And the posts of the door *moved* at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.” We find there the movement of heaven as the holiness of that blessed Man is brought before us.

Then comes what could not have place to-day—the live coal from off the altar. It anticipates judgment in the death of Christ. There is no live coal to-day : the judgment of God has been met in the death of Christ : there *man* was removed “ far away.”

One thinks of that one word in John’s gospel uttered by Christ when He sealed His own work

—“It is finished” (lit. accomplished), which has reverberated down the ages, and will till it reaches its climax in the utterance: “It is done.” (Rev. xxi. 6.) What was accomplished? The will of God. There too was closed up in judgment this present world and its glory. Just as in the future day Christ will take up this world and its magnificence and will fold it up as a garment and will place it far from His sight for ever, so in His death Christ rolled up under the eye of God this present world and its glory and removed it in judgment from His eye. “It is finished.” Never since has that world opened out under God’s eye.

Then the end of Isaiah vi. shews that we must accept the irretrievable ruin and absolute removal of man. “Make the heart of this people fat . . .” (Ver. 10.) When we have learnt that, we shall find that “in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return,” &c. (ver. 13), presenting no longer apathy, but movement. “And it shall be eaten”: God will get His portion then. “The holy seed shall be the substance thereof.” That substantiates how God will effect movement in the soul to-day. No mere intellectual apprehension of the glory of Christ’s world will effect it; nothing but the living power of a living Person will suffice.

The Book of Daniel presents the wooing of

the glory of this present world, in order that men should bow down to it and to him who will come in his own name: that we find in chapter iii., where Nebuchadnezzar sets up an image typical of the glory of this world and its empire in the course of the ages, and where all kinds of music are set in motion to ensnare men's hearts that they may fall down and worship the image. That was the wooing of this world and its system to gain worshippers. The "dulcimer" is referred to in the margin as "singing" or "symphony." It is the symphony of man's world, its songs of empire to draw men's hearts after it to worship him who is its prince. The same word recurs in Luke xv. The elder son when he drew near to the house heard "music and dancing" (lit. symphony and chorus). It was the music of heaven attracting to that glory-system, filled by Christ, where movement goes on for ever.

The music of those two spheres is still going on. Which is drawing us? Both are presented. One, under the glory of man, and, anticipatively, of that awful coming man who will be the great opponent of Christ. The glory of the other is presented to us in a crucified Christ lifted up above the earth, the centre of a glory-system which will never fade, in the midst of which He is drawing every heart to Himself.



## RESPONSE.

*"Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach."*

(HEB. XIII. 10-16.)

IN John xii. we have seen how the Lord Jesus proclaims, "Now is the judgment of this world." It is a solemn statement and one which we never find reversed throughout scripture, nor have we any warrant for supposing that that judgment passed upon this world by the Lord Jesus in view of His death, has ever been rescinded or ever will be. It was the moral closing up of this order of human glory, a glory which had, however, received a religious covering from God Himself. A God-given glory had attached to what was here, but it had been used not for the glory of God but for the glory of man ; that is, the very Jews themselves had taken up that glory-system initiated by God, and had used it to minister to their own glory. The Pharisees, self-righteous, and attaching the glory of God to themselves, could yet say, "Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him?" and could cast Him out and crucify Him !

The glory of this world came to an end in that very act of theirs—in crucifying Christ, and

it has never been revived under God's eye, and never will be. And in its closing up the prince of it, Satan, the one who has been behind the progress—even the *religious* progress of this world ever since he got man into his grasp, was "cast out." Now in contrast to that we saw how the Lord Jesus announces that, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto me"—that is, He was to take up a new position outside that order of things which brought about His death. It was *through* His death, for we are told, "This he said, *signifying* what death he should die" (the seventh and culminating sign-miracle of the gospel); but He was to have no more place or connection with this earth which had received His blood, and where the glory of God had been sullied.

"I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto me" ("unto *Myself*" literally). Down here there is everything to draw the hearts of men, and even of Christians, after the glory of this world. It appears still to have a glory, more particularly since it has taken up the glory that has shone out in Christianity and attached it to the glory of man here. "They loved the glory of men more than the glory of God." But Christ, outside of it all, is the one point of attraction for every soul that loves Him.

That was the first thing I desired to establish

—"I . . . will draw." That is His side of it, and He has been effecting it right through the ages which have supervened on His death and resurrection. Unknown perhaps to the hearts that have responded to it, there has been that mighty power which has insensibly drawn men from this world and its glory, and attached them in real affection to Christ where He is. Now we get our side, too, in *response* to what Christ is effecting. There are THREE GREAT CALLS TO CHRISTIANS, each one of which sets forth some aspect of what is proper response to the continuous action of Christ as drawing all to Himself. One of them is in this chapter, verse 13—"Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach"; the second in 2 Corinthians vi. 17, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you"; and the third and final call is in Revelation xviii. 4, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins." I desire to develop the aspect in which the first of these three is presented, and more especially as to the way in which Christ Himself is presented in this scripture. For, let me emphasise it, no religious system which has originated in men's minds can ever attract a heart to *God*: nothing but a divine Person can possibly draw our hearts into any God-given position. The Person of Christ

is presented as the attraction to the heart, for nothing less will effectually "draw." The spring of movement is affection to a Person—Jesus.

