

No.
109

**"IF YE THEN BE RISEN WITH CHRIST, SEEK THOSE THINGS WHICH
ARE ABOVE, WHERE CHRIST SITTETH ON THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD."
COL.3.1**

THE BELIEVER AND COMMERCE.

An Address (revised)

***At Forest Gate E.7,
12th November, 1917***

***by
PERCY W. HEWARD***

***Correspondence welcome: Scriptural literature for Believers
Gottlieb-Daimler-Str.1 – 74343 Sachsenheim – GERMANY***

THE BELIEVER AND COMMERCE.

An Address by Mr. P.W.Heward
Forest Gate, Nov. 12, 1917.

Outline:

God's Arrangements, suggestive of His Standpoint:-

1. "A Garden", Gen. 2 (Euphrates very differently used afterwards.)
2. The situation of Jerusalem.
3. The heavenly calling now.
4. Jerusalem, and its contrast with commerce in the future, Isa. 33:21; 60; Ezek. 47:1-5. (Notes on the promised land)

The Attitude of Man.

1. Babylon from Gen. 10 to Rev. 18.
2. Tyre, etc.
Notes on (a) The ephah of Zech. 5, and the last days.
(b) The sad history of nations, and the jealousies of commercialism.

Some Striking Language Used by God.

1. The word "merchant" in Isa. 23:8,11; Hosea 12:7; Zeph. 1:11, Zech. 14:21.
2. The twofold meaning of "merchandise", Ezek. 28:16, (See Lev. 19:16; Prov. 11:13; Jer. 6:28).
3. "The unrighteous mammon".

Commercialism among Israel.

1. Solomon's trading and the Lord's hints. 1 Kings 10:26--11:1.
2. Israel's Navy. 2 Chron. 8:17,18 (9:13), 20:35-37.
3. Warnings in Proverbs, and in such passages as Amos 8:5; Micah 6:10,11 (Neh. 13).
4. "An house of merchandise" and "A den of thieves".
5. Some solemn thoughts from Gen. 37:27,28; and from the life of Judas.

The Lord's people and the Heavenly Calling.

1. The address on the mount, and its true meaning contrasted with Socialistic perversion.
2. The attitude of Acts 2:41-47; 4:32-37.
3. Suitable occupations, 2 Thess. 3:12, Rom 12:17, etc.
4. Commands and silence, in the epistles to guide disciples.
5. The beacon of Demas, the warning of Laodicea, and the history of christendom.

It is our privilege and responsibility, beloved friends, to become acquainted with the mind of God concerning all manner of things. God does not appoint ignorance for His people, He delights that they should have a spiritual perception of His will. There is not a believer present who can boast. We have all made mistakes through ignorance of God's truth. There is not a believer present who can profess to understand all of God's teaching today, but we may receive continual and ever helping fresh instruction. The meek will God guide in judgment, and the meek will He teach His way. We want to know, not that we may be clever, not that we may have a reputation, but for His glory, that we may walk in His ways, that we may delight in His purpose, and that we may be able to guide others whenever God gives us an influence to use for Him. The believer's relationship to the world involves many problems. One of those problems is before us tonight; - "The Believer and Commerce". I want to speak first of God's arrangements set forth in Scripture, suggestive to us, regarding His standpoint. I do long that we may, in mercy, reach God's standpoint more and more. We do not want simply to obtain information upon this subject, and further light upon that subject; but to draw nearer and nearer to God that we may look at things from His standpoint; - thus shall we be kept from many erroneous inferences, and be kept from many sinful actions.

When God first placed man upon the earth, He prepared a garden, and He set Adam in the garden to keep it and to dress it. This was not only an arrangement for Adam. It is not only a portion of earliest history; it is more, even an indication of God's standpoint. God arranged nothing which would suggest the present organization and complexity of human commerce. Somewhat remarkably we are told of the River Euphrates with respect to the garden, and Euphrates was linked with commercial Babylon in after years, but it was first linked with God's garden. When God was pleased to bring Israel out from Egypt, He brought them out that He might bring them in, to give them a land for which He cared, and upon which His eyes were set. That land was a land without a great river. The only river of any size which it possessed did not flow into the sea. That was a set-back to

