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**North Road Chapel (Evangelical)
BIDEFORD**

Lessons from John's Gospel

chapter seventeen

"And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to Thee. Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, as We are" (John 17:11).

The previous article in this series was centred around the phrase, "*I come to Thee*", the ascension of Christ and His return to the Father as the mighty Victor. There are further aspects of truth concerning His return to heaven which must be considered.

The eternal Son of God, prior to His incarnation, is described as being "*in the bosom of the Father*" (John 1:18). This indicates hallowed intimacy, a place of indescribable favour. God said to Abraham concerning Isaac, "*thine only son whom thou lovest*" (Genesis 22:2). Such words were infinitely more true of the affinity of the relationship within the Godhead. The eternal Son enjoyed the incomprehensible favour of the Father. Could this sacred intimacy be in any degree weakened by the Son's incarnation? Would the fact that He had been **made sin** and was now returning to heaven in His mediatorial capacity as the **Man** Christ Jesus, still bearing the marks of being numbered with the transgressors, result in a less ardent relationship? Such questions are answered by a resounding **No**, He is still the only begotten of the Father, God's beloved Son, peerless, incomparable and unrivalled. Upon His ascension into heaven, the Father immediately sat Him at His right hand; "*The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool*" (Psalm 110:1); "*Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession*" (Psalm 2:6,8).

In ancient times, it was a custom with potentates to grant those who had found great favour in their sight, anything which they might ask; examples of this are given in Holy Writ. *"And it was so, when the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, that she obtained favour in his sight: and the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre that was in his hand. So Esther drew near, and touched the top of the sceptre. Then said the king unto her, What wilt thou, queen Esther? and what is thy request? It shall be even given thee to the half of the kingdom"* (Esther 5:2,3). *"When Herod's birthday was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod. Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask"* (Matthew 14:6,7). It is after this manner that God the Father says to His Son, *"Ask of Me and I shall give Thee"*. By this it is seen that the Son has the same position of intimacy and glory now as Mediator, as He had in eternity, before He took flesh and blood at His incarnation.

Another matter to be considered which also centres around our Lord's return to heaven are these words to His own, *"I go to prepare a place for you"* (John 14:2). In the light of other Scriptures this can appear strange, for in Matthew's gospel Christ is depicted as a King who, in a coming day, will separate the sheep from the goats; *"Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world"* (Matthew 25:34). If the kingdom was prepared for God's elect sheep from the foundation of the world and it was the decree of the Almighty to bring all the heirs of promise into it, how can the Saviour's words, *"I go to prepare a place for you"* be understood?

The Christian's inheritance is a free gift through the sovereign grace of God the Father. He determined it from all eternity. Nevertheless, although a free gift to the repentant sinner, it had to be purchased by

another, that One was Christ the Son of God. He paid the ransom price for the sinner's guilt to be cancelled and so enable the gift to be given. It must be understood that all those of the election of grace *"were by nature the children of wrath, even as others"* (Ephesians 2:3). Heaven's door was shut to them, as to all men, because of their sin. Christ the Mediator, having discharged the debt and purchased redemption for that chosen number, returned to heaven as their legal representative and Head, to unlock the door and so prepare the way for their entry.

When Christ ascended into heaven, He entered not as a private individual; He had the names of all the elect for whom He had made propitiation, graven upon Him. As Head, He possessed heaven on behalf of every one for whom He stood surety, just as a legal guardian will take up possessions on behalf of an heir who as yet has not come of age. At the present time the Mediator occupies heaven as a 'right' on behalf of all His redeemed ones, until each of them is called home; He keeps possession on their behalf. He ascended to make all necessary preparations for the moment of their entry. This is the meaning of those words, *"Whither the Forerunner is for us entered"* (Hebrews 6:20).

Another Biblical analogy is that Christ is the Captain of our salvation (cf Hebrews 2:10), as such He leads the advance. All this is so reassuring; our Captain has taken up quarters for Himself and all those He has redeemed. The resurrection and ascension into heaven of our Redeemer is the infallible pledge of our resurrection and entry into the Father's house, for He is the first fruits of all who sleep in Jesus (cf 1 Corinthians 15:20). All the preparations for our entry are in His invincible hands. Whenever we die, our place is ready, all the arrangements have been made, no power on earth or hell can prevent our entry.