Now that is very strikingly presented in this chapter, "Wherefore *Jesus* also"—He becomes the attractive point for the heart, for any mere taking up of an outward position, apart from affection to Christ underlying it, will be useless. We shall see, however, that a solid basis is laid upon which it is right and proper for every Christian to take it up. "We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned *without the camp*." We may dwell with profit on that expression, and on what is involved in it; for that is the place set before us to be taken up in our souls at this moment—"Let us go forth therefore unto him *without the camp*." There were many sacrifices in the Old Testament and they were nearly all made on the altar, but of only one of those sacrifices was the blood carried right into the holiest and placed under the eye of God. Then the body of the beast for that particular sacrifice, for example, a bullock, with his skin and his dung—was carried out *without the camp* and burnt. Now the camp presented Israel as in relationship to God; it was an ordered scene, wherein normally, all stood in relation to



Jehovah : it was marked by the presence of God ; but "without the camp" was morally outside the ordered sphere of recognised relationship with Jehovah. You will remember in Numbers xv. the case of the man found gathering sticks on the Sabbath day contrary to God's righteous enactment. He was put in ward until it was declared what should be done to him, and then the divine word came that he must be stoned outside the camp. Outside all relationship with Jehovah that sentence of death was executed. That may give us some idea of the force of "without the camp."

Now evidently the type which is referred to here is the sin offering—that which we get in Leviticus xvi.—and it is of all moment to us that Christ took the place of the sin offering. In a day like this, when the basis of the truth is being denied on every hand, and the atonement is being set aside as if it were of no account, we need to emphasise it more fully. On one side, Christ died as a martyr at the hand of men ; but on the other, He died as a victim under the hand of God : He was made sin. There are two things which are man's lot in this world—death and judgment. "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment." Moreover before there can be any approach to God by man, both these questions must be met ; and Christ met both. He was made sin ; He bore

the judgment that was due to sin on the cross ; and He died, death being the lot of man. As regards the question of sin, we must go back to the cross ; there can be no solid work in souls if the cross be not insisted upon as the basis of the work of God. All that moral distance from God involved, we do not know ; none of us have tasted it (God grant that no reader ever may!) ; but Christ took that place—that which in God's judgment must be the lot of the guilty and impenitent in the future. Tribulation, anguish, indignation and wrath fell upon Christ as He positionally took the place of sin upon the cross. In His own holy Person He was ever apart from sin, but He took up positionally that place which was man's due ; and therefore thick darkness shrouded that holy Sufferer. It was not nature in accord with the scene—that does not go far enough ; but God had withdrawn His shining. When that holy One took the place of sin God withdrew the light of His countenance, and there was darkness over the whole land. The evidence of it was the cry of that holy Victim, as expressed in Psalm xxii., "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" It is answered in verse 3 by "But thou art holy." The darkness bore witness to the holiness of God's nature, and that He had withdrawn His light from the Sufferer upon the cross. Others had never been forsaken, Psalm xxii. tells us,

but here was One abandoned of God as the sin offering, and then dying (because death rested upon us) that He might meet fully the penalty that was upon man. That was without the camp, outside the presence of God, as made sin ; He alone has been into that awful distance, and has come forth from it. If man, the irreconcilable man in the future, comes under that solemn doom it will be *never* to come out of it. But there were no depths to which the love of Christ would not stoop, for the glory of God and for our blessing. "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate."

In the coming of the Lord Jesus into this world, God visited it once more with His glory. It was the final presentation to man of the glory of God. On two previous occasions had it been brought near to man, and yet having to find an outside place. On one occasion God came down upon Mount Sinai in angelic glory in devouring fire, but before ever the law was given Israel had departed from God ; then, as Moses came down from the mount with the tables of the law in his hand, and saw what had taken place, he cast down the tables and broke them, and the sons of Levi who gathered together to him were commanded to go through the camp and slay every man his brother. (Exo. xxxii. 27.) Then came a noteworthy

change in the ways of God ; Moses took the tabernacle (there was evidently something which answered to it for the moment, and to which the glory of God was attached) and pitched it *without the camp*, afar off from the camp, and called it the "Tabernacle of the congregation." God withdrew His glory from the camp, which properly was in relation to Himself, and placed it outside it ; and all who sought the Lord had to go forth and find Jehovah outside the camp. Then God revealed His glory to Moses ; He brought His glory into view, His mercy, long-suffering, goodness and truth, and at the same time by no means clearing the guilty—He loved His glory.

Once more the glory of God comes into view in the time of Ezekiel. He sees the glory of God leaving the temple, hovering over the threshold of the house, loth to leave it, then departing to the door of the east gate, and finally ascending to heaven—and man was left without God's glory. Into the midst of that scene Christ came, and once more the glory of God was amongst men. "We beheld his glory" (John i. 14) ; it tabernacled amongst men. Now what did men do with it ? The Gospel of John tells us, "He, bearing his cross, went forth." Where from ? Out of the city. The princes of this world cast Him out of the vineyard, and there, on the hill called Calvary—a skull (displaying to the full

the emptiness of human learning and wisdom), they crucified Christ, the Lord of glory; and His accusation was written over Him in words of Hebrew, Greek and Latin. There was the world-wide proclamation of the world's own shame in each of its great departments—its religious character expressed in the Hebrew, its language of learning in the Greek, and its language of empire in the Latin. There in the face of heaven the shame of the world and its judgment in the death of Christ was proclaimed.

*Now the glory is outside to-day*; it could not possibly return to this earth as it is. There is no glory here but human glory, and all that will come down into dust. But God's glory is connected with Christ, and Christ has suffered "without the gate"; He suffered apart from justice. The gate was the place of the administration of justice in the Old Testament, but there was no justice in the death of Christ—"in his humiliation his judgment was taken away." If the glory has been rejected and Christ has been crucified here, what is the present position of this world? Is it on probation to-day, on trial under the eye of God, to see whether it can make advancement in the knowledge of God? or whether, with all its science and inventions, it can so perfect things here that men shall cease to die? All these things are 1900 years too

late. This world is a judged world, and the people who live in it are *lost*—not going to be: they *are* lost. Then what is God's attitude toward them? He might have swept this world out of existence consequent on the death of Christ. He did not do that, but expressed the riches of His grace toward it in presenting Christ again to men in untold, sovereign mercy. Well, what is the test of man?—to lead a good life? to keep the law? to do his duty? That is all hopeless. It belongs to the religion of the camp, and came to an end in the death of Christ. Our only privilege is to cast ourselves upon sovereign mercy, nothing else. The religion of "ought to be" is the religion of the camp; it had application to Israel as under God's rule and government until the death of Christ, but since then every soul that loves Him and understands the present position goes forth to Him as in need and lost. Christ never commended Himself to men's minds; men saw no beauty in Him, yet He was morally beautiful: every grace that was proper in man was in Him. He came into this world at the very zenith of its religion, learning and political power. If men would bring in ceremonial religion to-day, they go back to that day; Christendom is but a shabby reflex of the temple worship. If they would study law and the rule of empire, they go back to the period of the