commerce. The sea coast was arranged in such a way that there was little opportunity for a harbor. Joppa sometimes comes before us as a sea-port, but Joppa has not a well-arranged harbor. The only bay on the Palestine coast was round by mount Carmel. It is true that Tyre became a seaport center in the northern part, even in Phenicia. We do not deny the fact that human ingenuity will conquer difficulties. But God did not arrange the land prepared for commerce. If we were to approach Palestine we should find that not very many miles from the sea-coast the mountains begin to rise. Palestine is mountainous, and the city which God chose was placed upon mountains. It had no river, it had no opportunity for commerce. There we have a further hint of God's standpoint. When He set aside Israel He was pleased to indicate that He was not defeated. Before the temple was destroyed God had been pleased to gather believers out of all nations. The heavenly calling was emphasized before Israel were laid utterly low, even as Eleazar was clothed before Aaron died. God would show that He was not defeated. But what were His arrangements for His people in the present dispensation? We shall come to this subject more fully later on. I will only say now that the commandments of the Lord Jesus presuppose a suffering people who do not seek earth's treasures, who are not engaged in the struggling for earth's riches. The heavenly calling presents a contrast with commercial Babylonianism. When our Saviour shall return, He will not only receive His people unto Himself, but set up His kingdom at Jerusalem. Jerusalem will be geographically changed, it will be lifted up, and around it there will be a plain. Rivers will go out from Jerusalem both ways, BUT we are not only told in Isa. 33:21 that Jerusalem will have the Lord for its true place of broad-waters, but the words are added, that there will be no gallant ship. The river of Ezekiel 47 is too shallow for navigation. We read of fishers, but not of ships. In Isa. 60 there are plenty of imports to Jerusalem; - gold is gathered, silver is a burden. We read of dromedaries, and of other animals approaching that city: imports, for worship; - no exports, no traffic, no exchange. God is the Center,

and the house of His glory is beautified. Thus in all (dispensations) God hints His standpoint, God sets forth that which is so contrary to Human wishes.

Yes, the attitude of man must next come before us. When man sinned he was turned out from the garden, and we see a continuance of sin. First we have brought before us Cain and Abel. The one is engaged with animals, and the other with the ground. But in Cain's family there is a development, - a city is builded, and afterwards we read, not only of those who have cattle, but of the development of music, and of craftsmen, particularly of craftsmen for military prowess. Thus we have a stress upon human skill, and human greatness. It is worthy of notice that the last view of man's glory, where it is laid low in Rev. 18, particularly mentions the removal of musicians and the craftsmen. The earth is soon filled with violence, but we read little as to details. Suffice it to say that God sends a real flood, and sweeps away all but eight persons. Herein we behold His righteous sovereignty after the flood. Men are unchanged. The solemn event has not humbled them. In the family of Ham there arises Nimrod who begins to be a mighty one in the earth. He builds eight CITIES. The glory of man has always centered in cities. Human effort is put forth to make a glorious city in the land of Shinar, and on the site where the Tower of Babel was first attempted, Satan has always kept his eyes. Whether we think of the Babylon on Nimrod, or of the Babylon of Nebuchadnezzar, or the Babylon of Antichrist, we think of the display of man's defiant glory against God, and of its laying low. Babylon is to be a city that will make men a name, God scatters them, but they return to Babylon, and Babylon on the Euphrates becomes a continual center of earthly glory and traffic, especially we think of Rev. 18. Is it not plain that man delights in cities, that man delights in trading, and in the gathering of riches? Babylon, in the plain of Shinar, is the contrast with the mountain Jerusalem. It is man's choice, as contrasted with Zion as Saul was with David. Another city which will illustrate the attitude of man is Tyre, - The nearest great Gentile city to God's possession in Canaan.

Observe Tyre's glory in Isa. 23. It is a joyous city with antiquity of ancient days, - mark the added words, "The crowning city, whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honorable of the earth." Again we read, "Tyre will return to her hire, and commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth, and her MERCHANDISE and her hire shall be holiness to the Lord, It shall not be treasured nor laid up". Here it is plain that God will confiscate the riches of Tyre. Thus we see that man seeks for riches through trading. We think especially of Ezek. 27, "Now thou, son of man, take up a lamentation for Tyrus, and say unto Tyrus, O thou that art situate at the entry of the sea, which art a merchant of the people for many isles, Thus saith the Lord God; O Tyrus, thou hast said, I am of perfect beauty. Thy borders are in the midst of the seas, thy builders have perfected thy beauty. They have made all thy ship boards of fir trees of Senir; they have taken cedars from Lebanon to make masts for thee. Of the oaks of Bashan have they made thine oars; the company of the Ashurites have made thy benches of ivory, brought out of the isles of Chittim. Fine linen with brodered work from Egypt was that which thou spreadest forth to be thy sail; blue and purple from the isles of Elishah was that which covered thee. The inhabitants of Zidon and Arvad were thy mariners: thy wise men, O Tyrus, that were in thee, were thy pilots". Why this great stress upon the ships first? Verse 9 soon mentions "Thy MERCHANDISE", and we have the statement further on in the chapter, of those who were the merchants that traded at Tyre, - "Tarshish was thy merchant by reason of the multitude of all riches: with silver, iron, tin, and lead, they traded in thy fairs. Javan, Tubal, and Meshech, they were thy merchants: they traded the persons of men and vessels of brass in thy market. They of the house of Togarmah traded in thy fairs with horses and horsemen and mules," and so on. Tyre had a navy that Tyre might exalt merchandise. Here we see once more man's delight in commercial prosperity. Let it be observed that in the earlier passage where God says He will stain the pride of all glory, He touches merchandise