"O my Lord how great the wonders
Thy rich grace has wrought for me!
On Thy love my spirit ponders,
Praising, magnifying Thee;
Hallelujah
To the great eternal Three!

He has all my sins forgiven,
Paid my debt and made me free,
Vanquished hell and opened heaven,
And prepared a place for me;
My Redeemer
Loved me from eternity.

The people of God are a sanctified people, set apart by God in an eternal decree. They are also cleansed and justified by the work of Christ, redeemed by His precious blood. This now leads on to another aspect of truth which is vitally linked with the Lord's ascension, that is His high-priestly function. The high priest of the Old Covenant could not enter into the inner sanctuary without the blood of the sacrifice. *"Into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people"* (Hebrews 9:7). Upon the breastplate which he wore were inscribed the names of the twelve tribes of Israel; these were the people whom Aaron the high priest represented. He brought the blood of the victim which had been slain, and presented it before God as a propitiation for their sins; it was an atonement for those people whose names he bore.

This is a wonderful prefiguration of Christ in His ascension - His coming to the Father. *"I come to Thee"* are His words in the verse under consideration. He comes to God the Father in the office of great High Priest with His own blood. *"But Christ being come an high priest*

of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Hebrews 9:11,12 & 24). What assurance and peace does this bring to the believer. It is not that Christ appeared once before His Father on our behalf; the Scripture explicitly states, it is "**now to appear**" - present tense. He entered once into the holy place with His own blood and He **remains** there, He **now** appears. The glorified bodily presence of our great High Priest is ever before the Father, with the names of all those redeemed graven upon Him, His own blood also is there **now**, never out of view. Do we as the people of God appreciate this, that even **now**, this very moment as we read this article, Christ appears in the presence of God **for us**? He never ceases to show His own sin-cleansing blood on our behalf.

"Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession" (Hebrews 4:14). Our Lord and Saviour has passed into the heavens, there to look after the interest of all His redeemed people whilst they are still on the earth, and as they pass into their eternal inheritance, to open the door to each one, escorting them into all the blessings prepared.

In His high-priestly capacity, Christ is also termed the "*minister of the sanctuary*" (Hebrews 8:2). This sets Him forth as the Servant working on behalf of His people. What grace and condescension is again shown by this! Despite the high honour and exaltation which is His, "*who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens*" (Hebrews 8:1), bearing a name which is above every name

(cf Philippians 2:9), He forever acts as a minister of the sanctuary for His people. When the chief butler was restored to his former position and honour from the Egyptian prison, we are told that he forgot Joseph (cf Genesis 40:23). The child of God can rest assured that although Christ is advanced to the very pinnacle of heavenly honour, He will never forget us, His redeemed people. These thoughts are beautifully encapsulated by the verses of Michael Bruce:

"Where high the heavenly temple stands,
The house of God not made with hands,
A great High Priest our nature wears,
The Saviour of mankind appears.

He who for men their Surety stood,
And poured on earth His precious blood,
Pursues in heaven His mighty plan,
The Saviour and the friend of man.

Partaker of the human name,
He knows the frailty of our frame,
And still remembers in the skies
His tears, His griefs and agonies.

In every pang that rends the heart,
The Man of sorrows had a part;
He knows and feels our every grief,
And gives the suffering saint relief.

With boldness therefore, at the throne,
Let us make all our sorrows known;
And ask the aid of heavenly power,
To help us in the evil hour".

"Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we

have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:14-16).

The heart of our blessed Saviour is not changed because of His present position of such high dignity and glory. By His ascension and exaltation He is even the more fitted to watch over and minister unto His own, because God has made Him to be head over **all things** to the Church, putting all under His feet (cf Ephesians 1:22); giving Him power over **all** flesh (cf John 17:2), to the end that He, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, might bring the many sons unto glory (cf Hebrews 2:10).