Romans—it cannot be surpassed, our own law to-day is based upon it; and if they want an educated world in all its refinement of thought and of language, they must revert to ancient Greece. Christ entered this world at the height of its religious, political and educational power. But they saw no beauty in Him—none! Now how are we going to commend Christ to men? Can we do so by bringing in human means—learning, music, ceremonial? That is all gone in His death. He suffered outside the gate. What a clean cut it makes of everything that is of man; how it shuts us up to God. God is expressed in Jesus, and is brought close to us in the power of the Holy Ghost. We have Jesus as our object, and the Spirit as our stay down here—and we have *nothing else*.

If Jesus, that He might set His people apart with His own blood, that He might fence them off (that is the force of “sanctify”) from the course of this world, its religion, education and politics—if He, in His own Person, suffered without the gate and fulfilled under the eye of God the solemn and awful type of the sin-offering, the only possible answer on our part is to go forth to Him without the camp, bearing His reproach. It is *to Him*; there is a sufficient Object. The cost is great, but the Object is greater, and we may depend upon it that if that invitation in scripture be God-given, as it is,

there is more than compensation in Christ for all that it may cost here. We may take that place without the camp, because He has taken it. He took it in bearing judgment outside the presence of God, and we take it in the thankful acceptance of that atoning work, a position which virtually condemns the world and thus places us morally outside the pale of its recognised religious order. But here hesitancy often comes in, for many are willing to accept the benefits of Christianity and a hope of heaven when they die, who would yet earnestly shun the reproach of Christ. The world that reproached Christ was a religious world. It is easy to go on with a Christianity which can be hand-in-glove with the world ; but the reproach of Christ is mainly a religious reproach. The political side of it is, " Here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come." Withdrawn from the politics of this world, we could not vote, but it is our business to pray for those who rule.

" By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips confessing (*lit.*) his name." (Ver. 15.) There can be no knowledge at all of this if the place of reproach and rejection with Christ has not been taken up in our souls. We may be able to thank God for our blessings ; we may be able to press upon God how good He has been to forgive our sins ; but to present Christ to God as



His priests at the golden incense altar, to sound His praises continually, belongs to the priestly order of those who have gone forth to Him without the camp, bearing His reproach. And if they have that place within, they will come out here practically in the character of God's priests, not forgetful of doing good and sharing their goods with others, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

There is no middle path between inside the camp and without the camp. Many a Christian seeks to pursue a sort of middle path. He is not prepared to go on with that which is, but the reflex of the old effete religious order, nor is he prepared to take a path of entire separation outside with the Lord, and hence he will associate himself, it may be, with the best that he can find within the camp. Do you not think that is mocking God? If it says, "Go forth," it means it. One might say, "If we stay inside the camp, what a number we can reach." If we go outside the camp there is only—Jesus! Yes, only Jesus, and He is enough for every soul that loves Him.

When our souls take up that ground we find that outside the camp is the very home of the glory of God. That is, the glory of God's world is attached to the One who is outside, and there with Him we may learn all the spiritual joys of

God's holy temple ; we may learn the true and holy place of the golden altar, and we may learn there in truth what it is to confess Christ to God.

May God grant that the presentation of Jesus may have its effect upon all our souls in leading us to bear His reproach—a religious reproach—here, till He come !



## ENLARGEMENT.

*“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate.”*

(2 COR. V. 20, 21 ; VI. 1-18 ; VII. 1 ; I. 19-22.)

IN accord with what has already been before us, we get here another of those remarkable calls in scripture which are intended to effect the answer on the part of God's people to what we started with—"I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto me." We saw, there, His side, but there are various scriptures which give our side—the response proper on the part of saints to-day to what is being effected in Christ lifted up from the earth. Last time we looked at Hebrews xiii. and saw there the remarkable call to the saints who were still linked up with the Jewish order of things: "Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach." What is now before us is 2 Corinthians vi. 17: "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you." In connection with this is the thought of *enlargement*, which we find referred to in chapter vi.—enlargement of heart.

Many a soul who truly loves Christ feels often as if those who love him and walk with him are too narrow; if they would only take a wider view of things, there would be very much more work done for the Lord and a greater help in divine things. Now that principle was at work among the Corinthians. On the one hand there was that servant of Christ suffering contumely, despised, in tumults, troubled, perplexed, persecuted, cast down; and on the other hand were these Corinthians, who, while they were recovering from the evil in their midst in the first epistle, were yet on a line with those teachers who would put them in a way of liberty and liberality so that they were hardly prepared to share in the rejection of Christ. They already were reigning as kings without him, whilst Paul, the vessel of the testimony, was in reproach. Apparently they esteemed him very narrow, while they themselves were large-hearted; they could enter into a heathen temple and have concord with the heathen around them, and they could enjoy the light of this present world governed by its own god. Now the second epistle is written to give them enlargement, to shew them that in which true enlargement consists, and we shall see that the one who had true enlargement was Paul, the vessel of the testimony, and those who fancied they had it had yet to learn in what it consisted. "Be ye

also enlarged," he says to them in chapter vi. 13. The previous verse reads, "Ye are not straitened in us"—no doubt they said Paul would shut them up to a very narrow line of things—"ye are straitened in your own bowels." The bowels give the idea of affections in movement, and evidently their affections were not properly in movement; they did not apprehend what true enlargement of heart was, and this second epistle was written to bring that about in these saints at Corinth. We may refer to the end of the epistle to shew how it took practical effect in the collections they made for the poor saints. It is remarkable that nearly half of this important epistle has its bearing on how to make collections, and there is no doubt that the practical result of their enlargement of heart is seen in the way they responded to them.

