

NOTTINGHAM, ENGLAND,
November 8th, 1881.

MY DEAR SIR—Permit me though a stranger to assure you, that I can never feel sufficiently thankful that out of the thousands of copies of your book, "*Food for Thinking Christians*" distributed in this town—a copy fell into my hands; apparently it was the merest accident; but really I regard it as a direct providence. It has thrown light upon subjects which have perplexed me for years; and has made me feel more than ever, what a glorious book the Bible is, how worthy of our profoundest study. At the same time, I came from the study of your book with the conviction that a very large proportion of the Theology of our Churches and Schools, is the merest scraps of human notions, and that our huge *systems of Theology* upon the study of which, some of us have spent so many laborious years—only to be the worse confused and perplexed—are infinitely more the work of mistaken men, than the inspiration of the allwise God.

However I may differ from the book in a few minor details, I found the main argument to be resistless, commending itself to both my head and my heart. Again let me thank you on my own behalf, for the good I have received.

I find at the close of it, you make an offer to send copies to any who have reason to believe they can make a good use of them. In my church and congregation, there is a number of intelligent persons who are interested in the second coming, and who would be only too glad to read your book,

I could distribute 60 or 70 copies with advantage, you say, "ask and ye shall receive"—I have faith in your generosity. Believe me to remain yours, Most faithfully

LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY,
November 22, 1881.

GENTLEMEN—Having read with the most profound interest your publication entitled; "*Food for Thinking Christians*," and being fairly dazzled by the wonderful light it reveals on the great "subject," I find myself thirsting for more knowledge from this seemingly inspired pen.

Therefore in accordance with the invitation extended by you on the cover of this little work I ask that you send me a few copies of "*The Tabernacle and its Teachings*," if in print.

With reference to the first named book, permit me to say, that I have never yet read or heard anything equal to that little volume in its influence upon my heart and life; and to my mind, it answers most grandly and conclusively the great question, "Is life worth living." Such views as it sets forth, are bound to find response in the minds and hearts of all unbiased thinking christians, for they bear the stamp of something greater than mere human conception. I only wish we could hear it from the pulpits; but I think this must shortly follow. It is good seed and in its "*due time*" will come forth.

Believe me, I am

Very Truly Yours

"A LITTLE WHILE"

A little while, our fightings shall be over;
A little while, our tears be wiped away;
A little while, the presence of Jehovah
Shall turn our darkness into Heaven's bright day.

A little while, the fears that oft surround us
Shall to the memories of the past belong;
A little while, the love that sought and found us
Shall change our weeping into Heaven's glad song

A little while! Oh, blessed expectation!
For strength to run with patience, Lord we cry;
Our hearts up-leap in fond anticipation.
Our union with the Bridegroom draweth nigh.

—Selected.

A little while! His presence goes before us,
A fire by night, a shadowy cloud by day;
His banner, love-inscribed, is floating o'er us;
His arm almighty is our strength and stay.

A little while! 'Tis ever drawing nearer—
The brighter dawning of that glorious day,
Blest Saviour, make our spirits' vision clearer,
And guide, oh, guide us in the shining way.

"YE ARE GODS"

"I have said, Ye are Gods; and all of you are children of the Most High. But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes" [literally heads]. Psa. 82:6.

Our high calling is so great, so much above the comprehension of *men*, that they feel that we are guilty of blasphemy when we speak of being "*new creatures*"—not any longer human, but "*partakers of the divine nature*." When we claim on the scriptural warrant, that we are begotten of a divine nature and that Jehovah is thus our father, it is claiming that we are divine beings—hence all such are Gods. Thus we have a family of God, Jehovah being our father, and all his sons being brethren and joint-heirs: Jesus being the chief, or first-born.

Nor should we wonder that so few discern this grand relationship, into the full membership of which, we so soon hope to come. The apostle tells us that "*the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God . . . neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned*." (1 Cor. 2:14). Just so it was, when our great Head and Lord was among men: He, having consecrated the human at 30 years of age was baptized of the spirit, and became a part-taker of the divine nature. When Jesus said he was a *son of God* the Jews were about to stone him, reasoning thus, that if a son of God, he was making himself to be also a God, or of the God family. [Just what we claim. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God"—"The God and Father of our Lord Jesus hath begotten us."] (1 John 3:2 and 1 Pet. 1:3).