W.H.Molland

The Earth, the Heavens and Man

Primal and Ultimate

The subject before us is of immense importance. It is essential to have an understanding of what is meant by the **earth**, the **heavens** and the God-appointed role of **man** in this sphere.

Primal Creation

At creation, amidst the vast universe which was brought into existence by the Word of Almighty God, was the planet frequently referred to in Scripture as the **earth**, with the cosmic arrangement essential to it, often designated the lower **heavens**.

When the creation of this part of the universe was effected, the firmament established, dry land and water separated, seasons brought into being by the positioning of the sun, moon and other planets of the same particular system, the creation of all life, botanical, marine, animal and bird, the Creator pronounced it all good (cf Genesis 1:1-25). Thus was the creation of planet earth and its solar system finalized. Then God created **man** in His own image and likeness, to have dominion over this section of His creation (cf Genesis 1:26,27). This is a tenet of the faith which must be grasped, that man was expressly brought into being to have dominion; the world was his domain. He could rightly be designated the King of the Earth, answerable to none, other than the King Eternal.

Man was a most noble being. He differed from angelic creatures in that he was tripartite, comprising of spirit, soul and body (cf 1 Thessalonians 5:23), his body being actually formed from the dust of the ground - earth. This was prior to the earth being cursed; the basic elements of Adam's body were from an un-cursed earth. By the very mode of man's creation it is shown that he was inseparably connected with earth; he was an integral part of that particular planet. Being created corporeal, that is, having a body of flesh and blood, he breathed the air of earth's atmosphere; it was native to him. He had bone and muscle, possessed intellect and ability, thus was he perfectly equipped to fulfil his God-appointed vocation, namely to have dominion and subdue (keep under control) all that pertained to the material planet earth (cf Genesis 1:28).

By creation man was essentially a terrestrial creature, created for earth. Angels are not of that order, they are spirit beings (cf Psalm 68:17; Isaiah 6:1-8; Hebrews 1:13,14; Revelation 5:11 & 7:11). Angels are non-corporeal ministering spirits, created such, having their being in the celestial realm - heaven.

In his most exalted position upon earth as God's viceroy, primal man and his Maker enjoyed the closest of communion, but this perfect man fell. Adam, the federal head of mankind, transgressed, he disobeyed his Creator. Immediately he lost that vital life of his tripartite being, which was spiritual. Although still maintaining his existence upon earth, Adam was now spiritually dead, "*without God in the world*" (Ephesians 2:12). His nobility was gone, his ability to exercise dominion and keep under control that which had been entrusted to him, was lost. No longer could he function to the glory of God; he was now a servant of Satan, a tool in the hands of the Great Adversary.

The inability of man to fulfil his God-given appointment on earth soon became apparent, sin rapidly escalated and with the passing of the millenniums, things have become increasingly worse. On account of Adam's failure it is as stated in Holy Writ, "*The whole world lieth in wickedness*" (1 John 5:19).

What then will be the ultimate outcome? Will God in His own time, totally and eternally annihilate the earth which He created? Will man, who was created such an illustrious being and given great authority, be entirely blotted out of existence in the end? Could there be some of mankind, if only a minority, who would find favour with God and possibly have an everlasting spirit existence in the celestial realm with the angelic creation? The final answer to all these questions is, No!

God created the earth and man to have dominion of that sphere. Was the Creator defeated in His purpose? Did man so ruin the plan of Almighty God that He, the Creator, had to abandon it, letting the planet and its inhabitants continue its ever increasing, sinful spiral for a few millenniums, pending a Divine act of complete extermination? No! The eternal God never forsakes the work of His hands. The planet was created for God's glory; Adam was created king over it; earth is man's

domain. This will never be altered, for it concerns the mind and purpose of an infallible God who never changes course.

By his fall Adam, and in consequence the whole human race, lost title (the legal right) to earth. This does not mean that the natural man has no rights whatsoever upon it. All the sons of Adam are members of the human community; they are citizens of the respective nations of earth into which they were born, therefore they enjoy the rights which the laws of their particular government give them. They may prosper and hold the deeds of a large estate, have a stake in industry or be majority share-holders in multi-national companies. All such positions are held by right, but this is civil right and it all is subject to change. These rights are not the same as given to Adam when he was created. Man now in his natural fallen state has no ultimate rights, his future is outer darkness, he is reserved unto judgment (cf Matthew 25:30, Jude v.13).