Now in order to see how practical enlargement of heart is effected in the saints, we might first turn to a verse in chapter i.: "He that establishes us with you in Christ (or Christward), and has anointed us, is God." (Ver. 21 N. Tr.) We have already seen that in John xii. we get movement on the part of Christ—He draws; in Hebrews xiii. there is movement on our side. There we find it is God who is effecting the movement, and it is Christward—*unto Christ*, in a particular direction. Now Christ is presented

in this epistle as the Yea and the Amen, and we must touch on that, because we shall know very little of enlargement according to God if we fail in the apprehension of Christ in this character. They had charged the apostle with vacillation of purpose in coming amongst them, but he says, "Our word toward you was not yea and nay. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, . . . . was not yea and nay, but in him is yea"—yea has come to pass. (Vers. 18, 19.) The two thoughts are very beautiful, and they cover the early chapters of the epistle ; Christ is the Yea and the Amen of whatever promises there are of God. The "yea" is God's affirmation in regard to man—God presents Himself to man in Christ as the yea. We shall find that up to chapter iii. in this epistle Christ is presented as the Yea of God to man. One might refer to the ten commandments ; they were practically built upon the word "nay;" they were marked by "thou shalt *not*," while with God there is no negation. The law properly set forth God's thought for man, but the remarkable thing is that that which formed the transcript of the mind of God had to be written in negative characters. Now why was that? The order of man in whom the mind of God could take effect was not yet upon the scene, He was not yet to be found ; hence there could not be positive commandment, it had all to be negative. Just as we were told as little

children, "You must *not* do this or that," because those were the very things we were prone to do. The man that would not do for God was marked by "nay," but Christ came upon the scene to put an end to that order of man, and now it is no longer "yea and nay"—it is no longer "nay" at all. The blessedness is that in Him yea has come to pass. He came here as the living expression, the concrete setting-forth, of all God's mind toward man; and so we can see in Him God's yea has come to pass. No longer is man under probation, no longer is he under God's commandment, "Thou shalt not"; but henceforward everything is from God's side, it is God's "*I will*"—Christianity. The law might be summed up in "Thou shalt not," but Christianity can be summed up in this, "*I will*" on God's part.

When we come to chapter iii. we find Christ is presented as God's covenant—the new covenant in contrast to the old. The old was, "thou shalt not"; the new is, "I will," and it is all seen in Christ. Now do our souls lay hold of Christ as Him in whom God's yea has come to pass? What a world of soul trouble we should be delivered from if we did. All the thoughts of what I ought to be, what I could be for God, vanish when I learn what God is for me in Christ. In Him, in His death, the old order is closed up; and alive from the dead He assures

us not only of His mercy, but His love; and God can present Himself to us in Christ—no longer with veiled face, but now the glory of God is unveiled in the face of Jesus Christ. It shines there telling out to the full all that God is toward man as revealed in Himself, and thus we see Christ as the “Yea” on God’s part manward. If that glory and light once shines into our souls, it dispels what would hold us in bondage here! But there is one mighty being who would do everything he could to falsify it and to put us back under law, and he is named in this epistle “the god of this age”—of this age of world-improvement, yet on God’s side of a time of favour when His glory in the face of Jesus Christ shines down into this world. He is doing all he can to hinder that light—blinding “the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.” It is a great thing we should get light, because it effects something Christward; it is God’s work, divine formation, as the end of chapter iii. says, “We all, beholding the glory of the Lord with unveiled face, are changed.” (*Lit.*) That is a wonderful word: beholding the Lord’s glory. The view of those who apprehend Christ as “Yea” is focussed upon Him; every divine sensibility is centred in the face of Him in whom the glory of God shines. That is the shining of this



epistle, and all for the purpose of bringing about enlargement: we must see the way in which Christ is presented to us.

Now for the other side. "In him is the *yea*, and in him the *amen*." What do we take that to mean? One may get up and pray, and more or less instinctively we answer, "Amen." What do we mean? It presents Christ as Man under God's eye. "Amen" is the response on man's part to God. In Christ as the "Yea" we see everything on God's part manward; but in Christ as the "Amen" we see Christ taking a place, as Man, in which He can present man in reconciliation and complacency to God. In contrast with the order of man that could only say "nay" to God, in Christ we see the divine answer in Man to God, so that the heart of God is filled and satisfied, and we are satisfied too. That is what "Amen" conveys. Hence in prayer, the unlearned can say "Amen" at the giving of thanks, because he says, "Christ is the answer to that prayer, and hence I can fully go with what Christ is to God." Christ is the one great answer of all prayer to God, and it would give us enlargement if we saw this: that under God's eye there is Christ and no other man. One may say, Is not the world under God's eye to-day? No, not as such; Christ is under God's eye, and He would bring us into that scene of

satisfaction where, in one way, prayer is already ended, and where we can come without a need to enjoy what God has before Him. What a difference it would make in saying "Amen" if we could look beyond the mere thought of "So be it," with the knowledge that it *has* come to pass in Christ. Hence in chapter v. we are brought to the great point of reconciliation. The Spirit would bring us there—to all that is based on the fact that Christ was made sin for us who knew no sin. The saints are invited to come into the reconciliation. The heart of many a saint knows but little of that scene of complacency and satisfaction which is before God, where He can say, "Old things are passed away ; new things are come to pass" (lit.). What are the old things? The things which had to do with our responsibility here. We have to take up things in responsibility, but it is not a question of responsibility after the flesh when we touch the scene of reconciliation where new things, the things of God's counsel and purpose, have come into view and subsist in Christ. What a blessed scene that is! There Christ is God's Amen.