Merchandise is linked with the pride of man, and so in Rev. ~~18~~ 18 where God speaks of the laying low of human greatness, there is the lamentation as to the merchandise of gold and silver and precious stones, and of pearls, and of fine linen, and purple and so forth. Babylon is said to have within her the blood of all that are slain upon the earth. The verse before says "Thy merchants were the great men of the earth". The spirit of commercialism is the spirit of antipathy to saintship. In this connection we notice the ephah of Zech. 5 prophetic of the last days. The prophet is at Jerusalem, but sees an ephah pass him and it is going toward the land of Shinar. This implies that there is something which has been brought from the land of Shinar, but it is to be taken back there, and set UPON HER (OWN) BASE. There is wickedness inside the ephah. An ephah is, among other things, a symbol of commerce. This we shall see more fully. A concordance will make it clearer. Wickedness hidden away in commerce, - dishonesty of trade. This was linked with Babylon of old, but the commercial centers are now shifted from Babylon to the west of Palestine; they will return to Palestine, as the ephah is seen going east. Commercial prosperity shall be taken back to its original home. The sad history of nations will illustrate what I have sought to show from Scripture. Man's desire has always been on things of earth. Riches have always been popular, and hence trade has been a delight, and if we look back upon the years that have gone by, we shall find that internal and international jealousies have been caused and developed through commercialism. There is, moreover, striking language employed by God which we do well to notice. In Isa. 23:8,11 we have the words "traffic-kers" and the "merchant city". Against the second verse (11) we have the marginal note "Canaan". It would be well if our translators ALWAYS told us when the word "Canaan" is employed in this special sense. It has been pointed out that as the Chaldeans were astrologers, the term "Chaldean" is used for "astrologer", and as the Canaanites were merchantmen, so the term "Canaanite" came to be employed for a merchantman. Hence I should be inclined to render the 8th verse with a marginal note also. "Whose traffic-

kers (whose Canaanites) were the honorable of the earth". Thus Canaan is linked with traffic, even as we have seen Babylon so linked. In other words, the division of Noah's family which was associated with Ham, was a center of commercial prosperity. Ham illustrates most definitely the trend of men, and it was in the line of Ham that there was earthly success. In Hosea 12:7 we read "He is a merchant" (marg. - Canaan) "the balances of deceit are in his hand; he loveth to oppress". In Zephaniah 1:11 we have the same term with respect to the merchant people cut down. You will now understand why I read Zechariah 14:21 "In that day there shall be no more the Canaanite (the trafficker) in the house of the Lord". Surely this language of God is a strong witness. The Canaanite is the symbol of traffic, and the Canaanite was the one who sought to usurp the position which belonged to Israel. The Canaanite was the one of Ham's line who got in the way of God's privileged nation. The Canaanite was driven out before the Lord's hosts. Secondly, in Ezekiel 28:16 we have a remarkable statement respecting the king of Tyre. "By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned; therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God; and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire." It seems to me this description of the king of Tyre is a description of one greater than man; one who, unlike men, was, as verse 15 puts it, perfect in his ways from the day he was created, till iniquity was found in him. Here surely we have a description of Satan. This will explain many of the passages. Verse 18 continues "Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffic." The word "traffic" in this verse, and the word "merchandise" in verse 16, are the same, and they come from the same root as the word "slander" or "talebearer", as Lev. 19:16; Prov. 11:13 and Jer. 6:28 will show. What is one of the names of the Devil? The slanderer. Is it accidental that God uses the same root for slander and traffic? Is it strange that Satan appears as the patron

of earthly prosperity? He is the god of this age. He does not encourage men merely on the path of manifest sin, he encourages them on the path of prosperity. To the believer this involves sin, when it is prosperity that ignores God; but Satan covers up his purpose. He appears to be one who is concerned in the BETTERMENT of humanity. He is oftentimes disguised as an angel of light. Let me repeat it, Satan has always emphasized commerce. He has always contrasted himself with God's standpoint. He has set his Babylon against God's Jerusalem. In other words he is the patron of human arrangements, and the patron of human commerce. While speaking of the language employed by God, we do well to recollect Luke 16, - the unrighteous mammon.