Questions may now be in the mind of the reader such as: Does not the Scripture state that we shall inherit the earth (cf Matthew 5:5); "*we shall reign on the earth*" (Revelation 5:10)? Do not these promises ultimately pertain to man? Yes, but not in his fallen state. These promises are made to regenerated men and women, those who by the grace of God, through the redeeming work of the Lord Jesus Christ, have been born of the Holy Spirit. They are new creatures in Christ, now incorporated into His kingdom, a spiritual people, not of the world (cf John 17:14) but strangers and pilgrims on the earth (cf Hebrews 11:13). These spiritual people have title to a new earth in a future day.

Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God, is the Mediator between God and men (cf 1 Timothy 2:5). He is appointed heir of all things (cf Hebrews 1:2); all His redeemed ones are joint heirs with Him (cf Romans 8:17); to these redeemed men it is clearly stated, "*Things*

present or things to come, all are yours" (1 Corinthians 3:22). This is the honoured position of all who are of Christ's kingdom, they have the rights and privileges of that kingdom which knows no change, the Supreme Ruler being the King Eternal. He is Lord of all - not earth, many will say; the Devil, the prince of the power of the air who got into Eden at the beginning, he holds sway on earth now. God is going to burn up this planet; here we have no enduring substance. Isolated texts will be brought forward in an endeavour to substantiate these beliefs, but it is not a complete presentation of that which God has set out in His Word. All Scripture must be kept within the aggregate of truth. Each section in Holy Writ is but a part of the total embodiment of Divine revelation.

It is clearly stated that Jesus Christ is the Prince of the kings of the earth (cf Revelation 1:5). As He was about to return to heaven as man, He said, *"All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth"* (Matthew 28:18). Christ is now at God's right hand; He is above (or over) all principalities, powers, dominions in this world and that which is to come (cf Ephesians 1:19-21). As He, the Mediator, sits at the right hand of the Majesty on high, He expressly states, *"The heaven is My throne"*, then He immediately adds, *"The earth is My footstool"* (Isaiah 66:1). It must be firmly grasped that although seated in heaven, Christ sits there as Man, not as an angel or in spirit form. He is now forever the Mediator, the Man Christ Jesus (cf 1 Timothy 2:5). Having established from the Scriptures these essential points of doctrine pertaining to the primal creation of earth, heaven and man, we move now to the second part of the article.

Ultimate Creation

Many secretly ponder the future of the earth, the heavens and man, often with obscure thoughts and conclusions. It has to be said

concerning the natural man, who has no knowledge or vital experience of God's great salvation, that his future is one of everlasting woe, outer darkness (cf Matthew 22:13 & 25:30), a place of eternal torment (cf Luke 16:19-26), a fact which is intensely solemn. Fallen man has no rights or title to any blessings other than the natural, temporary, civil rights which he may enjoy for his brief life upon this fallen earth.

However the matter now to be addressed is the ultimate state of the earth, the heavens and redeemed man. The multiplicity of prophetic interpretations and outlines of events in the 'end time' (many of which are highly speculative and totally lacking in sound Biblical exegesis), have caused much confusion, rather than furnishing the believer with the glorious hope of the eternal future. Plans and charts depicting future events and developments, how prophecy will unfold (as these so-called prophetic students see it), have been produced in profusion. Many wild predictions have been propagated, asserting imminent future events which have never materialized, indeed oftimes the reverse has been the case. Almost the last words of the Great Head of the Church to His own before He went back to heaven were, *"It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power"* (Acts 1:7); His clear command to His disciples being, *"Occupy till I come"* (Luke 19:13).

The eternal state is the glorious subject now to be considered and upon it there are many clear statements in Holy Writ; we look at just a few.

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and

God Himself shall be with them, and be their God" (Revelation 21:1-3).

"Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind" (Isaiah 65:17).

"We, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Peter 3:13).