Now, having considered Christ as the Yea and the Amen, we might touch on verse 21, "Now he that establishes us with you in Christ (or Christward) is God." Is not that good of

God? He effects in the saints the answer to the drawing of Christ; He brings them into movement Himself, so to speak; and what effects it is the presentation of Christ as God's Yea and Amen. Thank God, these things are not merely the portion of those who are what we may speak of as far on in the truth. That word is a great comfort in the first epistle, "How shall he that is unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks?" It is the privilege of the simplest soul in Christ to say "Amen"—that God has secured His own answer to His heart of love in Christ as Man, and the simplest believer may touch that in his soul. May it be so with us all!

Turning very cursorily to chapter vi. we may remark there the importance of the call that comes to us. If Christ be presented as the Yea and the Amen, it is most certain that as such He is outside the course of this world. That which dominates man in this world is the inability to give God either "Yea" or "Amen." Now Paul presses the importance of coming into reconciliation, and in chapter vi. he says, "We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain," and he indicates the importance of the present moment, "*now* is the accepted time; behold, *now* is the day of salvation." He unfolds here the character of his ministry; it

was necessary that he should do so; he was more than a mere unit in God's testimony, for God's testimony was centred down here in that apostle. It found its home in him who was persecuted and hunted from place to place and regarded as the off-scouring of all things; and what he brings before us here will help us to see where true enlargement lies. It was not an easy path, one in which they could be on the best of terms with the world or the church, suiting themselves to their company. Paul did not suit himself to his company, except as Christ was the Object, and then he made himself all things to all men that he might save some. There are twenty-eight things named down this long list, and they divide themselves into four sevens. The first gives character to the remainder in the first two sevens, and we see what was involved in the path of one who had been drawn away from this world (dominated by the god of this age), over to that real world filled by Christ as the Yea and the Amen. "Giving no offence in anything, that the ministry be not blamed: but in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God." Ministry is of God, and it is of the deepest importance that the ministry be not blamed. Paul was most careful that the service should be carried on unsullied by him, and that its true character should not be dimmed. It was not a ministry

that commended itself to the world. Paul's Master never commended Himself to the world, and Christ's servants never commend themselves to the world; if the world commends them, so much the worse for the servants.

Now he says, "in much patience" (or endurance). That dominates the other six. While we recognise Paul as one pre-eminent as an apostle, all would surely desire to serve the Lord, even if as simply as the little maid in Syria. Well, it is to be in much endurance. How pre-eminent that was set forth in Christ! "In afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults"—all summed up in endurance. If we suffer [*lit.* endure], we shall reign. Now the Corinthians wanted to reign without enduring—"Ye have reigned as kings without us"; he marks out here the true path to reigning: it is enduring.

Now for the next seven: "In labours, in watchings, in fastings; by pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness"—these all go in connection with labours. They may not be our thought of labours. We often get the idea, If only one could do something heroic! and simply that people might say, What a splendid thing to do! There was nothing of that with Paul, nor was there with his Master; the reason is that it is what is of man.

Next we read, "By the Holy Ghost"—the

only power by which we can serve Christ—and what follows is “love unfeigned,” the first trait of the Holy Ghost. Then, “in the word of truth, in the power of God ; through the arms of righteousness on the right hand and left, through glory and dishonour, through evil report and good report” (N. Tr.). How different that is from a path that would be marked out by ourselves! We might have desired honour from all. But it is, “honour and dishonour, evil report and good report.”

Then follow the last seven: “as deceivers, and yet true ; as unknown and yet well known ; as dying, and, behold, we live ; as chastened, and not killed ; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing ; as poor, yet making many rich ; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.” Oh, what a narrow pathway you have got, the Corinthians would have said ; but Paul turns the tables and says : “O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged. Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels. Now for a recompense in the same (I speak as unto my children), be ye also enlarged.” What was wrong? They were not taking this pathway. Their affections were shut up and narrowed Christward ; they were not expanding in regard to that glorious scene that God has secured for Himself in Christ as the Yea and the Amen ; they were

not marked by it. Had they been, they would have been in the same pathway as Paul, and they would not have thought him narrow.

And now he exposes what was at work in their hearts. "Be not diversely (lit.) yoked with unbelievers." That was the point. They could be on friendly terms with the world, and they could even join it. Well, that was heathendom—heathendom was around them then; the sorrowful thing for us is to know that the professing church has incorporated heathendom. It has swallowed up the heathen world, taken over its temples and its heathen festivals, and so we find ourselves nominally in the christian *world*. It is difficult to see who are true Christians, but we are called upon to follow righteousness, faith, love, peace with those that call upon the Lord out of a pure heart. If we be diversely yoked in our ways—business, social relations, service, whatever it be—the result is, it is unequal, and the world gets the advantage. The Christian does not raise the worldly man to his level, but the worldly pulls down the Christian into his world, where moral darkness still reigns and holds men there lest the glorious light of God should shine for them.

How solemn are these few thoughts here! Five great words are used:—"What FELLOWSHIP hath righteousness with unrighteousness?"

—one marks God's world and the other marks man's. Is there any fellowship? Paul's answer is, None. The next is, "What COMMUNION hath light with darkness?"—they could never be mixed. Then, "What CONCORD (symphony or like sound) hath Christ with Belial? or what PART hath he that believeth with an infidel (unbeliever)?" It is difficult to distinguish *unbelievers* in this day; a man may be *unconverted* yet not have definitely refused the truth; but still we have to be very careful how we go on with those who have not received God's testimony, for such make God a liar. The next thing is, "What AGREEMENT hath the temple of God with idols?" They are very remarkable words, and the principle still holds good. People are too well educated to bow down to wood and stone, but idols are as much in evidence to-day, leading men away from Christ and keeping their hearts from Him. (Compare Rev. ix., 20, 21.)