Commercialism among Israel is another remarkable topic. First recollect Solomon's trading, and the Lord's hint respecting it. In 1 Kings 10:26 we have Solomon's gathering of chariots and horsemen, against the law of God in Deut. 17. In 1 Kings 11:1, we have his love to strange women AGAINST the law in the same chapter of Deuteronomy. In between the two we read "And Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt, and linen yarn: the king's merchants received the linen yarn at a price. And a chariot came up and went out of Egypt for six hundred shekels of silver, and an horse for an hundred and fifty: and so for all the kings of the Hittites, and for the kings of Syria, did they bring them out by their means". Here was Solomon's failure

Israel's navy has a checkered history. In 2 Chron. 8:17,18 we read, "Then went Solomon to Ezion-Geber, and to Eloth, at the sea side in the land of Edom. And Hiram sent him by the hands of his servants ships, and servants that had knowledge of the sea; and they went with the servants of Solomon to Ophir, and took thence four hundred and fifty talents of gold, and brought them to king Solomon". "Now the weight of gold", adds 9:13 "that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred and threescore and six talents of gold". The number is solemn in the sight of Rev. 13. In 2 Chron. 20:35-37 we have a further view of the navy. "After this did Jehoshaphat king of Judah, join himself with Ahaziah king of Israel, who

did very wickedly. And he joined himself with him to make ships to go to Tarshish; and they made the ships in Ezion-gaber. Then Eliezer the son of Dodavah of Mareshah prophesied against Jehoshaphat saying, Because thou hast joined thyself with Ahaziah, the Lord hath broken thy works. And the ships were broken that they were not able to go to Tarshish.

Thirdly, the book of Proverbs warned against commercialism among Israel, and we do well to notice Amos 8:4,5, - "Hear this, O ye that swallow up the needy, even to make the poor of the land to fail, saying, When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the Sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances by deceit?" Micah 6:10,11 - "Are there yet the treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked, and the scant measure that is abominable? Shall I count them pure with the wicked balances, and with the bag of deceitful weights?" The last chapter of Nehemiah shows that some of Nehemiah's greatest difficulties were in dealing with the commercial spirit which is so contradictory to the attitude of the law, with its humane arrangements including the year of release, and the year of jubilee. When the Lord Jesus Christ walked this earth, three times he dealt with the temple. On the first occasion He said, "A house of merchandise", on the latter "a den of thieves". Israel dragged their commercialism into the temple, - that which was to be a center of worship was made a place of gain. Gain is man's natural object, but God has always emphasized that which excludes the thought of gain, worship unto Himself. Israel did not learn the lesson, and their house was left unto them (a wilderness).

Before leaving the nation, it is solemn to notice that in (the book of) Genesis, whereas we find Jacob's family encouraged to a pilgrim life, those who were linked with Abraham, but were not in the line of promise, were merchantmen. The Midianites and Ishmeelites came along as merchantmen, and the spirit of commercialism was present in Judah, and he even sold his brother. We see the love of money in another Judah, called Judas Iscariot, who betrayed his Lord for thirty pieces of silver.

It is refreshing to turn to a fuller consideration of the Lord's people, and their heavenly calling. The address on the mount was given to be believed, and recorded to be obeyed. It is not out of date, nor will it be till our Lord comes back. It has a true meaning which is quite contrasted with socialistic perversion. It is easy for a man of this age to fasten on a verse of Scripture which seems to suit him; but only believers will delight in the whole Scripture. The Lord Jesus sets before us an unagitated suffering people, willing to bear reproach, and to bear problems, avoiding pride, avoiding display, and laying up for themselves treasures in heaven. The whole trend of the address on the mount, or shall I say, the whole atmosphere, is entirely against commercialism. There is no thought of human prosperity; pleasing God is the pervading object. As we read the history of the early church, we find how these principles were realized, in the power of the Holy Spirit, so much so that as many as were possessors of lands and houses indicated their delight in the Lord and gave up the things of earth, - I refer particularly to Acts 2:41-47; 4:32-37, - to set forth the pilgrim-like attitude which is such a reverse to Cain building a city.