"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth" (Matthew 5:5).

We have been made "unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth" (Revelation 5:10).

The definite reference to **earth** will be observed in all these Scriptures. By posing a question, the link should become apparent. For what realm was man created? - Earth. *"Let him have dominion"* was the word spoken concerning the planet upon which man was placed; God's sovereign purpose was for **man** to have dominion over the earth. Does the God of eternity change course? Can it be that an immutable God has been compelled to alter His plans because of the Devil's intrusion into Eden? Is it the intention of the Almighty to call out the election of grace from the earth and having completed this, give them a place in the celestial sphere with unfallen spirit beings to dwell eternally in that realm? Is this to be followed with the utter and total destruction by God, of the earth which was man's domain, having been expressly created for him? Is total annihilation the ultimate for the planet earth? The answer to all these questions is: **No!**

Light is shed upon all this in the book of the Acts of the Apostles, *"Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began"* (Acts 3:21). In this verse Peter is speaking of the ascension of the Mediator, the **Man** Christ Jesus, and His

enthronement and rule in heaven **until** the restitution or restoration of all things. This is not 'Universalism'. The truth being conveyed here is, that Christ reigns supreme in heaven now for the accomplishing of all the Divine purposes. One of those purposes is the restoration of the earth. Peter gives further details, *"Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness"* (2 Peter 3:13). It is all according to *"His promise"* states the apostle. This man Peter was in the congregation when the Lord delivered that amazing sermon on the mount, and he registered that promise; the people of God are *"to inherit the earth"*; we are looking for this, he writes; it is going to be a great and glorious restitution; righteousness is going to dwell on this new earth. A little later John was actually given a revelation of this restoration; he writes, *"I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea"* (Revelation 21:1).

When we read of the new heaven, we are not to think of the *"third heaven"* (2 Corinthians 12:2), or the *"heaven of heavens"* (1 Kings 8:27); that is the dwelling place of the eternal God, it is a realm of intrinsic holiness. There is nothing in that sphere which requires restoration. The heaven referred to in Revelation 21:1 is that area of the universe pertaining to earth and its essential atmosphere, which is a part of the solar system effected at creation and vital to the planet earth. This area, because it is an indissoluble part of earth is defiled by Satan in common with the planet itself. It must always be remembered that the Devil lurks in the lower heavens; he is a prince in that realm - the power of the air (cf Ephesians 2:2); *"Spiritual wickedness in high places"* (Ephesians 6:12), consequently *"the heavens are not clean in His sight"* (Job 15:15); *"It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified"* (Hebrews 9:23).

This new heaven and new earth is the restitution or restoration of these realms; it is not described as 'another', it is said to be 'new'. In order to rightly understand this matter of purification, restitution and restoration, all that is involved must be held together; man, earth and the lower heavens, for the same principle is operative throughout. At spiritual regeneration a man or woman becomes a new creature, but not another person. *"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new"* (2 Corinthians 5:17). It is the original person, but that person has been purified, restored, re-created in Christ, and so has become a new creature. To take this further, Scripture teaches the bodily resurrection of man; it is not resurrection **from** the body, but resurrection **of** the body (cf Romans 8:23).

At death, man's body returns to the dust (earth) from whence it was taken, but in resurrection, that which was sown in corruption will be raised in incorruption, for this corruption **must** put on incorruption (cf 1 Corinthians 15:42,53). On that glorious resurrection morn when man's basic, earthly elements again come together by the mighty power of God, that vast company raised will not be other creatures, they will be the same people. Their corruptible dust will know complete restoration, each body will be *"like unto His (Christ's) glorious body"* (Philippians 3:21); man's personality maintained but made new by this wondrous restitution.

Thus will it be with planet earth and the lower heavens. They are to be burned up; fervent heat will melt and dissolve the elements, is the exact terminology used (cf 2 Peter 3:10). Further evidence of this is given by the inspired Psalmist, *"Of old hast Thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of Thy hands. They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment: as a vesture shalt Thou change them, and they shall be changed"* (Psalm 102:25,26). *"They shall be changed"* - not

annihilated. The underlying Greek word 'to change' is 'to renew'. Just as spiritually the old nature perishes as the flesh is mortified and the inward man renewed (cf 2 Corinthians 4:16), so will the planet earth be changed.

