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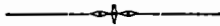
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is a question of fact; so the Apostles put it in their first preaching as "witnesses" of the resurrection, and to such regard of it we should try to compel questioners now. Let the testimony to Christ's resurrection be examined as to its character and circumstance; let the reality of the conviction to which contemporaries were led be also noted; let the extraordinary results which followed conviction be observed, and let the unparalleled purity and goodness which Christ injected into humanity be taken into consideration in connection, and if prejudice be absent, the decision can hardly fail to be, "The Lord is risen indeed," "Whom we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus."

A. D. MACNAMARA,
Canon of Cork.



ART. IV.—SAYINGS OF JESUS.

SPIRITURAL INSIGHT.

WHEN Jesus began to teach, there was no small stir about what we should call His religious and political opinions. He Himself took no side, espoused the cause of no party. He saw beneath and above all "views," and spoke with "authority," not as the scribes, who had been the traditional guides of popular thought and interpreters of the Scripture.

Thus teachers and leaders of all sorts repeatedly pressed Him with questions, or tried to entangle Him in His words. Others watched Him closely to see how He would acquit Himself under the public cross-examination to which He was incessantly subjected.

First, these natural enemies, the Pharisees and Herodians, conspired to test Him with a burning question about the authority of the Roman Government. When they were foiled, a third section, the Sadducees, came forward with another carefully prepared test about the resurrection. And after they had been answered in their turn, a fresh inquirer, who had listened with interest, broke the silence which followed by introducing yet another momentous subject, asking, "Master, which is the first commandment of all?" To this Jesus replies by quoting a sentence from Deuteronomy (vi. 4), which follows the summary there given of the law, and saying, "The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first and great command-

ment." Then (after, it would seem, a moment's pause) He added, "And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these." Upon this the man exclaims, "Well, Master, thou hast said the truth. . . . This is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices."

Here was a singularly brave admission, which, however, Jesus immediately accepts, saying to the man who made it, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of heaven." This was great praise, and it becomes significantly greater when we remember to whom, and why, it was given.

He was a scribe, one of a class whom Jesus designated as hypocrites, and on whom He once poured His reiterated "woes." None of the twelve Apostles were chosen from among these men, though they had been most instructed in that law which Jesus came to fulfil. They were the men who withstood Him as a blasphemer of Moses, and a misinterpreter of the Scriptures.

And why did He single out this one for His praise? It was not because he had done kindness to his neighbour, like the Samaritan in the parable; it was not because his prayers had gone up as a memorial before God; it was not because he had showed great faith, like the centurion who trusted to His word; it was not because, like Zacchæus, he had been at pains even to see Him as He passed; it was not because, like Nicodemus, he had been moved by the miracles that He did; it was not for any of these things that Jesus commended this solitary scribe, but because he, being one of the teachers of the law, had understood and admitted the justice of the way in which it ought to be interpreted.

Here is a significant light thrown upon the position and doctrine of Jesus. We might, indeed, say that His teaching mostly turned upon a right estimate of that which had been written. It was this on which He rested at the crisis of His trial in the wilderness, when the tempter urged upon Him the literal acceptance of a promise in the Psalms. It was this to which He tried to point the multitude, whose only notion of Divine food was something which they could eat, like manna, with the mouth. It was in this sense that He spake of His body as a temple. I will not, however, quote other instances in support of what I say, but remind my readers of a notable occasion, when His ministry drew to a close and He felt Himself constrained to expound "in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." This was needful, because they had been long, and were then, generally misapprehended. Men were still "fools and slow of heart" to understand them.

And it was because this one prescient scribe saw beneath

the letter of the law that Jesus spoke to him as He did. The sight of this honest inquirer did not, indeed, reach so far as to show Jesus to him as the Redeemer, the Christ; but he was on the right track. He had got hold of the key which opens the treasure of eternal truth. And it was because of this that Jesus could say to him, "Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God."

The secret of Christian salvation is found or seen through a spiritual apprehension of the Scriptures, as contrasted with the literal. The friends, companions, and colleagues of the scribe whom our Lord commended relied on this last. It was because of their hard verbal reliance on the letter of the law that they opposed and condemned Jesus. And when one of them showed that He placed the unseen above the seen, the moral above the ceremonial, He was honoured with the praise of the Lord.