Jesus does not deny that when he said he was a son, it implied that he was of the divine nature, but he quotes to them the above passage from the Psalms as being good authority and it seems as though it satisfied them, for they did not stone him. Jesus said, "Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are Gods?" Then he proceeds to show that the "*Gods*" there mentioned, are the ones who receive obediently his words and example, and concludes his argument by asking whether if God calls such ones as receive his (Jesus,) teachings, Gods, whether they think that he the teacher, whom the Father had specially set apart as the head of *those Gods* could be properly said to blaspheme, when he claimed the

same relationship as a son of God. (John 10:35).

These sons of God, like him from whom they heard the word of truth by which they are begotten, are yet in disguise; the world knoweth us not for the same reason that it knew him not. Our Father puts no outward badge or mark of our high relationship, but leaves each to walk by faith and not by sight all through the earthly pilgrimage—*down into death*. His favor and love and the Glory and Honor which belong to our station, we can now see by the eye of faith, but soon it will be realized in fact. Now we appear like *men*, and all die naturally like *men*, but in the resurrection we will rise in our true character as Gods.

"It doth not yet appear
How great we must be made;
But when we see him as he is,
We shall be like our Head."

How forcibly this is expressed by the prophet and how sure it is too, Jesus says—It cannot be broken: "I have said ye are Gods, all of you sons of the Most High. But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes." [lit. *heads*—Adam and Jesus are the two heads.]

Then the whole family—head and body are addressed as one, as they will be under Christ their head, saying—"Arise O God, judge [rule, bless] the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations." The Mighty God, and everlasting Father of the nations, is Christ whose members in particular we are. He it is that shall inherit all things and He it is that promised his body that they too should have power over the nations, and of whom Paul says "Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world?"

How forcible this scripture in connection with the thought that *all* must die like men—like the (last) one of the heads. [See article "Who Can Hear It."—November Number, 1881, Z. W. T.]

Christ
is
God

"The Word Was With God, and the Word Was . . . "?

FEW passages in the Bible have received more attention in the churches of Christendom than John 1:1. The way it reads in many Bible versions is similar to that of the *King James Version*: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God [ὁ θεός], and the Word was God [θεός]."

Many who accept the Trinity point to this passage in support of their doctrine. The verse, however, has been rendered differently in some translations, with the acknowledgment that the original Greek reveals a difference that is hidden in renderings such as the above.

In 1984 there appeared in English a translation from German of a commentary by scholar Ernst Haenchen (*Das Johannes-evangelium. Ein Kommentar*). It renders John 1:1: "In the beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with God, and divine [of the category divinity] was the Logos." —*John 1. A Commentary on the Gospel of John Chapters 1-6*, page 108, translated by Robert W. Funk.

When comparing Genesis 1:1 with the first verse of John's Gospel, this commentary observes: "John 1:1, however, tells of something that was in existence already in time primeval; astonishingly, it is not 'God.' . . . The Logos (we have no word in either German or English that corresponds to the range of meaning of the Greek term) is thereby elevated to such heights that it almost becomes offensive. The expression is made tolerable only by virtue of the continuation in 'and the Logos was in the presence of God,' viz., in intimate, personal union with God."

Does that sound as if scholar Haenchen

discerned in the Greek some distinction between God and the Logos, or Word? The author's following words focus on the fact that in the original language no definite article is used with the word *the-os*, or god, in the final phrase. The author explains:

"In order to avoid misunderstanding, it may be inserted here that θεός [*the-os*] and ὁ θεός [*ho the-os*] ('god, divine' and 'the God') were not the same thing in this period. Philo has therefore written: the λόγος [Logos] means only θεός ('divine') and not ὁ θεός ('God') since the logos is not God in the strict sense. . . . In a similar fashion, Origen, too, interprets: the Evangelist does not say that the logos is 'God,' but only that the logos is 'divine.' In fact, for the author of the hymn [in John 1:1], as for the Evangelist, only the Father was 'God' (ὁ θεός; cf. 17:3); 'the Son' was subordinate to him (cf. 14:28). But that is only hinted at in this passage because here the emphasis is on the proximity of the one to the other."

Then Haenchen observes: "It was quite possible in Jewish and Christian monotheism to speak of divine beings that existed alongside and under God but were not identical with him. Phil 2:6-10 proves that. In that passage Paul depicts just such a divine being, who later became man in Jesus Christ. . . . Thus, in both Philippians and John 1:1 it is not a matter of a dialectical relationship between two-in-one, but of a personal union of two entities."—Pages 109, 110.

Hence, rather than saying that the Logos (Jesus) was with God and was God, John 1:1 explains that the Logos was with the Almighty God and was divine, or was a god.

B.S.
32

By J. F. [unclear]

fuse men and turn them away from the truth of the Bible.