This is the principle maintained throughout pertaining to man, earth and the lower heavens. Man's body goes to corruption returning to dust, awaiting restitution. The planet and its surrounding heavens are to be dissolved; in modern parlance, the atoms will be split and all pertaining to it will be reduced to its basic elements. Then will God 'change', 'renew', bringing out of that crucible new heavens and a new earth. This is exactly what John recorded, "*I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away*" (Revelation 21:1).

Immediately following this glorious vision of the new heavens and a new earth, John saw something infinitely more wonderful, "*And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God And He carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God*" (Revelation 21:2,3,10). This is an amazing section of Holy Scripture which must be registered and pondered. It is the culmination of our faith, the meridian, the point of highest splendour.

As the apostle John looked upon that section of creation which had been so defiled by Satan and marred by sin, dissolve and melt with fervent heat, then perfectly restored, he sees the holy city coming down from God, out of heaven. This is not the lower heavens; this descent is from the heaven of heavens; it is coming down from the

very dwelling place of God. From this third heaven a voice is heard calling John to register and record this stupendous happening, "*Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them*". Where? Upon the **new earth** with **men**.

The whole principle of redemption is embodied in the Mediator, the **Man** Christ Jesus. Man was specifically created for earth, it was his primal title, but he lost it. The Son of God became Man to restore that title and Christ will forever remain Man as Head of all that company whom He has redeemed from Adam's fallen race. Therefore at the restitution of all things, when all that has to be restored has undergone Divine purification and the whole drama finalized, Christ the God-Man will dwell with redeemed mankind in the sphere for which man was primarily created - earth.

The first man, Adam, failed. His position of dominion over the earth he lost. The second Man, the last Adam, who is the Lord from heaven, could not fail (cf 1 Corinthians 15:45-47). He effects the spiritual regeneration of all that remnant of Adam's fallen race who God in sovereign grace has elected. He in the final, will regenerate also the planet for which man was created. Then He, the second Man, the Great Head, will dwell with His redeemed people, forever holding that dominion on the earth which the first man lost.

It is in consequence of all this that the capital of heaven, the holy Jerusalem comes to earth. That which is now His footstool will then be the site of His throne. "*The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it*" (Revelation 22:3). Someone may well be secretly saying, I thought our final destination was heaven. It is perfectly true that the spirits of redeemed men are with Christ in the celestial realm immediately they die, but that is only a temporary condition. Most definitely they are in a far happier state than anything they have known on this fallen earth, but they are "*unclothed*", being "*absent from the*

body" which is in the grave (cf 2 Corinthians 5:1-8). Not until the day of resurrection when spirit, soul and body come together again, will the redemption which is in Christ Jesus be complete. This will be the restitution of man to his tripartite being, as created for earth in the beginning. At this same time will the earth be restored for the habitation of restored man. This is the eternal state.

Earth when restored, will be heaven for redeemed man, for where the throne of the Lamb is, there is heaven; however this is but a part of the eternal kingdom. The redeemed, glorified sons of Adam will serve their God in a dimension which cannot yet be comprehended, reigning with Him throughout endless ages, but the new earth is the centre from which redeemed man will worship and serve, for here is set up the Divine Capital, here the Great Head, the man Christ Jesus will reign supreme for ever and ever (cf Revelation 11:15). The earthly city of Jerusalem was the capital city in Israel, where mortal kings reigned for a season on a cursed earth. The new Jerusalem comes down from God out of the heaven of heavens, hence it is termed the Holy City. It is set up on the new earth. Here in that day, will sit the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords (cf 1 Timothy 6:15), He being their God and they being His people.

Almighty God never changes course or is deflected from His purpose. He brings all His counsel to fruition. He created man for earth and renewed man will inhabit a renewed earth for all eternity.

"The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the thoughts of His heart to all generations" (Psalm 33:11).

"Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure" (Isaiah 46:10).