But the temple of God is here, and it has no agreement with idols. It says, "Ye are the temple of the living God." He has already brought about for His pleasure an answer for Christ *here*, in that the Holy Ghost is dwelling here and bringing the glory of Christ into view as present light to men, as the temple of the living God. "As God hath said, I will dwell in



them, and walk in them ; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." Now do we realise that as a fact ? that *God* is dwelling here because the Holy Ghost is present here. What conclusion are we to draw from these things ? Can God go on with admixture of good and evil ? Can God tolerate what is clean and unclean ? Is it possible to have His approval and blessing in that way ? No. It is summed up in this : if Christ has been presented to us as the Yea and Amen, if He comes before us as outside this present narrow world, God speaks, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing ; *and I will receive you.*" And yet does your heart say, "I would like to stay there a little longer just to do them a little good" ? Do you set up your will and feeble service against the command of the Lord ? (Jehovah, here.) "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye *separate.*" Many a soul has said "If I could only be there a little longer, I could help such a number of people out." But we may depend upon it that God's testimony lies in separation at the present day—*touch not* the unclean thing—separation which takes nothing from the character of man who was marked by "nay" ; but finds everything in Him in whom "Yea" has come to pass. That is true separation, and it is marked in these twenty-eight

things seen in the life of Paul. Every one of them was seen in undimmed beauty in Christ as He walked here ; and that is what is meant by real heart separation to Christ apart from evil associations. There is the holy vessel, but it may be defiled by its associations. "Wherefore come ye out from among them . . . . and I will receive you." What more can we want? "*I will receive you.*" Think of being received by the blessed God, and that He pledges Himself to this by His omnipotence !



## THE LAST CALL.

*“Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins.”*

(REV. XVII.; XVIII. 1-8.)

WE have on previous occasions looked first at the way in which the Lord Jesus Christ, lifted up from the earth, is at this moment drawing all to Himself; that we saw in John xii. and what was involved in it was that in His lifting-up from this earth there was brought into view a new glory system outside of the present one. Morally, the two are marked, the one by the glory of God, the other by the glory of man, for there were those who loved the praise of man more than the praise of God. The drawing we referred to then was on the side of Christ.

Then we turned to the thought of the response there should be on the part of those who own allegiance to Christ, and considered one of the three calls in the New Testament by which God seeks to effect movement Christward, and that in response to His drawing of affection as lifted up from the earth. We spoke of the call in Hebrews xiii. : “Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.”

That call was addressed actually to Jewish believers who were still linked up with the guilty city of Jerusalem, on which, in God's righteous government, judgment was shortly to fall. The call went out to them that they might cut their links with that guilty religious order of things, and take an outside place with Christ, who had suffered without the camp, outside the place of known relationship with God. We saw how He had fulfilled outside the gate the type of the sin offering; how He had been forsaken by God, the darkness of distance from God closing Him in on the cross; and how that He having taken that place *outside*, it is our privilege to accept in His death the judgment of sin in the flesh.

Then further we looked at the second great call to Christians in the New Testament—"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." (2 Cor. vi. 17, 18.) There what was in question was not so much the religious order of things, the camp, in which we find ourselves morally still to-day, as the world, blinded by Satan its god, the world in its ensnaring influences holding men in its clutch. Fellowship with unrighteousness, with Belial, with infidels, with idols, is in view

there, and the necessary consequence was that God's saints at Corinth were narrowed up and straitened. They thought the narrowness was in Paul, but he points out the path of enlargement for themselves to be in growth in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ as God's "Yea and Amen." The divine call allows of no compromise, "Touch NOT the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you," God in that way pledging Himself by His omnipotence to be a Father to all who will cut their links with this world and trust themselves to Him.

We touch now upon a very solemn scripture, which one may venture to describe as the last call. It comes before us in Revelation xviii. 4: "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins." It is undoubtedly the last call, the last appeal to separation, and, moreover, has a different character from the two previously taken up. While no doubt true ministry rightly exposes evil, to be of profit to souls it must present divine Persons. Any ministry which exposes evil and offers nothing positive can be of little real help to souls; but with every call to departure from evil we shall find, if we look for it, some peculiar presentation of divine Persons which is intended to set the souls of the saints in movement toward Christ.

So in this solemn passage *the Lamb* will come into view for our wondering contemplation.

In Revelation xvii. and xviii. we find the public profession of Christianity at the close. How near that last phase may be we cannot tell, but we find it pictured under two symbols—a harlot and a city. In both these aspects it is presented as the rival of the true church. In chapter xvii. it comes largely before us as the harlot—not as Israel is constantly brought before us in the Old Testament under the figure of unfaithfulness to her husband: that is never predicated of the church as a whole, though it be of individuals, as in James; under this symbol it is the rival of the bride of the Lamb, while in chapter xviii. it is the rival of the heavenly city. God will judge it in both these characters, and it will be brought down to the pit.

It is necessary that we touch slightly on detail in order that we may apprehend the position in which this last call goes out, for it is intended to have *a present application* to our souls. The woman is pictured in chapter xvii. as clothed in all that is proper to the church in glory. We may remark that the words “decked with gold” (ver. 4) is properly “gilded.” (See margin.) She bears all the external marks of religion, and unless the tutored eye be there, her appearance would certainly

deceive ; nor would the name written on her forehead be legible to any eye that has not been opened by the Spirit : "Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth." This scripture leaves us in little doubt as to what is symbolised by this woman. Various statements in the chapter converge at one point to shew that it is *the principle* of which Rome is the head—not necessarily Rome itself, but the principle of professing Christendom which has its apex in Rome. Further on we shall see proof of that.