Briefly, the Scriptures state that Jehovah is the only God; that his creature man sinned and was sentenced to death; that no man was able to redeem his brother from death; that God in his loving-kindness sent to earth his Son, the Logos, whose life was transferred from spirit to human; that he died as a man and as a substitute for the sinner, and that God raised up Jesus out of death; that God will now establish his kingdom with Christ Jesus as the Head thereof, and that through that kingdom all the families of the earth shall have the opportunity to receive the blessings of life. The Scriptures furthermore show that Christ must reign until he has destroyed all enemies, which includes the Devil himself. To be sure, the Devil would do everything possible to confuse the people and prevent them from learning these truths, and he has brought forth the "trinity" for that very purpose.

The fact that the trinity has been taught by men for centuries adds nothing to its value. The time has now come when the people must learn the truth, because the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Now the people must choose for themselves as to what they will believe. If you want to learn God's truth you must take your Bible, and not the unsupported statements of imperfect men. In Ephesians it is written that God's

W.T.B.S.
1932

purpose is to gather together all things unto Christ and to make him ruler over all, subject only to Jehovah God, and that there is one Lord Jesus Christ, and one God, the Father of all, who is above all. A knowledge of God and his beloved Son, as set forth in the Bible, means that one has learned the way to life. That knowledge is of first importance to every one.

Jehovah is the only true God. The Logos, who afterwards became Jesus, was, when he was on earth, a man. He was raised from the dead a divine creature and is the great King whom God has placed upon his throne. In this kingdom not only will these errors be destroyed by being taken away from the people, but all imperfections will be removed from the human race and the obedient ones of mankind will know the truth and follow the truth, and, doing so, will be restored to perfection of mind and body and give praise to Jehovah God, who is worthy of all praise. The last book of the Bible is called Revelation. It is that "Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants". Surely Jesus did not give himself that Revelation. As further proof that the trinity doctrine is false, at the very beginning of Revelation Jesus said: "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore." This is proof that Jesus is not God, because Jehovah never died. He is from everlasting to everlasting.

trary: Paul's letters, weighty with logical reasoning, do not even mention the subjects upon which sectarians do most insist, and which are by them generally made tests of fellowship.

Paul said nothing about an everlasting torture of sinners; he said nothing whatever about a mysterious trinity, in which three Gods are incomprehensibly one God and at the same time three Gods; he said not a word about man being of a nature such as *could not die but must live* everlastingly, in a place of either pleasure or woe; he said nothing, either, about the present life ending all trial for all classes; and he entered into no entangling discussion about the bread and wine used in commemoration of the Lord's death—as to transubstantiation or consubstantiation; yet it can easily be discerned that he was not in harmony with any of these errors.

Notice particularly, however, that without so much as mentioning a single one of these sectarian tests of fellowship, Paul declares: "I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God." (Acts 20-27) From this it is very evident that none of these points, which are today regarded as the very essence and substance of Christian doctrine and as the proper tests of faith, are the *one faith*, or in any sense or degree parts of "the faith once delivered unto the saints."—Jude 3

The one faith, which all should hold, was a very simple one, one so simple that all, the learned and the unlearned alike could grasp it and comprehend it, and be "fully persuaded in their own minds" concerning it. It was not a dose of incongruous mysteries, inconsistent with themselves and unharmonious with reason as well as with the Bible, to be swallowed by the ignorant with credulity, and by the learned with hypocritical mental reservations; but it was so simple, and clear, and reasonable, that any and every honest follower of Christ could be fully persuaded in his own mind concerning it.

What was this one faith? The basis of it is stated by Paul thus: "I delivered unto you first of all, that which I also received [first of all—as a foundation truth or doctrine, upon and in harmony with which all other doctrines must be built], how that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures." (1 Cor. 15:3, 4) "There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."—1 Tim. 2:5, 6.

This, in a word confesses sin and utter helplessness; it acknowledges God's loving plan for our redemption; it owns that our Lord's death was our ransom price; and that forgiveness (justification), and reconciliation to God, and the restoration of believers, come as a result of faith in this Redeemer, when in due time it is made known to each and all.

These brief statements contain the whole gospel, in the same sense that an acorn contains an oak tree. Without this gospel kernel, the true gospel can never be possessed; hence this must be insisted on as a test of Christian fellowship. This must be received, else the gospel is not received. When it is received the gospel is received. Then a work of growth begins—a development of this gospel. It may vary in rapidity of growth according to temperament and surroundings; it can develop into a twig, a sapling, a sturdy oak successively, but the nature of the seed will appertain to it in every stage of its development. So is faith—the true faith: it must begin with the one kind of seed-faith in all, no matter what stage of development each may attain. This one gospel acknowledges man's fall and sinfulness, and God's mercy and love manifested through Christ's great work of redemption, forgiveness and final restoration of all the willing and obedient, but of no others. All theories, and they are many, which omit any of these items are spurious.