W.H.Molland

Extracts from the Writings of Erich Sauer Wiedenest, Germany

"In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth". As if cast in bronze, these words stand there defying all atheism, pantheism and materialism There is no statement in the cosmological teaching of other peoples which equals this first sentence of the Bible. In the beginning was not chaos; in the beginning was God God called the world into being out of nothing. The present creation was not to arise out of something open to sense - perception (cf Hebrews 11:3). He, God Himself, is the beginning and as such is the absolute ruler over matter. Everything is His and everything coheres through Him (cf Hebrews 1:3; Colossians 1:17; John 1:3).

He delegated to man a special task linked with his dwelling place Right at the beginning of the Bible, man is described as a royal race: *"Replenish the earth ... subdue it ... have dominion"*! (Genesis 1:28). Here is a call to a kingly control of the world and nature; an appointment to a holy, spiritual nobility God gave man a high task. He was to administer the earth in the holy service of the Most High. He was to be the Creator's viceroy in this region of God's created kingdom".

"Paradise was the beginning of the ways of God with man here on earth But then came sin. In Eden man lost his Eden, and Paradise, this dwelling of delight and loveliness, became the place of a tragic collapse Death entered the human race and in Paradise began man's hell The final history will return to the opening history, and as at the beginning of the ancient earth there existed an earthly paradise, so at the last on the new earth, there will be a heavenly paradise (cf Revelation 22:1-5) The Scripture intimates repeatedly a deep connection between the earth and mankind".

"A new world will emerge from the flames of the old We look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness (cf 2 Peter 3:13). This is the final expectation of Christian faith The new world will not be without connection with the old world. The coming earth is not 'another' but a 'new' one Doubtless the material also will be built in, even if in a manner still incomprehensible to us at present. God does not forsake the work of His hands. Furthermore, He will never give over His glorious material to Satan, His arch-enemy, to possess and destroy Thus God will not annihilate but "*change*" (Psalm 102:26), not reject but redeem, not destroy but set in order, not abolish but create anew, not ruin but transfigure".

Announcement

"The Bringing up of Children"

Five cassettes (10 sermons) preached by Mr Alun McNabb at Priory Road Baptist Church, Dudley. We highly recommend this series on this much neglected subject; they are available for loan or purchase. Enquiries to Mr M.Abbott; conditions as on back page.

Visiting Preacher D.V.

Lord's Day, 7 January 2001 Dr.S.S.Short (Weston-super-Mare)

Preliminary Announcement

Annual Bible Convention D.V.

Saturday, 2 June 2001 Speaker: Mr W.J.Seaton (Inverness)

Editorial

Resurrection of the body is not given the place in the Christian's thinking which the Scriptures demand. Much is said in preaching about the salvation of the soul. At the funeral of believers great emphasis is laid upon the fact that the departed one is now freed from the restriction and weariness of the body and their spirit is "*with Christ which is far better*"; this is gloriously true. The body is laid in the grave, the appropriate Scriptures read, but scant reference is made to the wonder and power of a certain future resurrection of that **same** body. It has already been stated in this magazine that man was created a terrestrial creature; his existence in an unclothed spirit form at death is but a temporary state. God made man - spirit, soul and body and it was in the entirety of his created person that Christ redeemed him. The Christian is not a redeemed soul, he is a redeemed person. The victory of the Mediator over sin, death and hell was not a two-thirds victory, saving only the soul and spirit from spiritual death; the body was equally involved. The **bodily** resurrection of the Saviour is proof of this; it is also the harbinger of the resurrection of our mortal bodies, which must put on immortality (cf 1 Corinthians 15:54). The full effect of Christ's redemption, the final accomplishment of His work of atonement will not be seen or known until this takes place; man must be returned to his primal state. The vile body of humiliation which has gone to corruption will be raised and fashioned like unto Christ's glorified body (cf Philippians 3:21). Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written "*Death is swallowed up in victory*" (1 Corinthians 15:54). Redeemed man, fully restored a tripartite person, will be perfectly fitted for worship and service in his eternal abode, on the new earth. This is the purpose for which he was first created. This is the goal, the glorious consummation of our faith.