A deeply important subject might be taken on "Suitable occupations for the Lord's people. One has to be very careful as to inferences. In parables the Lord alludes to various things without approving of them ~~and~~ necessarily. In like manner when Paul referred to the Corinthian games, he did not imply that believers could rightly engage in them. He was alluding to a contrast with the Corinthian games; even the believer's intense pressing forward for the prize of the high calling. The record that a certain man did a certain work, does not say the Lord approved of the work. We have to find out if the record is given to guide us or to warn us. However I think it seems clear that the Lord Jesus, though He drew His disciples from fishing to be fishers of men, quite allowed such a profession in life, for He gave a miraculous draught of fishes. One might infer from this, and from the way in which food is emphasized as a necessity for the Lord's people, that it is quite approved by Him that His own should be

engaged in food production. James 5 seems to mark out the Lord's people in the days to which it alludes, as working on the land. Apart from this we find in the epistle to the Thessalonians, as well as in Eph. 4, a stress on working with the hands, and various Scriptures contain such statements as "providing things honest in the sight of all men". The fact that Paul was approved as a tent maker seems to imply that God's dear people may make certain things, apart from the mere production of food. It is somewhat interesting that a tent suggests covering, and a covering is, as food, a necessity, a solemn necessity, in the present state of affairs through sin. The believer is shut out from all trading that involves the position of a den of thieves; he is shut out from all dishonesty; he is, moreover, shut out from all partnership with the world; he is shut out from all thought of amassing wealth, - thus he is separated from a large portion of commercialism. A time will come when God's people will be drawn out of Babylon itself, as Rev. 18 shows. At the present time they are to be guided by Divine principles, and to be fully persuaded in their own mind. The Divine principles of separation to which I have referred, would lead them to use the world, without ^{mis-}using it (to the full). They work for earthly masters who may be froward; they do whatever they do heartily as to the Lord and not to men, even as they can pay taxes to His glory, because this is appointed. But though the believer, till the Lord calls him forth from the present position near to the men of this world, though the believer till that time is partly engaged in some of earth's business, - his heart must not be on earth's commerce. Whatever he does must be that which is honorable and unto the Lord, on which He can have the Lord's blessing, and he must not use his time so that he fails to have opportunity for the direct service of his God. If these principles are laid to heart, they will separate believers from much, they will make them more cautious in all, and they will glorify the Name of the Lord.

We have commands and silence in the epistles, which God displays. I

have already partly referred to this, but I would suggest how that a prayerful perusal of the epistles will show that their atmosphere is against believers' prosperity in this age. The beacon of Demas, moreover, stands out, he loved this present age. The unveiling of Laodicea searches our hearts. Laodicea was rich and increased in goods. The history of Christendom is a reminder to us that those who have borne the Name of Christ have sought the things of earth. It is remarkable that the woman of Matt. 13 is not only linked with the corrupting of fine flour, but linked with the ephah. The commercialism which entered into Israel's temple, entered into that which claimed to be the church of God. Thus, instead of devotion to Him there was the position of the den of thieves. The history of Christendom will bear this out. We have solemn links between religion and trading, which dishonor the Name of the Lord. And so, beloved friends, this subject leads us to see how sad is the condition of the world, how awful is the prospect of the world. How important that believers in their heart attitude should be severed from the heart attitude of those who know not Christ, that they should walk this earth as strangers and pilgrims, unlike the family of Cain, and unlike the family of Ham; without a continuing city here, but seeking one to come! The citizens of the new and the heavenly Jerusalem are to set their minds on things above. They need to be careful lest they be attracted by that which appeals to the man of this age, who has his reward here and now. They need to look for their reward when their Lord shall come back. Their position is to be the offscouring of all things, and going forth to Christ without the camp, they are to bear His reproach. They cannot trim their conscience to suit the fluctuating opinions of a changing world, they cannot accommodate their convictions to get on in this age. Their Lord must be first, their Lord must be last, their Lord must be all in all. Saved by grace, born of the Spirit, they are called to be led by the Spirit, and not only are they unitedly to seek after an

exemplification of this heavenly calling, but each individual, seeking to obey the command to make his calling and election sure, and spiritually progressive, should beware lest he wounds his conscience in the tiniest point, for "whatsoever is not of faith is sin". Oh that we may be willing to lose in this world, and to be counted foolish by others, if so be that we please our Lord, and look forward to hear His "Well done". It is enough for the disciple to be as His Master, the servant as his Lord. He was called Beelzebub, He was rejected of men, He had not even where to lay His head; - if He grants to us food and ^{a covering} (clothing), let us be therewith content, content with such things as we have, since He has said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. The spirit of commercialism with its rivalry, the spirit of commercialism with its amalgamations, the spirit of commercialism with its various forms of untruthfulness can only awaken the sorrow of those who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, and can only lead us to desire that in all our life we may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour.