Some deny God's love in the matter, and claim that all the love was Christ's, and that he interposed and thwarted the Father's original plan; but those of the one faith are guided by our Lord's own testimony, that God so loved the world that he devised the plan as it is being carried forward, and sent his only begotten Son to do what he has done and is yet to do for the world. (John 3:16, 17) Others deny that any redemption was accomplished by the death of our Lord Jesus, deny that his life was substituted as a corresponding price or "ransom for all," and claim that the Father does all by simply pardoning the sinners. But again the one faith is clearly pointed out by the words of Paul—"There is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus who gave himself a ransom [corresponding price] for all."

When received into honest hearts, this simple gospel, the

true gospel, will gradually open up and spread its roots of reason and its branches of hope in every direction, feeding upon the promises of God, building itself up as he designed, and grasping, as it progresses, the "one baptism" (See Tower, June 15, '93) and every other feature of the gospel in its fulness.

Note the difference between this, God's test, on the simple first principles of the gospel, and the wrong course of men who attempt to enforce upon all an entire system of faith (and that when they are the merest babes in Christ), so fettering them, then, that their growth is hindered. To ask babes in Christ to assent to thirty or forty articles of faith arranged by fellow-men, and to agree to take those as the infallible truth, and to promise never to believe either more or less than they contain, is like selecting in an orchard one gnarled and crooked tree, as a standard, and requiring all the other trees to be padded out to make them look as thick and as gnarled as the sample, and to be bound with iron bands that they might never grow larger or straighter.

This true gospel, this simple faith, easily understood and confessed by the weakest babe in Christ, must also be, and always, and equally, the faith of the most developed sons of God. This one faith (and not the endless ramifications and details of faith which lead out from it) Paul placed as a standard or test of all claiming the name Christian. All the consecrated who agreed on this one standard, or foundation truth, Paul counted as in and of the one church. While each member was to grow in grace, knowledge and love, there would always be harmony and oneness in the faith and fellowship of the church, if all growth were kept in line and harmony with his foundation truth.

Here was a perfect basis of union, which allowed for all the various stages of individual development in the truth, and which most effectually guarded against errors. For if this simple creed were today made the standard by which all doctrines should be tested, it would speedily lead to the discarding of every error and to the true union of the church in the "one Lord, one faith and one baptism."

The endeavor to compel all men to think alike on all subjects, culminated in the great apostasy and the development of the great Papal system; and thereby the "gospel," the "one faith," which Paul and the other apostles set forth, was lost—buried under the mass of uninspired decrees of popes and councils. The union of the early church, based upon the simple gospel and bound only by love, gave place to the bondage of the church of Rome—a slavery of God's children, from the degradation of which multitudes are still weak and suffering.

The Reformation movement of the sixteenth century came as an effort to regain liberty of conscience; but, deluded by the idea of an elaborate creed, insisted upon for so many centuries, the reformers and their followers formed other systems of bondage very similar to that of Papacy, though slight modifications gave liberty to fuller ideas on some subjects. And so it has been ever since: each new reform movement has made the failure of attempting to make a creed just large enough for its prime movers.

A "CHURCH TRUST" UNDESIRABLE

But while division in the church of Christ are very wrong, and very contrary to the will and word of our Lord, they are better far than a union in bondage under Papacy's system, creed, etc., Instead, therefore, of attempting to get all the sects to combine in a sort of "church trust," an image or likeness of the Papal system of oneness (though on a higher plane), to regulate and restrict further investigation and further growth, we need to do the very opposite—to abolish all sects and all elaborate creeds and confessions of faith. Instead of being further bound (by such a church trust union—or wheel within a wheel, double imprisonment), all bondage should be set aside, except the simple tests first imposed in the one faith once delivered to the saints; and all party sectarian names should be repudiated, and the name of Christ should be the only name borne by his church.

Such a breaking down of sectarian fences would leave the true children of God willing to accept the original and simple test—"all one in Christ Jesus;" and this is what is needed. It would destroy sectarian pride, which so often counterfeits true Christian zeal and love, but it would tend to develop the truth, and thereby to develop the real zeal for the truth which our Lord desires in his followers. The term Church of Christ would no longer mean to any "our denomination," but, when they would sing,

"I love thy church, O God,
Her walls before thee stand,
Dear as the apple of thine eye,
And graven on thy hand,"