Now when John beheld her, he says, "I wondered with great astonishment" (lit.) Then he is told the mystery of the woman. She is seen seated on a scarlet beast. This awful wild beast is the revived form in Satanic power of the Roman empire. It was, and is not (that is, it has no present public form), and it shall be present ; and when it is present it will have ascended out of the bottomless pit, going forth in Satanic power and agency. The harlot is seen seated upon that beast guiding and controlling it, and yet using all its worldly power for her own advantage. The seven kings probably refer to the phases of the Roman empire—five are passed away, the sixth no doubt referring to the line of Cæsars, under which John was suffering, and one was to come ; then there was to be an eighth. Now while the Book of Revela-

tion does not present things historically (it is properly prophetic), yet God in order to teach His saints has allowed shadowy fulfilments of things yet future ; and as regards this seventh power, we may well notice what happened in the French Revolution at the end of the last century but one, a striking illustration of what will take place later. Every attempt was made to cast God off and to blot out His name from under heaven, and all who refused to bow were beheaded. We find that to be the case here too (see chap. xx. 4), showing that the guillotine may again deluge the earth with blood. But out of the confusion of that reign of terror arose a man of lowly origin, who yet quickly got the empire of Europe at his feet : that man was Napoleon I. He no doubt came in as allowed by God, and we see thus how quickly, if God remove His hand, the forces of evil may unite and all come under one controlling hand. But prophecy awaits the eighth, and when he does come, he will have the character of all the others, he "is of the seven." Satan will bring forth from his domain that wild beast who will be controlled for the moment by the false woman, the professing church, and who, with his allies, will eventually turn and rend her.

We note that in the future day there will be ten kings (who cannot be identified to-day for "they have received no kingdom as yet"): these



will receive power as kings one hour with the beast, will hand their strength over to him. Under the guidance of the professing church (for she still rides on the beast), man's insolence against God, his pride and hatred, will rise to such a height, that "these shall make war with the Lamb." (Ver. 14.) Could pride and insolence reach a greater point than that: to make war with Him who is the Son of God! We are not told in what way it will be compassed, but nothing can equal it in daring impiety and wickedness. It may be that inventions will be perfected to such an extent in destructive force that they will attempt to defy even the artillery of heaven. In the previous chapter we are told the name of this battlefield of the nations—Armageddon. The barrier separating east from west will be destroyed when the Euphrates is by divine judgment dried up; the nations of the earth will rush together to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

"And the Lamb shall overcome them." How brief the statement! The Lamb in the Book of Revelation stands in contrast to the wild beast of the Roman Empire. Man has set himself to gain the earth and rule it apart from God; his road to empire is by ravage and raven, by plunder and bloodshed. It commenced with Nimrod (Rebel), begotten of Cush (Darkness)—the first to hold sway over the wild beasts of

earth and the first empire builder. (Gen. x. 8-10.) For an emperor is not merely king, but king of kings. But the Lamb stands in contrast to man's road to empire. Man would tread down and foul all with his feet ; but when we come to Christ, to whom this earth pertains, what road does He take? Downward ! " He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation?" And yet in that One, God is going to take possession of this earth. He it is who is God's Emperor, and He is about to enter on His rights here, and we await that moment. But in what a way has God intervened to achieve His end ! Not in one come here in outward might, but in Him who, standing before the Procurator of the fourth empire, could say, " My kingdom is not of this world." And so He went down into death that He might there substantiate the moral claims of that kingdom (the loving righteousness and hating lawlessness), and in resurrection take up its sceptre as God's Lamb.

Hence it says, " The Lamb shall overcome them." There is not a word as to how the battle is conducted ; doubtless the boasted armaments of Europe will be gathered together, reinforced by the whole power of Asia and the East, to fight against the Lamb. But when God brings

into play the artillery of heaven, of what avail will be all the forces of men? Christ will destroy them with the brightness of His coming and consume them with the breath of His mouth. Man's artillery is horizontal; that of the heavens is vertical, as we read in chapter xx. 9, of a later time: "Fire came down out of heaven and devoured them." Yet man's pride will rise to this awful height, and when it does, and not till then, we get the vindication of the title of Christ to this earth.

"And the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings." That is His true place; the only Lord-Emperor of this earth in the mind of God is the lowly, crucified Nazarene. Do we own allegiance alone to Him? God will completely vindicate His right and title to this earth, "for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful." It is extremely beautiful that the Spirit dwells here upon the character of those who will be with the Lamb when He comes forth to crush the pride of this present world—called, and chosen, and faithful. Those three moral marks are what give the true answer on the part of God's saints to the last call of the next chapter, "Come out of her, my people." They are called; and the call is to come out. The very basis of Christianity lies in that. God is taking *out* of the Gentiles a people

for His name ; the very name of the *church* means "called out," elect, chosen. How little Christians weigh this, alas ! They go on with this world and its religious system ; but they are called, and the call comes to produce movement. They are called by the gospel, they are chosen, elect, and God's election is for His pleasure ; His choosing is for His complacency. Such are they in the mind of God, and further, as faithful, they will reign with Christ.

Now comes a very solemn picture indeed. The horns represent the power of the beast. These ten powers will conspire together, and will hate the harlot and despoil her. "God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled." (Chap. xvii. 17.) The very principle of Babel is *unanimity*—"let us build *us*," &c. They had one mind there at the outset, and in the end we find the same thing ; but God overrules it for the execution of His will ; and before He judges this awful professing system here, He allows the very power with which the church was allied to despoil her, to make her desolate and naked, to eat her flesh and to burn her with fire. One can refer to a parallel case in the Old Testament. When Jehu came to Jezreel, after having executed the judgment of God upon Ahaziah, Jezebel with her painted face looked out at him from the

window ; he commanded her to be cast down, and they did so, her blood being sprinkled on the wall and on the horses, and he trampled her under foot. Then after he had gone in he gave order for her burial, but they found no more of her than the skull and the feet and the palms of her hands. That is a picture of what will happen to that awful religious system on earth which finds its principle and centre in Rome. We have to beware lest that principle find a place in our hearts. It is as easily found in the heart of the simplest Christian as in that of the highest prelate. And what is that principle? Glory for me!—the glory of *man*! It may be the taking up of a God-given glory and making something of myself by its means ; but the moment it is so taken up it is the principle of Babylon. We see an instance of it at the very outset in the church at Corinth. God had endowed them with most wonderful gifts, gifts of tongues and many others, which shewed the presence of God in their midst over-riding the barriers which sin had occasioned and other limitations which God had placed to curb the pride of man. These gifts were intended to be held for God, but they were perverted to the glory of those who received them, in such sort that it was said of them by the apostle, “Ye have reigned as kings.” Now that in principle was Babylon ; while it was divine endowment it