The winning of this commendation was not to be wondered at. Jesus said of Himself: "The words that I speak unto you, they are *spirit* and they are *life*." And we cannot read the Gospels without seeing that this indicated His way of looking at, and test of, those which had been spoken and written before.

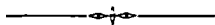
Here is the first lesson we may learn from this notable interview between our Lord and the discreet scribe. It is impossible to over-estimate its weighty significance; for, in fact, it shows the line of cleavage which divides spiritual from materialistic religion in all ages; in our own as well as those which have passed. At any time the man who sees behind, beneath, the outward letter, commandment, ordinance, is not far from the kingdom of heaven.

This rules all true worship and perception of the unseen. This takes a man out of the ranks of those who, having eyes see not, and having ears hear not, neither understand. It puts the believer into a position which the Jews of old had not reached, and leaves him in that presence of the spirit, behind the letter, which marks the liberty of Christ.

To some, probably, this may savour of audacity. They cling to the jots and tittles of sacred writ, and delight or weary themselves with seeing to their minute literal observance, whether these twigs of the tree of revelation are found in the Gospel or the law, the New Testament or the Old. But to the eye that is anywise opened there is incalculable help in the admission of Jesus to the discreet scribe. And any man who has his insight and courage is at any time nearer to the kingdom of God than the student who does not get behind the verbal sentences of the Scriptures which are intended to reveal it. All Christians are invited to notice the atmosphere of

spiritual perception into which the believer is lifted by Christ. The moment one out of a multitude of slaves to the letter was seen to be shaking himself free, he was instantly told by our Lord, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of heaven."

HARRY JONES.



ART. V.—MORE ABOUT THE SEVENTY WEEKS OF DANIEL.

IN November, 1891, an article appeared in the CHURCHMAN on "The Seventy Weeks of Daniel," in which we maintained that those 70 weeks began with the Decree of Artaxerxes, in the twentieth year of his reign, giving permission to Nehemiah "to restore and to build Jerusalem" (Neh. ii. 1-9). This *terminus a quo* of the 70 weeks was, according to Ussher, in the year B.C. 454.¹ The 70 weeks are divided, in Daniel ix. 25, into 7 weeks, 62 weeks and 1 week: or, as these are evidently weeks (or hebdomads) of years, not of days, into 49 years, 434 years, and 7 years. The prophet was told, and tells us, that the first two of these three periods would be "unto Messiah, the Prince," and that after the second of them, the 62 weeks, or 434 years, the Messiah would be cut off (verse 26). The remaining period of "one week" is dealt with in verse 27. It is there divided "in the midst," giving us obviously, as it seems to us, the same prophetic period as we find in Daniel vii. 25; xii. 7, 11; Revelation xi. 3; xii. 6, 7, 14; xiii. 5—as the "time, times, and an half," the 1,260 or 1,290 days, the 42 months of Antichrist's prevailing, and, let us add, as surely we may, the shortened days of the great tribulation predicted by our Lord in Matt. xxiv. 22. It is interesting to observe that this same period of $3\frac{1}{2}$ years corresponds with what seems to have been the period of the ministry and, alas! the rejection of the true Christ. This correspondence between two such periods can hardly be accidental. The Christ of the one period came in His Father's name, and men received Him not. The Antichrist of the other period will come in his own name, and him they will receive—to their ruin.

¹ The reader is requested to refer to the correction of two mistakes in the writer's figures on p. 75 of the November CHURCHMAN (1891), which he will find on p. 153 of the December number; according to which B.C. 454 is given as the date of the twentieth of Artaxerxes, instead of B.C. 444. Let 4 years be deducted from 454, according to the truer date of the Nativity, and let 33 years be added to the 450 for the earthly life of our Lord; the result will be 483 years, or 49+434 years, *i.e.*, 7 weeks and 62 weeks, unto Messiah the Prince, His entering as King into Jerusalem, and His "cutting off" a few days after.