was used for self-glorification. In the Old Testament we see the same principle. In connection with Babel, it was the pride of man : "Let us make *us* a name." Man would scale heaven to get glory and win a name. Then it comes up in relation to Achan. He coveted and took a wedge of gold and a goodly Babylonish garment : it was the glory of this world, and a full exposure of it is made in the sight of God, and of all Israel, that Achan may loathe and judge the very thing his heart had coveted. Passing on to the Book of Daniel, we find an empire and glory given of God to Nebuchadnezzar. There came a moment when Nebuchadnezzar walked on the terrace of his palace, looked forth on that mighty city Babylon, and his heart became lifted up with pride, as he said, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" While the word was in the king's mouth there fell a voice from heaven, "O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken ; The kingdom is departed from thee" ; and from that moment man's empire was stamped as Babylon. Driven forth from his empire Nebuchadnezzar was made to eat grass as oxen and his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws. Nebuchadnezzar himself was personally recovered under God's government,

but the kingdom marked then as Babylon never resumed its God-given character, and it has gone on ever since, and will go on to the end as marked by the pride and glory of man, and we have to remember that, though we may desire to be separate from it, we must bear the public shame of it.

We have traced a little of the history of that which in its last phase, though professing still to have the name of God, is seen as "the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird."

To pass on to the last call. In chapter xviii. 1. we read, "And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory." This great and mighty angel refers, no doubt, to Christ—He appears several times in this book under angelic guise—and the earth is lightened with His glory. The glory which until that moment fills the earth is the glamour of Babylon. Indisputably the glory of this world shines in connection with Babylon; it is the reflex of her gold and jewels and adorning which are spoken of in chapter xvii., filling the hearts of men to-day with the pride of empire. Now we find when this heavenly visitant appears that the whole earth is filled with his glory. When God intervenes the

glory of man will pale in one moment. There will be, no doubt, a physical manifestation of glory in this event, but there will be a *moral* manifestation of glory too; and the glory of Babylon will be seen to be tinsel as that glory lightens the earth. We may recall that it says of the spoils of Achan that "they laid them out before the Lord." No doubt when Achan saw them, and then coveted them, and took them, they must have appeared an extremely desirable acquisition; but, as laid out before Jehovah, how despicable they must have appeared! And when Christ comes to claim His kingdom, the glory of Babylon will be seen as the veriest tinsel.

His glory lightened the earth. And then he gives the true character of it all. "He cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils," &c. (Ver. 2.) One has noticed with astonishment that the word here used for "habitation" is the same as that which occurs in Ephesians ii., where we are told the saints are "builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit." That is God's thought for the church; God dwells there—in the true church—by the Spirit. How awful the contrast here with Babylon! In chapter xvii. we have the most incontestable proofs that in principle Rome is spoken of. It is the city



of seven hills ; we are told it is the great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth ; and if anything is evident in scripture, it is evident that the Spirit of God meant us to understand Rome—not as the actual city, but as the whole principle which that city enshrined, the principle working in men's hearts and eventuating in Babylon. And Christ says of it, " It is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird." She has made all nations drink of the cup of her filthiness. Is it to be wondered at that God's answer to it is the cup of His wrath ?

In connection with Babel, men had said, " Let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach into heaven." Now here we see the culmination of the principle of Babylon. She has built a city, and its top does reach to heaven. But of what is it built ? Of sins ! Her sins have been heaped one on another up to the heaven. So the call in verse 20 is, " Rejoice over her, *thou heaven !*" Such has the professing church become ! Now in view of that, what is the position of one who loves God to-day ? We can never escape the shame of it. If you lived in a Catholic country, and there was an exposure of the professing christian system, you would have to bear the shame of it. No less in a so-called Protestant land is the general departure

of the professing church the common shame of all christians. Every principle that will eventuate in Babylon is at work around us to-day. But a pathway is marked out for us which we may take *under God's eye*. "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins." There is no dallying with it; if you stop there you are partakers of her sins. There is no doubt that this last call is of the very widest bearing, and will embrace those who may yet be left on earth, and who are found willing to listen to the voice of God even at the very extremity of things (the true church will long ere this have been with Christ). Yet it is intended to have its application to us at the present moment, more especially since the last days are approaching when the fulness of apostasy will set in and when religion, having publicly allied itself with the Antichrist, and with that awful Roman power, the beast, whose number is 666, will then be spoiled and torn to pieces by it.

It will be impossible for any one to see that name on the forehead of the harlot unless they get with God to have their eyes opened. That name is mystery. We get our eyes opened in the apprehension of Christ as God's Lamb—He who, to substantiate His title to this earth, went down; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and, like a sheep dumb before his shearer so opened He not His mouth. As we

contemplate Him in that way, withdrawing from human glory that He might tread a path of shame and suffering, we shall get our eyes opened to the true character of the brazen-fronted harlot, who would claim our allegiance, and—if it might be—ensnare us in her sins. If you touch her you will be caught, and as caught you will learn too late, to your cost, that her guests are in the depths of hell.

This last call is an extremely solemn one. If these calls eventuate in movement in any of our souls to Christ, they will not have been pointed out in vain. One's desire has been not merely to indicate the evils from which we have been called by God to withdraw, but to shew how Christ is presented in some peculiar light that our souls may be drawn over in affection to Himself. May we count nothing loss that will help us in His testimony here, and will endear to us His Person.

